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WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?: FRAMING ATLANTA'S MOVEMENT TO END
HOMELESSNESS, 1900 – 2005

by

WILLIAM WYATT HOLLAND

Under the Direction of Charles Jaret

ABSTRACT

This study examines framing strategies employed by the social movement responding to homelessness in Atlanta, Georgia over the course of the 20th century. Drawing on archival records, media accounts and interviews with religious, business and government leaders, this longitudinal case study documents the varied casts of individuals and groups responding to the visible poor on the streets of the city. At the forefront of this project were religious groups serving variously as agents of social control or prophets calling for justice.

Social movement framing theory, supplemented by resource mobilization and political opportunity theories, are applied to analyze movement processes. Framing theory provides an explanation for the coordination of collective action in social movements. However, the processes by which movements develop, contest and subsequently transform frames have received little scholarly attention and remain central questions for framing theory. This study addresses these questions.

Analytically, I consider the movement in two waves: 1) an early movement dating from 1900 to 1970 and, 2) a modern movement covering the years from 1975 to 2005. In each period movement leaders adopted diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames to organize and direct their actions. In the first wave, the Salvation Army and Union Mission drew on frames of sin

and redemption to develop specialized, separate institutions and programs for the visible poor. The second wave of the movement developed its framing by incorporating elements from the civil rights movement, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker traditions. Religious leaders developed a church based, volunteer run shelter system providing free emergency night shelter to homeless persons. Freezing deaths on the streets of the city in 1981 led to rapid diffusion of church-based sheltering and adoption of a crisis/disaster frame. Central to these developments was a core group of religious leaders bringing a variety of personal experiences and visions to sheltering. The experience of sheltering and the confrontations with downtown business and political leaders fostered the development of frames with greater complexity and highlighted internal contradictions in the movement. New frames explaining homelessness variously emphasized either structural (injustice) or individual (disability) factors leading to framing conflicts within the movement.

INDEX WORDS: Social movements, Homelessness, Religion, Atlanta, Framing theory, Public space, Poverty, Shelters.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?: FRAMING ATLANTA'S MOVEMENT TO END
HOMELESSNESS, 1900 – 2005

by

WILLIAM WYATT HOLLAND

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University

2009

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HOMELESSNESS, 1900 – 2005

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December 2009

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to Mary Ann Downey, my faithful and supportive partner. I also dedicate this to my parents, Rev. Harvey C. Holland and Rev. Miriam H. Holland who inspired in me a commitment to social justice and a love of learning.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Cities are places of great heterogeneity (Wirth 1938). However, this heterogeneity is not spread evenly through cities' subareas, therefore spaces within cities are graded and can be read as "a landscape of exclusion" with "the relegation of weaker groups to less desirable environments" (Sibley 1995: ix). Maintaining this landscape is problematic and requires constant border patrolling. In this environment one of the enduring tensions of urban life is the perceived threat to order posed by the visible poor if or when they appear in "out of place" spaces. The most visible of the poor are those labeled homeless.

This dissertation is a historical and theoretical study of the social movement that sought to end homelessness in the City of Atlanta, Georgia over the course of a century. It is also the story of the varying responses of groups in an urban center in the American South to the visible poor over an extended period of economic and racial transition. It concerns the wishes and visions of political, business and religious leaders of the city. At the center of the story are the dreams of redemption of individuals and of a city, and also the conflicts that arose when those visions of redemption came into conflict with one another.

Social movements are manifestations of a preference for change (McCarthy & Zald 1977). This study is an examination of the ways various groups in Atlanta, Georgia mobilized in response to visible homelessness in the city. Over the time period considered by this study, these periods of mobilization ebbed and surged, in response to changing social conditions, constructions of the "problem" of homelessness and the availability of resources. While the state and business actors were important players in constructing the homeless as impediments to progress or recipients of assistance, the principal actors were from the religious and charitable sectors.

This was a movement for the most part shaped by religion and religious understandings. In addition, with a few exceptions, the leaders and participants in the movement were not, in a direct material sense, the beneficiaries of the movement's activities. The movement drew heavily on mobilization within religious networks to recruit adherents to the movement and to cultivate the assistance of constituents. For the most part, the benefits accrued to the leaders and participants in the movement were indirect. Their motivation for service was religious conviction and personal efficacy – they saw themselves as providing a solution to a problem. Drawing on powerful religious language, leaders inspired and cultivated adherents to support and nourish the movement. The recipients – the potential and actual beneficiaries of the movement were the visible poor – the homeless men, women and children.

The movement was also shaped by race and particularly by differing attitudes and practices towards black and white poor. For much of the early movement, and continuing during the period of the civil rights movement, racial segregation was the norm. While the white poor were stigmatized but tolerated, the black poor were threats to social order. For the most part, religious and political institutions followed and maintained the normative order of racial division. The breakdown of the legal barriers of segregation did little to diminish the threat of the visible black poor on the streets of Atlanta.

Social movements are often viewed as centrally engaged in contention with the state (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). In contrast, the movement to end homelessness in Atlanta, for the most part, emphasized either cooperation/collaboration with the state or in a separate religious sphere counter to this view. The provision of shelter and assistance to the poor was deemed the proper role of religion and met with acceptance as the socially approved safety net for the deserving poor. But as we will see, differing understandings of homelessness led religious leaders to

support or contest efforts at social control. If unbridled capitalism and business boosterism were the principle component of Atlanta's "good business climate," religious institutions were, at least initially, viewed as the legitimate providers of sanctuary. Business and political leaders formed a cohesive alliance that framed the city as the "Capital of the New South," religious leaders provided the charitable services to ameliorate any hardships.

Historically, this study answers such question as: How did groups and individuals respond to the visible poor in Atlanta over time? What brought these people together to respond to homelessness? What were their accounts of homelessness and their reasoning for engaging with homelessness? What organizations, institutions and initiatives resulted from their efforts? How did they understand homelessness? These historical questions lead to theoretical ones. On a theoretical level, I am interested in how this longitudinal case study helps inform our understanding of social movements and particularly the processes and dynamics of constructing and sustaining collective action.

The theoretical lens for this study is constructed from social movement theory, primarily framing theory, and informed by theories of urban political economy. The framing perspective emphasizes the ideational component to the processes by which social movements (and other actors) create and coordinate their collective action. I am particularly exploring: how the movement understood their action, what differences there were within the movement, and how the movement interacted with the frames of other groups in the environment. From the framing perspective, the central ongoing challenge to social movements, or to any collective actor, is the process of reality construction, the articulation of the desired social reality. The success of a social movement derives from its ability to shape ideas and actions that attract people to its cause and to mobilize them for action. This process of reality construction is intimately tied to action.

Action both precedes and underlies the contentious process of framing. While other organizational and structural factors are also important, this aspect, the public ideas of the movement, is central to understanding social movement claims. Theories of urban political economy, particularly the growth coalition (Logan and Molotch 1987), complement framing theory by highlighting the ideational struggle that goes on between those invested in place and seeking to maximize the value of places, and those seeking to maximize any other use.

PURPOSE AND STUDY SITE

This study is comprised of three layers of analysis. First, it is a description of how the movement arose and of the ebbs and flows of organized attention to the visible poor. This entails the examinations of the individual and institutional mobilization for action and the process for creating collective action frames. As I will show, the movement manifested itself, sometimes in contradictory ways, in a rich diversity of expressions. Second, this diversity of responses led to disputes and conflicts within the movement arising from differing understandings of the problem of homelessness and what constituted the appropriate response. These “framing disputes” represent within movement differences that provide differing accounts of the problem, and appropriate solutions. Finally, I will explore the “framing contests” that occurred between advocates for the homeless and their opponents. As we will see, within movement and extra-movement differences were strikingly similar.

Brief Overview of the Movement to End Homelessness

Homelessness is not a new phenomenon in Atlanta. For much of the city’s history, a substantial segment of Atlanta’s population has faced homelessness, or probably more accurately, residential insecurity. The city of Atlanta’s location was established not by access to valuable resources, but to the vagaries of railroad surveyors establishing the end of a railroad

line. The city's position as a central transportation and trans-shipment center meant that the city had required a large contingent workforce and attracted a transient population seeking work. Early on, city leaders identified the visible poor – known as “vagrants” and “beggars” as threats to public order.

Beginning in the late 19th century, evangelical Protestants began developing missions in Atlanta's downtown to, in words of their hymn “rescue the perishing.” By the early 20th century, specialized rescue missions had emerged for men, women and children. Leaders of these missionary missions, working with other religious and philanthropic leaders were early founders of the organized charity movement. These movements reached their apex during the Great Depression. In the period following, several enduring institutions were created that formed the basic safety net for the homeless in Atlanta through the two decades of the middle 20th century.

In 1972, growing visible poverty in inner city Atlanta prompted the opening of the first soup kitchen since the Great Depression in a downtown Episcopal Church. Seven years later, on November 1, 1979, the first emergency night shelter opened (Gathje 1991). By 1985, over 80 organizations, including 50 shelters, were providing direct services combining both individual and systemic advocacy for a diverse mix of homeless persons. Over the next five years, the movement continued to grow and by 1990 it encompassed a network of over 75 shelters located primarily in churches, housing approximately 2500 individuals a night in the peak winter season. Loosely coordinated by a single coalition, the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, these organizations initially achieved a number of important victories.

By the early 1990's the movement had factionalized as a result of differences over tactics and, more fundamentally, differing understandings of homelessness. Increasing professionalization and conflict eroded support for the movement and fractured the cohesion of

the coalition. By the turn of the century, Atlanta had several coalitions promoting different approaches to homelessness and competing against each other for legitimacy, media attention, funding and support of those providing services.

Social Movement Organization and Homelessness

In this study, I focus on the construction and life course of the collective action frames providing cohesion and direction to the social movement mobilized in different periods. My focus, therefore, is not on the homeless per se, but upon how the movement accounted for homelessness and crafted the appropriate response. As such, my focus is upon the coalitions, organizations, and leaders (none of whom were homeless) who became the movement's recognized spokespersons. They were the critical actors in articulating this framing.

The poor and marginalized have held considerable interest to social scientists and reformers for well over a century (Riis 1997[1890], Piven & Cloward 1971[1993], Piven & Cloward 1977). The emergence of homelessness as a social problem in the late 1970's was merely the reemergence of a perennial condition in American history. Throughout our nation's history social responses toward homeless persons have fluctuated wildly (Kusmer 2002). Commentators since Tocqueville have highlighted the residential mobility of Americans. We have always been a nation in movement. In the decades following the Civil War, this took on a new dimension. A transient army of predominantly white men served as a mobile itinerant labor force for agricultural and industrial needs. The "hobo" became a cultural icon, at once idealized as an embodiment of independent masculinity, while also seen as a threatening menace (Depostino 2003). The settling of the hobo through legislation and repression greatly reduced the threat. With a few notable exceptions (Spradley 1970), social scientists largely ignored homelessness in the period between the Great Depression and the early 1970's. Indeed, in the

1960's some social scientists asserted that homelessness, with the destruction of skid row housing, had been eradicated (Bogue 1963). With growing public awareness of homelessness in the late 1970's, renewed interest in the causes and conditions of homelessness led to considerable investigation (Barak 1991; Burt 1992; Shlay and Rossi 1992; Snow and Anderson 1993).

In the period between the Great Depression and the early 1980's, considerable scholarly theory and research has heightened awareness of the dynamics of social movements. Particular scholarly attention had focused on the structural conditions that provided the political opportunities for the emergence of social movements. Similarly, reviews of the civil rights movement highlighted the importance of an organizational infrastructure supporting social movement emergence.

Given the two decades of scholarly attention on homelessness as a social condition and the burgeoning scholarly interest in social movements, it is surprising that little attention has been devoted to the social movement and social movement organizations which have arisen to end homelessness. Few published accounts examine the organizational life of the movement to end homelessness on either a local or national level. Mitch Snyder, an early charismatic leader of the homeless movement in Washington, D.C., received considerable media attention for his direct action campaigns through the Community for Creative Nonviolence (Rader 1986). Atlanta's Open Door Community has used its publications to highlight its analysis of homelessness in Atlanta and the history of their social movement organization (Gatje 1991). Other national leaders have provided retrospective descriptions of the development of local and national homeless advocacy organizations, briefly touching on the efforts of homeless advocates to frame homelessness as a rights issue (Hopper 2003). Short-term organizational studies

highlight that local coalitions face many dilemmas over how to decide on tactics and representation (Rosenthal 1996). As with other movements, the process of formalizing organizational structures often leads to a decline in activism (Cress 1997). In some areas of the country, homeless individuals have successfully mobilized on their own, but have faced great difficulty sustaining action over time (Wagner 1993, Wright 1997). Homeless individuals who form their own squatter communities have been critical of the organizations purporting to advocate on their behalf (Wagner 1993). Nonetheless, some scholars have viewed the movement to end homelessness as the potential basis for a new anti-poverty movement uniting the homeless and poor people's movement (Yeich 1994).

The diverse needs of homeless individuals resulted in the engagement of diverse groups of organizations, often with disparate goals and purposes. While it has been recognized that social movements frequently develop a division of labor (Gamson and Meyer 1996), the active competition between SMO's claiming to serve the same purpose has received relatively less attention. This competition became particularly salient within the movement to end homelessness after the mid 1980's. The movement to end homelessness experienced early success by fostering the creation of an extensive system of volunteer run shelters and support services. This in turn garnered the attention of both media and funding sources. The Reagan administration's withdrawal from urban issues left many needs unmet (Caraley 1992), resulting in a proliferation of nonprofits and grassroots organizations seeking to meet emergency needs. The federal initiative to address homelessness, the 1986 Federal McKinney Act, promoted and required the empowerment of local coalitions to insure the coordination of planning. At a time of federal cost cutting, heightened scrutiny was directed on inefficiencies in social service planning. Fiscal conservatives argued that rather than increasing funding for services, eliminating

inefficiencies through increasing coordination and planning of services was the solution. Funding became tied to participation in networks. This had the effect of legislating the collaboration of wildly divergent groups with qualitatively different framing. These forced marriages resulted in great difficulties in developing a collective action frame (Croteau and Hicks 2003).

In summary, social movement research has not yet sufficiently explored the dynamics and processes of social movements for the homeless. In light of this situation, my research fills a gap in our current understanding of how social movement organizations frame their challenges in general. More specifically, this study seeks to provide an understanding of how social movements articulate their claims in a diverse and contested environment. The anti-homeless movement has experienced repeated internal conflicts (within movement) and external conflicts (with other political and business interests) over diagnostic and prognostic framing. As such, it provides a useful case study to explore the processes that the movement uses to resolve challenges to collective identity.

Atlanta's Urban Politics

Local social movements exist within and articulate their claims in a particular political and social context. The political opportunities and culture surrounding them influence the way movements articulate their claims (Bogard 2003). In Atlanta, those concerned about ending homelessness operated within a political context dominated by a longstanding alliance of political and economic elites that sought to minimize social problems and social conflict. The “Atlanta Spirit” was a cohesive political ideology that permeated the city with the faith that the good business climate and “progressive” leadership would lead to cooperative realistic solutions to problems.

Over the last fifty years, Atlanta's political and economic structure has been regularly explored as a case study of how urban power is organized. These studies map the transition of Atlanta from a period in which a tightly-knit political and corporate elite shaped fundamental decisions in the city in a relatively uncontested way (Hunter 1953), through the civil rights era when political power became more diffuse (Stone 1976, Hunter 1980). The change in political leadership, particularly the rise in black political power, resulted in broadening the ruling coalition, such that it now operates in a way Stone (1989) characterizes as an urban regime. Regime theory describes how political decisions are made in the city through the collaboration between political and economic leaders. Like the concept of the growth coalition, regime theory highlights the loose connection of a variety of interests who share a concern for growth. These studies highlight how a strong pro-growth business and political community has successfully dominated city politics. The ideological dominance of pro-growth policies has resulted in a long history of policies detrimental to African-American and poor communities (Stone 1976, Baylor 1996, Ferguson 2002,). However, global and regional challenges to the old business hegemony continue to make framing an important perennial problem for urban regimes (Stone 2001).

Growth coalitions and urban governing regimes, like social movements, face the critical task of packaging their ideas in ways that are persuasive and unifying (Stone 2001; Logan and Molotch 1987). For these groups, bolstering support for growth and a "good business climate" is an ongoing accomplishment (Cox 1999; Short 1999; Doyle 1999). While there are differences "on which particular strategy will best succeed, elites use their growth consensus to eliminate any alternative vision of the purpose of local government or the meaning of community" (Logan and Molotch 1987:51). Against this, groups pushing for "alternative visions" use framing to subvert, challenge and/or extend the framing of the "growth consensus." Given this

confrontation, it is surprising that despite the theoretical depth and empirical research on growth coalitions and regime politics, there is relatively little research on the social movements contesting these regimes; perhaps, because they are so unsuccessful. Thus, this study provides an opportunity to fill one gap in our understanding of the interrelationship of social movements and political/business interests.

Social Movements, Race and the Atlanta Experience

Atlanta is a site of black political power. Atlanta's well-established and politically organized black community was able to gain political leadership of the city in the early 1970's. Atlanta, as a consequence, provides a case of three decades of black political leaders who continue to use the rhetoric and historical memory of the civil rights movement to achieve electoral success. However, the civil rights rhetoric of opportunity has been less successful in addressing entrenched poverty in its most visible form – homelessness. Stone (1989) argues that electoral resources have been insufficient for black political leaders to accomplish their goals, so building an alliance with the growth coalition has been necessary to make the city work. While considerable scholarly attention has focused on the efforts of excluded African-Americans to secure political power, few studies have examined the dynamics that arise when social movements subsequently challenge these regimes. Exploring these challenges highlights issues of class and race disparities within the context of urban political power.

The case of homelessness highlights the emergence of the class conflicts that arise when the black political elite assumes the reins of power. In Atlanta, a majority black city, poverty largely has a black face. In turn, because homelessness is largely a function of poverty, this has led to the new homeless also being predominantly African American.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD

Research Questions

- How did the movement to end homelessness emerge in Atlanta?
- How are frames constructed?
- How did the movement develop and articulate a common understanding of “homelessness” (collective action framing), ascertaining its causes (diagnostic framing), pointing toward solutions (prognostic framing) and attracting followers (motivational framing)?
- How did the social movement adapt when its framing was challenged or resisted by those within the movement?
- How do frames change?
- What crises did the movement face? Can these be understood as framing challenges?
- What accounts for the success or failure of the social movement’s framing activities?
- How do social movements contest and cooperate with growth coalitions and political-economic elites?

Research Strategy

This project is a longitudinal case study examining the processes of framing undertaken by a social movement, and its opponents, within the context of urban change. This study includes an examination of framing disputes (within movement) and framing contests (movement with opponents) that occurred over a life of the movement.

To answer these research questions, I draw upon public and private archives, media accounts, government reports, participant observation and interviews with movement leaders. My strategy was to collect the texts created by and about the movement that could be reviewed to reveal the underlying frames of leaders at discrete times over the life of the movement.

Commercial media accounts from local and national papers provided both avenues for movement leaders to get out their messages. Such sources provided a rich collection of news articles, opinion-editorials, editorials, letters to the editor, and paid commercial advertising, which revealed multiple voices of the movement. Likewise, the movement was engaged in disseminating its own communication through newsletters, newspapers, church bulletins, flyers and letters that were collected and reviewed. Government sources provided both examples of framing projects as well as an archive of public testimony by leaders. Public and private archives were an important source containing letters, internal communications and speeches that revealed the inner framing work of a variety of organizations. I also participated in public meetings during the years near the end of the period covered in this study. Finally, I interviewed leaders of the movement.

When I first considered this project, I believed that interview data would provide the richest source of information to answer the questions I was exploring. As I entered more deeply into the project, I realized that I had committed a conceptual error. My central concern is how framing as a dynamic process occurs over time. While interviews conducted in the present provide valuable insights into the reflections of leaders of the movement, they provide less insight into the views of leaders at the time the movement was forming or in the heat of conflict. Representatives of commercial media outlets had interviewed these leaders repeatedly. As a result, leaders were continually reflecting on their history and these historical understandings were changing. As I conducted interviews, I came to understand that the very position of movement leaders contaminated their own recollections. To a large extent leaders had been debriefed in a variety of ways – through formal oral histories, written accounts and newspaper interviews that were available to me. As I compared their writings and communications of two

decades past, I concluded their accounts were more reflective of their contemporary understanding of the problem than of their framing at the time the movement began and developed. It was a reminder that framing is a process that occurs in time and in flux. How homelessness is framed today is less relevant than how leaders framed it for themselves and their followers, twenty-five years ago. People, and leaders, do not become involved in social movement “ready made and unchanging. Interest formation is a dynamic process and part of political struggle. In this process individuals create and affirm both their personal and group identities” (Lars 1996:275; Knoke 1988). With this insight, I placed greater emphasis on ferreting out statements made at the time of movement activity. So while interview data was useful, it has not, in the end, provided the key data for understanding the theoretical questions of this study.

This, of course, is one of the most interesting aspects of this study – how framings change. There is a temptation to reify frames so that they become static things. Framing changes over time, new actors bring in new framings into the mix. The process of socializing the new actors or the movement changing in response to these actors is one of the fascinating dynamics revealed in this study. If social movements are themselves amorphous networks of people, formal and informal organizations and other networks with a preference for change, then frames are changing to incorporate these new participants. Viewed this way framing become an adaptive, flexible process of ongoing conceptualization.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Following this introduction, in Chapter 2, I review theories of social movements, placing emphasis on the framing perspective and providing a working definition of social movement relevant to this study. In Chapters 3 and 4, I describe the history of the movement in two stages.

Chapter 3 covers the emergence of the first missions in Atlanta and the rise of organized charity taking the story through the early 1970's. Chapter 4 tells the story of the beginnings of the modern movement through the establishment of the first modern, church-based shelters. Chapter 5 compares and contrasts how the movements that emerged during the two periods developed their frames and it provides an answer to the questions – where do frames come from and how are they constructed? Chapter 6 further examines the question of how movements create a collective action frame by describing the process of creating the first social movement organization, the Task Force for the Homeless. Chapter 7 examines how frames become more elaborated through conflict by examining the Task Force's first campaign – pushing for the establishment of public toilets and its consequences on subsequent movement formation. Chapter 8, 9 and 10 describe the process by which frames are changed through conflicts over public space and program. Chapter 11 explores the within movement differences over framing. Chapter 12 describes the role of the City and organized nonprofit community framing the solution to homelessness. Chapter 13 concludes the study by summarizing the findings and identifying questions for further work.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study examines the social movement that arose in Atlanta, Georgia in response to homelessness over the course of the 20th century. In this chapter I will establish the theoretical framework on which this study is built. I will begin by developing a definition of social movement appropriate to this study. Next, I will provide an overview of social movement theory, focusing on the three dominant perspectives in contemporary social movement studies – political opportunity, resource mobilization, and framing, paying particular attention to the latter. While these three lines of explanation have often been presented as contrasting explanations, a growing consensus has emerged among social movement theorists that “taken together, they provide a relatively comprehensive theory of social movements” (Hutchison 2007: 481). This is in line with recent attempts to integrate theorizing (Staggenborg 2008).

WHAT ARE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?: DEFINITION AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

There is no single “satisfactory” conceptual definition of social movements in modern sociology (Oberschall 1994, Diani 1992). While this lack of conceptual clarity in part reflects the complex and often conflicted nature of social movements, more fundamentally it represents differing theoretical and methodological approaches. Conceptualizations of social movements tend to reflect a combination of the theoretical orientation of the analyst and the particular research problem being explored. Narrow definitions have the advantage of providing opportunities for comparative studies across cases at the cost of artificially excluding many cases that are generally understood to be social movements. For example, recent theorizing on social movements has sought to narrow the scope of social movement to only those movements engaged in conflicts with political power (Tilly & Tarrow 2007) or cultural structures (Diani 1992). While this narrows the range of behavior being studied, it eliminates much organized

action. Tilly's formulation would eliminate much of what we think of as the cultural conflicts from the study of social movements. For the purposes of conceptual rigor, the concept is overly narrowed. On the other hand, overly broad definitions run the risk of constituting an object that is impossible to study. Everything is part of a social movement.

This study is a longitudinal case study of social movement activity in a particular setting. I am interested in exploring the complexity and diversity that exists within the social movement broadly conceived. Indeed, this is one of the advantages of the case study approach (Yin 2009; Snow & Trom 2002). For the purposes of this study I want to account for a wide range of behaviors manifested by those who participated in the social movement. As I will show, some of the groups and individuals clearly saw themselves as engaged in contention with the state and economic actors, while others thought of their participation in the movement quite differently. This is not unique to my study population; it reflects a common experience of social movements. Participants in movements themselves often disagree on which groups or individuals are "in" the movement and which are "out." I am interested in the commonalities and differences within the movement, so for the purposes of this case study, I am seeking to include many diverse voices into a movement.

While there are many different conceptions and definitions of social movements at their core social movements are about some kind of change. A widely cited definition of social movements begins with this change element. "A social movement is a set of opinions and beliefs in a population that represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (McCarthy & Zald 1977:1218). This is a good starting point; the formulation provides two keys to building an understanding of social movements – first, they are about *beliefs* and second, about *change* in the social structure. Social

movements are about some individuals believing change is needed. Preferences constitute the minimum element, the necessary and sufficient basis, for a nascent social movement. From this bare foundation, we can seek to understand how social movements move from beliefs into action, how preferences are mobilized into action. Likewise, from this foundation it is possible to examine how social movements grow or decline and how they define the objects of interest. In addition, this change orientation permits us to differentiate social movements from other kinds of preferences and organizations.

But while the belief in change provides an adequate foundation, social movements are something more. To the start provided by McCarthy and Zald, I now turn to how Diani (1992) formulates movement: “A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani 1992:13). This definition adds several important elements. First, it builds on the earlier definition of preference and adds to it the idea that social movements are networks with a collective identity. It takes us beyond a vague preference for change and provides the vehicle for agency by conceptualizing social movements as social networks of interacting individuals and organizations. It is these networks tying individuals and groups together creating the potential for collective action. These social networks and their interactions generate a collective consciousness that manifests itself as collective identity or sense of we-ness. This in turn provides coherence and unifies the movement.

Second, Diani’s definition provides methodological caution by implying that particular social movements are not synonymous with a single social movement organization. Social movement scholars, for heuristic reasons, have tended to confound “the movement” with

particular organizations that are active in the movement. In addition to providing some conceptual focus, Diani's formulation provides methodological focus to the study of social movements. While social movements are broadly conceived, pragmatically, studies of social movements tend to be studies of particular social movement organizations. Social movement organizations are attractive foci of study because they are formally constituted, maintain membership lists, are bounded in time and [often] maintain written archives. Social movement organizations provide institutional continuity and outlive the actual life of the movement. By using organizations as the unit of observation, it is relatively easy to determine whether or how particular individuals or groups are in the social movement. But social movements, and particularly social movement participation, are distinct from organizations, however important those organizations may be. Using the Diani definition helps to focus analytical attention on the diffuse networks of those who are involved in the social movement. By examining the larger network of involved people, groups and organizations, the complexity of interactions begins to emerge and may better explain the dynamics of a social movement. While the trajectory of individual organizations can be explained by organizational variables, the arc of a larger movement requires another level of analysis.

But this definition also has its limitations. First, narrowing social movements to only those engaged in "political or cultural" change excludes many examples of collective action that we consider to be social movement activity. Most glaringly is Diani omission of economic conflict. To take this a step further, even the limitation to cultural, political or economic conflict, is, in itself narrowing. Both elements exclude self-help movements that seek primarily to change the individual participants (e.g., AA, al-anon, etc). Second, Diani highlights "conflict" as the central dimension of social movement activity. This is also problematic. While mobilization for

change may lead to conflict, it does not necessarily do so. We have many examples of mobilization for change in response to perceived needs that cannot be easily characterized as “conflict,” but are still within the range of what we commonly understand to be social movement

Drawing on these two conceptualizations of social movements. For the purpose of this study, I define social movements as

A social movement is a network of individuals, groups and/or organizations who hold particular opinions, beliefs and preferences about changing elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society and is engaged in the process of change on the basis of a collective identity.

This revised definition incorporates the most important elements of the two definitions and provides the lens for which I will explore the social movements responding to homelessness in Atlanta. I am interested in the opinions and beliefs of those who responded to homelessness and of the networks in which they participated to articulate those beliefs. I am interested in the ideas about change and how those ideas became materialized through networks, organizations and institutions.

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

I now turn to sociological theorizing on social movements. I begin with a synopsis of the classical account as much of the theorizing of the second half of the 20th century arose in response to these arguments. I will then review the general insights emerging from the political opportunity, resource mobilization, and framing perspectives.

Classical Accounts of Social Movements

Prior to the 1960's the social science literature on social movements, analyzed social movements as a form of collective behavior with an emphasis on the social psychology of participants (Oliver & Johnson 2005). Classical theorists conceptualized several diverse types of group behavior – panics, crazes, crowds and social movements within a unitary category – collective behavior. In general, such collective behavior was viewed by the classical theorists as distinct from other institutionalized forms of social life. Dating back to LeBon's *The Crowd* (1903), collective behavior was epitomized by the crowd or mob, irrational and dangerous to the social order. Using the structural functional model, social movements were regarded as indicators of aberrations or dysfunctions in the social system. Inadequate socialization, marginality and other factors served to explain social movements as a form of deviance and dysfunctions. Such approaches associated social movements with irrational collective behavior.

In general, classical theorists viewed social movements as manifestations of a strain in the social order. These strains produced grievances around which individuals coalesced. These aggrieved groups formed social movements. Social movements were aberrations to the social order, in stark contrast to the status quo and institutionalized processes of the normative order. As they conceptualized the social order, social movements and other collective expressions were representations of threats to this normative consensus and essentially irrational.

Classical social movement theory emphasized a sharp disjunction between social movements and other forms of social organization. In general the former were conceptualized as separated from normal social life and represented ruptures in the social fabric. Social movements arose in response to strains-induced grievances, were relatively short in duration and receded when the strains were resolved. In addition, social movements were characterized as relatively

rare and time-limited phenomena, “discontents were transitory, movement and institutionalized actions were sharply distinct, and movement actors were arational if not outright irrational” (Jenkins 1983:528).

But even if social movements are irrational and threatening, they still must be explained. To explain the emergence of social movements, theorists turned to social psychological explanations and located the roots of social movements in rapid social change and the isolation of mass society. Strain theorists, identified the genesis of social movements in the “widespread feelings of uncertainty and anxiety that any major instance of social change may produce” (Marx & McAdam 1994:78). As a matter of causality it is social change that creates social movements. As one strain theorist put it “we describe social movements and collective action as responses to social change. To see them in this light emphasizes the disruptive and disturbing quality which new ideas...can have for people” (Gusfield 1970:9). For this branch of strain theory it is change that creates movements.

While strains due to social change were identified as one engine of social movement formation, the social isolation produced by modern social organization based on a complex division of labor (referred to as “mass society” by Kornhauser) was another. Building on Durkheim (1933), Kornhauser (1959) views social movement participation as a product of the extreme realignment that occurs in a rapidly changing social order, which leads some individuals to be detached from traditional groups or alienated from the norms and institutions of society. They become isolated from conventional social structures. In Kornhauser’s formulation, democratic societies are managed by elites that are relatively open to non-elites. At the same time, those who are in marginal positions in society are available for mass movement recruitment because they lack attachments to other groups. Participation in social movements provides a

way for such isolated individuals to experience social connection and purpose. Dislocated, movement adherents become “true believers” (Hoffer 2002[1951]) in the cause that provides them with meaning. Isolation is overcome by participation and identification with the movement’s goals.

To a large degree, classical theories of social movements reflected the dominant structural-functional paradigm of the time. Relatively little empirical investigation was undertaken to test theories of social movement. LeBon, for instance, relied largely on historical accounts to develop his theories. Strain theory fails to account for why particular strains create social movements, while others do not. Finally, mass society theories failed the empirical test. As we will see below, isolates do not join movements.

The failure of classical theory to adequately account for social movements, led to the development of new theory. I will now turn to the theorizing that represents the new theoretical consensus.

Theorizing on Social Movements After the Mid-20th Century

The rise of the American Civil Rights movement in the 1950’s followed by a series of social movements catalyzed social scientists to reconceptualize the genesis and dynamics of social movements. Studies of the civil rights movement in particular highlighted the importance of organization and resources to develop and maintain a social movement. Drawing on conflict theories, social movements were seen less as aberrations than as rational approaches to achieve social goals. In addition, empirical investigations revealed that social movements were based in institutional structures and movement participants were recruited not from isolated individuals but those in dense networks.

Over the last four decades, three dominant perspectives have supplanted the classical theories to explain social movements in the United States. Political opportunity, resource mobilization, and framing perspectives have blended to create a complex account explaining the emergence and trajectory of social movements. In general, these three approaches can be thought of as representing differing scales of study. Political opportunity theories highlight the social and political context out of which social movements emerge and which predict the chances of success. Resource mobilization theories shift attention to the importance of social movement organizations (SMOs) highlighting their ability to provide focus and direction to movements. Finally, framing theories emerged as a major social movement paradigm complementing the first two by highlighting the way movements create a sense of coordinated action and articulate their grievances (Snow et al. 1986; Benford and Snow 2000).

In the following sections, I summarize key elements of the Political Opportunity and Resource mobilization perspectives of social movements. I then go into greater depth on framing theory as it is the principal theoretical lens I will use in this study.

Political Opportunity Perspective

Like classical theorists, the point of departure for opportunity theorists is the world outside a social protest movement. The opportunity perspective builds on the fundamental observation that social movements exist within particular social, economic and political contexts, which provide both opportunities and constraints to mobilization. Political Opportunity theory argues that this context, particularly the nature of the state viewed broadly, establishes conditions (opportunities and constraints) that explain the likelihood of the emergence and shape of particular movements, and also influences the chance for their successfully achieving movement goals. This context is the “opportunity structure” for the movement.

The idea of political opportunity structure, builds on Merton's (1938) concept of the opportunity structure. For Merton, if either the socially approved goals or the means to goals are "blocked," individuals and groups will seek alternative ways to achieve them. Using the concept of opportunity structure he developed a theory of deviance that explains the differential trajectory of individuals within the social structure. More recently, the concept of political opportunity structure has been developed more systematically to analyze how contending groups seek to press forward their demands for changing the social structure and/or reward distribution (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

Most theorists operating within this tradition trace the origins of the political opportunity approach to Eisenger's analysis of 1960's urban protests (1973). Eisenger tried to identify structural variables that differentiated those U.S. cities that experienced serious urban riots and those that did not. He conceptualized the political opportunity structure largely in terms of open or closed governmental structures. In his analysis, cities with relatively open political structures tended to have fewer riots in comparison with those with relatively closed structures. In the former case, dissenters were brought into the existing institutional structures, while in the latter they were shut out. In the latter case, this "blocked opportunity" increased the likelihood of social movement protest. The risks of protest made sense, as they appeared to be a reasonable approach that was both necessary and effective in securing the changes needed.

Drawing on Merton and Eisenger, political opportunity theorists have sought to conceptualize a "structure of political opportunities," to explain the emergence, or the lack of, social movements in particular situations. Tarrow conceptualizes this political opportunity structure as the "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the

political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure." (Tarrow 1994:76).

At its heart, political opportunity explanations seek to contextualize social movements within a network of opportunities and constraints. Having established this context, the challenge is to identify the key dimensions of the political or social milieu that enhance or inhibit the emergence, trajectory and success of social movements. Empirical and theoretical studies of social movement context have attempted to identify the key factors. Beyond Eisenger's focus on the openness of the political structure, Tarrow identifies five dimensions of political opportunity (1994:77-80: 1) access, 2) shifting alignments, 2) divided elites, 4) influential allies, 5) repression and facilitation (Tarrow 1994:85).

Within the opportunity tradition, there are two major strands of political theorizing. The major difference in the two lies in differing conceptualization of the opportunity structure. Tilly and others working in his tradition tend to narrow their conceptualization of political opportunity to elements of the formal political structure. For Tilly, social movements are a form of "contentious politics" that engages in struggles with the state for changes in the political reward system, so the opportunity structure for such conflicts more narrowly hones in on the structure of the polity.

In contrast, MacAdam views the opportunity structure much more broadly. The state is not the only dimension of the context, for McAdam, "*any* event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations or assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities" (1982:41). His work (McAdam 1982) work on the civil rights movement is the exemplar of the application of the political opportunity model to a particular social movement, and he includes the collapse of the South's cotton

economy, the migration of blacks to the North, their shift to the Democratic Party, and the nation's post-WW II emergence as a world power and involvement in the cold war all as part of the political opportunity structure that facilitated the civil rights movement and its successes.

The Political Opportunity perspective provides a rich set of dimensions by which social movement theorists can understand the context of opportunities and constraints in which movements emerge. In terms of the ongoing debate over agency and structure, the political opportunity tradition places greater emphasis on structural conditions. Political opportunity theory accounts for the environment, but doesn't provide an account of the process by which social movements actually organize and press their claims. While clearly structure matters, Political Opportunity theory does not explain how or why movements actually develop.

Resource Mobilization Perspective

The political opportunity perspective elucidates structural and contextual factors that influence the formation of social movements, explaining which environments are likely to foster or inhibit the development of social movements. Resource mobilization perspective shifts the question to explaining how social movements emerge and mobilize. In the mobilization account, rather than structure dominating their explanations, agency comes to the forefront.

Resource mobilization emerged as a response to classical theorizing. Classical theory posited that grievances arising from structural strains were "necessary if not sufficient," to explain the emergence of social movements. In testing this empirically, McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) argued there was little support for this analysis. In fact, they argued, there is little relationship between objective or subjective deprivation and the emergence of social movements. They begin with a basic observation that potential grievances are ubiquitous in social formations; modern society is rife with potential grievances, few of which become social movements. The

question becomes what is it about particular grievances that mobilize individuals and groups into social movements?

To answer this question, mobilization theorists challenge another of the tenets of classical theory - that social movements are composed of socially isolated individuals alienated from the larger society and networks. Drawing on a range of studies of actual movement experience, they found that rather than the social isolated, social movements are composed of groups and individuals who are well connected and organized. Social movements do not represent the action of disorganized anomic masses, but rather the rational action of groups organizationally able to defend and advance their interests (Oberschall 1973; Tilly et al. 1975).

In this view, it is organizations that provide the key vehicle for articulating and advancing claims. In contrast to the classical approach, there is no disjunction “between social movements and more conventional groups” rather there is a continuity (Goldberg 1991:7). Based on these insights, McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) postulated that movement activity crests and falls not with particular grievances but the availability of external resources necessary to support collective action. Indeed, grievances in the mobilization perspectives are taken as a given and “the definition of grievances will expand to meet the funds and support personnel available.” (McCarthy & Zald 1973:130).

While political opportunity examines the contexts of action, the resource mobilization approach concentrates on the mobilizing structures and assets that a movement brings to a social struggle. Social movements vary greatly in their ability to gather and mobilize resources to press their claims. Resources are viewed broadly; knowledge, money, volunteers, legitimacy, access to media, and so on, are all considered resources. Leaders and organizations are central actors for explaining social movements. Resource mobilization theory holds that in modern society

organizations are the most effective vehicle for obtaining and distributing resources are organizations, and therefore social movements will take the form of organizations. While many organizations are involved in modern social movements, mobilization theorists pay particular attention to the role of social movement organizations (SMO's). These SMO's may be pre-existing organizations aligned with the social movement goals, or may be new organizations created to further the explicit goals of the movement. In either case, an SMO is a formal organization that "identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or countermovement and attempts to implement those goals" (Zald & McCarthy 1977: 1218). No one social movement organization represents an entire movement, in fact competition and struggles among SMOs for legitimacy and resources are typical features of a social movement (Zald & McCarthy 1990).

Resource mobilization theory shifts the focus from political opportunities and constraints, to consider how outside resources are drawn to the movement. A key group for contemporary movements is conscience constituents. Conscience constituents are "individuals and groups who share the movement's goals and donate resources, but who do not stand to benefit directly from the movement's goal" (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1221). These conscience constituents provide a stream of resources to support the process of mobilization. This is particularly important when the groups are resource poor (Obserschall 1973:159). Conscience constituents, like social movement organizations, often work on behalf of the beneficiaries of the movement.

Leaders are the active agents of mobilization in this perspective. Leaders make active strategic and tactical choices that are implemented by SMOs, and their strategic choices shape the form and direction of the movement. Similarly, leaders and leadership networks serve as

“grievance entrepreneurs” or “issue entrepreneurs” that is, individuals and networks who are able to use organizational resources to mobilize around the issues that will be the target of change.

Mobilization scholars see the political structure not as a constraint but as variable. The political opportunity structure is dynamic and movement activity can change the ‘rules of the game.’ It is the ability of the movement to garner and deploy resources, more than the structure of political opportunity that predicts the ability of the movement to achieve its goals.

Furthermore, “activists can sometimes shape their own opportunities and mobilizing structures” (Goodwin & Jasper: 28). Variants of resource mobilization theory, such as the Political Process Model, focus explicitly on these “dynamics of the political opportunity structure” vis-à-vis movement mobilization (Rule and Tilly 1975; Tilly et al. 1975; Gamson 1975; McAdam 1983).

Empirical studies from the resource mobilization perspective show how social movements mobilize utilizing existing organizational support. Morris’s (1984) work on the black civil rights movement revealed the importance of the local black churches as mobilizing institutions in this struggle. Other scholars highlight the role resources play in a range of important movement dynamics, from organization formation and viability (Cress and Snow 1996; MacGammon 2001) to variation in protest activity across time and space (Cress and Snow, 1996; McLaughlin and Khawaja 2000). More recently studies have begun to examine the specific mechanisms through which SMOs acquire critical resources (Edwards and McCarthy 2004).

Resource mobilization and political opportunity theories largely focus on the institutional structure and political context of social movements. In these perspectives, the particular content of the movement, the ideas and beliefs, were taken as given, and received relatively little analysis. Mobilization was viewed as an organizational challenge. It was not until the mid-

1980s that analysts turned to meaning work – “the struggle over the production of mobilizing and counter mobilizing ideas and meanings” (Benford and Snow: 613).

Framing Theory and Social Movements

Political opportunity theory provides the context for movements, and resource mobilization theory describes the mechanisms, but neither explains the link between the individual and the movement; “frames” provide that link.

Collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic conditions or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements and urge others to act in concert to affect change (Benford and Snow 2000:615).

Frames are about the content of movements, the ideas around which movements are formed and which provide the map for collective action.

Drawing on James (1955) and Schutz (1991), Goffman (1997[1974]) proposed the use of “frame” to describe the structure of meaning that individuals use to make sense of the world, and he used the phrase “frame work” to describe the process by which individuals accept or adopt those structures of meaning. In his formulation, frame describes the structures by which individuals organize their experience of the world and determine what is meaningful. In Goffman’s words, a frame answers the question, “What is going on here and why?” (Goffman 1997[1974]:153). Goffman limits his discussion of frame to the subjective organization of experience. Goffman’s principle interest is in how individuals organize their experience. In his formulation, frames are essentially tacit and while he describes the selection process between alternate frames, he fails to provide an explanation for how frames might change. The internal process of framing for an individual is choice between sets of alternate frames from a limited menu.

What Goffman ignored is how new frames are created to organize experience (i.e. the role of agency in framing). If framing is only a result of socialization processes, “scripts,” and so on, it explicitly sets aside exploring the connection between framing processes and the larger social order. Goffman implicitly accepts framing as a relatively uncontested process in which the issue is how to choose among limited number of alternate scripts. In fact, framing, for Goffman, explains the processes by which a consensual, integrative social order is created. Frames are not conceptualized as a focus for conflict and power, nor is the process of transforming frames theorized.

Media study theorists were the first to mold Goffman’s frames to show how media shapes news stories (Gitlin 1977). This work portrayed how frames are created and adapted to describe new situations. Social movement theorists further adapted the concept of frame to analyze the meaning work social movements undertake. In this new formulation, frames link the “social psychological and structural/organizational factors” (Snow et al 1986: 464) accounting for participation in social movements. Framing explains how the networks of individuals coordinate their experience with each other, challenging or defending the status quo. In other words, “frames function to organize experience and guide action” (Snow et al 1986:464). Framing processes provide the link explaining the means by which social collectives are constituted as an oppositional body. Frames operate in a way that is both individual and collective “but is important in collective action only insofar as it is shared by enough individuals to channel their behavior in shared and patterned ways” (Johnson 2002:64).

Social movement frame work has two related but analytically distinct processes. First it is an ongoing active interpretative process that challenges (e.g., critiques, questions) the taken-for-granted reality (frames) supporting the status quo. For example, social movements are

engaged constantly in a process of crafting and maintaining a collective understanding of social phenomena that provides a vocabulary and interpretative map for understanding what is going on. Social movements are oriented towards a change goal, but this usually involves a “reality construction” process that is contested or in competition with other frames. Struggles occur within the movement to “align” frames of participants and potential participants so that collective action is possible. In the movement to end homelessness, the words depicting the visible poor – “bum, punks, drunks, winos” had to be challenged to mobilize the attention of conscience constituents. The negative, stigmatizing valence had to be transformed. The use of religious imagery, people dying on the streets, sympathetic stories of homeless veterans, statistics on homeless employment, all were mobilized to challenge the existing framing.

Second, at moments in time a particular frame serves as the active and dynamic product of social movements. Creating and promulgating a new alternative frame provides a different answer to the question “what is going on and why?” In the second sense, social movements promulgate new meanings by engaging in a range of meaning making activities (e.g., creating flyers, producing slogans, producing media, signs, conducting marches, articulating demands) to assert their claims. Rather than passively accepting frames that are the products of dominant social actors, social movement framing is the active process of constituting a collective understanding of a situation. Social movement actors construct and deploy framings that make their case.

Relatively little is known about the process by which frames are initially constructed (Benford 1997). It is understood that frames are constructed from the building blocks available from the cultural toolkit of symbols and histories (Swidler 1986). Using this raw material of culture, social movements link their interpretations to the common language, often extending or

interpreting cultural ideals. For example, the civil rights movement used the religious language and symbols often used to maintain the status quo as the basis to challenge established oppressive conditions. If the cultural milieu provides the building blocks for movement construction, social movement framing activity is also constrained by the cultural vocabulary. The success of a particular frame is its ability to build credibility and attract support. This in turn is closely tied to the degree to which it “resonates” with publics (Snow and Benford 1988).

Social movements can be thought of as creating a language of contention. Recipients of social movement activities decode this language. The framing efforts of social movements may be constrained by other activities in the particular setting. Earlier social movements may create a vocabulary of meaning and action that transfers onto later movements and prior movements’ frames may influence the acceptable framing of successor movements. In the recent past, the frames and repertoires of the civil rights movement continue to shape subsequent movements. Indeed, some analysts argue that early movements are largely responsible for the creation of a “master frame” which defines and confines successor movements. Subsequent movements’ initiatives may be strengthened by connecting to these framings as well as constrained by them (Snow and Benford 1992). While predecessor movements may establish the framing vocabulary, they also provide a vocabulary used by opponents to dismiss movement activities. Direct action movements during the latter part of the 20th century had to respond to efforts to dismiss their activism as the “passé” activism of “old hippies”(Tucker 1990).

Scholars exploring social movement framing have identified a plethora of “frames,” but framing is not the exclusive province of social movements. An extensive literature on framing indicates that mass media and religious institutions, along with political parties and economic elites actively engage in framing (Benford and Snow 2000; Lakoff 2002; Tannen 1993).

Framing is a constant process engaged in by groups and individuals seeking control, and framing efforts of social movements leads to “the struggle over the production and mobilizing and countermobilizing of ideas and meanings” (Benford and Snow 2000:613). Framing and counterframing contests provide mechanisms to analyze the dynamics between social movements and other social actors. If frame construction is the process of reality maintenance and reality construction, then various elites – political, religious, media – and movement organizations all have a strong interest in promoting their frames. Public discourse is affected by framing processes and social movement actors, business groups, political figures, and media outlets are in a continual process of promoting competing social realities.

Critics of the framing perspective argue that it adds little that is new and merely repackages the older concept of ideology. Ideology, they contend, provides a set of ideas that explains events and establishes an interpretative field, but, more importantly, explicitly describes the power arrangements. On the other hand, in their view, frames and framing are relatively neutral concepts, in a political sense, undercutting the core of social movements.

Proponents of the framing perspective argue that frame and ideology are both useful but distinct concepts. Ideology refers to a

fairly pervasive and integrated set of beliefs and values that have considerable staying power. In contrast, collective action frames function as innovative amplifications and extensions of, or antidotes to, existing ideologies or components of them. Accordingly, ideology functions as both a constraint and resource in relation to framing processes and collective action frames. (Benford and Snow 2000: 613)

Frames are, therefore, somewhat situation specific, providing interpretations that lead to mobilization. Ideology provides a context in which frames are created and disseminated but, “unlike formal ideologies collective action frames share the emergent qualities of the social movement organizations that create them” (Mueller 1992:14).

Three components of collective action frame. Frames are important in the analysis of social movements because they explain the processes of mobilization and coordination of action. But what makes for an effective frame for collective action? According to Gamson (1992), a collective action frame must combine three principal or essential components: 1) a sense of injustice, 2) agency and 3) identity to effectively mobilize action.

The injustice component “refers to the moral indignation” (Gamson 1977: 7) aspect of political consciousness. This is the passion of social movements. Social movement collective action frames inspiring mobilization require something more than an intellectual understanding of social problems, they require a sense of urgency. Such frames are “laden with emotion.” For Gamson, it is the sense of injustice that activates the movement for “injustice focuses on the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul” (Gamson 1992b:32). The sense of injustice requires awareness that there are human actors who bear responsibility for the conditions that lead to suffering.

Moral outrage by itself is insufficient to ignite and propel action – anger can just lead to depression or self-destruction. Gamson argues that a collective action frame must also contain an agency component that leads to the “consciousness that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through collective action”(Gamson 1992: 7). This sense of personal and collective efficacy combines with the sense of injustice to heighten the personal sense of responsibility and capacity to address troubling conditions. Finally, Gamson argues that social movements frames must provide a sense of collective identity, a sense of we-ness. The insiders and sympathizers with the movement create a network of individuals and groups who have, or perceive themselves as having, common “interests and values” (Gamson 1992: 7).

Among movement scholars, there is debate on the degree that social movements are by their nature adversarial, or engaged in conflict, to use Diani's term. As we have seen, this derives in part from the definition of social movements. The sense of we-ness required for a social movement to constitute itself may imply a "they" who do not. Similarly, a sense of injustice is most often visible through agents of injustice who become targets of movement activity. However it is not logically required that a troubling condition necessarily requires an adversary. Nonetheless, Gamson argues, lacking a clear adversary, movements will lose their focus for action, the motivational power of a sense of conflict, provides the impetus for action.

The three framing tasks. Snow and Benford provide the most detailed and methodologically useful model for understanding and analyzing frames in social movements (Snow and Benford 1988). They argue framing does more than create a general mindset, as Gamson (1992) suggests, or elicit emotively powerful models as Lakoff (1996) describes. Frames provide an interpretive set of ideas or propositions that mobilize for action. The effectiveness of movements and the internal coherence of movements trace back to the ability to create and sustain this frame. There are three components or dimensions to a collective action frame: providing participants in movements with the identification and analysis of the problem (Diagnostic Frame), a program of action (Prognostic Frame), and a reason for action (Motivational Frame).

Social movements must answer three core framing questions in order to create a coherent and energizing reason for mobilization. First, movements must identify the problem and who (or what) is responsible for it. This is diagnostic framing. Second, the movement must describe what is to be done about the identified problem making clear how it responds to the critique

developed. Finally, movements must provide a reason for participants to get involved. I will now look at each of these framing tasks.

Diagnostic framing provides a description and analysis of a problematic condition. The core of the diagnostic frame is identification of the problem, but perhaps more importantly, identification of the cause of the condition (i.e., who or what is to blame). This attribution of causality or blame provides a rationale for change as well as a target for change efforts. Social movements have a range of possible frames to define the problem, and within broad issue areas, social movements often engage in internal struggles to define the problem as well as with external opponents. For any identified condition, there are a range of possible diagnostic framings and possible targets for attribution. For example, among movements addressing alcoholism, there are networks that define it as a lifetime disease (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous) and others that frame it as a social learning problem (e.g. responsible drinking), while others as moral condition (e.g., the Prohibition Movement). These movements struggle against competing definitions of the situation.

Having identified the problem and who is responsible, the second framing task is prognostic – what is to be done? This prognostic framing identifies the course of action required to resolve the problem or condition. While diagnostic framing identifies the target or goal of action, prognostic framing identifies the strategy and tactics and targets by which the change may be accomplished. Again using the alcohol example, Alcoholics Anonymous focuses on the process of admitting to the disease and attending AA meetings, while the Prohibition Movement sought to make alcohol sales illegal.

The third framing task – motivational framing – answers the question – “why should I get involved?” Returning to Gamson, motivational framing combines the sense of agency with the

emotional salience of the issue. Motivational framing provides “the ‘heat’ that distinguishes social movements” from other institutions or ideas (Taylor 1995:227). While diagnostic and prognostic framing provide the analysis and direction, it is motivational framing that inspires the translation of ideas into action and stimulates and sustains participation in the movement.

Together a movement’s answers to these three questions provide its collective action frame. The effectiveness of these answers is measured in the degree of resonance the answers have in the lived reality of movement adherents and other publics.

By using Snow and Benford’s framing model, it is possible to analyze the meaning production work of social movements, such as the statements of movement leaders. Ascertaining how the movements articulate their claims provides a method by which to trace how social movement collective action frames change over time.

The Salience of Frames. Snow and Benford identify three critical factors affecting the salience of framing to potential movement participants – centrality, experiential commensurability and narrative fidelity (cultural resonance) (Snow and Benford. 1988). Centrality has to do with the hierarchical importance of the values or ideas evoked by the movement frames. The more *salient* the values evoked by the frame are to the target’s identity, the more likely the framing will motivate mobilization.

Experiential commensurability (Snow and Benford 1988) or, alternately, empirical credibility of framing refers to the resonance of the frame to the “lives and experiences” of the movement targets.¹ In order for frames to be accepted and internalized by individuals there must be congruence between the frame and the real world events *as experienced by the target*. Of

¹ Somewhat confusingly, Gamson & Mondigliani (1989) refer to this as narrative fidelity.

course, this is not an objective criterion, but rather the world of experience. A frame is “credible” to the degree that it reflects subjective experiences of movement participants.

Finally, narrative fidelity or “cultural resonance” refers to how well the frame fits with the “stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one’s cultural heritage” (Snow & Benford 1988: 210). For instance, in the civil rights movement, Biblical narratives of freedom were drawn upon in the speeches and imagery to motivate and inspire movement activists, the media and conscience constituents.

Frame Alignment Processes. So far, framing has been presented as a scheme of interpretation and/or a product of social movement organization leaders. The importance of framing however lies with the successful “linkage or conjunction” between adherents (or potential adherents) frames with those of the social movement. This linkage has two important implications. First, successful framing connects new supporters and their resources to the movement and second facilitates the coordination of social action. This conjunction of framing that explains how movement participants, whether individual or organizational, come to collectively coordinate their actions in a coherent form.

So, how is this linkage secured? Social movements frame within a social and cultural context and frames are never built out of nothing, but are created through existing cultural codes and models. Social movement frames, to be meaningful, must be connected to other frames in the social environment. The question now becomes how frames of the social movement and frames of constituents become linked. Snow and Benford utilize a visual metaphor – the frames must be aligned. Frame alignment is a process by which “interests, values and beliefs” of individuals (potential constituents, participants) are brought into congruence with the “activities and goals” of Social Movement Organizations. Four key frame alignment processes have been

identified: 1) frame amplification; 2) frame bridging; 3) frame extension; and 4) frame transformation (Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986).

Frame amplification is the most basic of the processes. Amplification is the process of “highlighting some issues, events or beliefs as being more salient than others.” (Benford & Snow 2000: 623). This process “clarifies and invigorates” the interpretation of “particular issue, problem or set of events” as the focus for meaningful action (Snow et al 1986:469).

Amplification builds upon existing beliefs and values to highlight the salience of the frame to movement adherents. The use of slogans and cultural symbols are important element in amplifying the movement’s message and linking with constituents. In the farm worker movements, the use of cultural narratives linked Mexican cultural narratives to labor mobilization. . Movements may use public events and other mobilizing tactics to re-energize the frame for the publics in a way to highlight the continued salience of the frame.

Frame bridging is the process of linking frames to others that have ideological similarity, but have not previously been linked. Bridging is the process of connecting movements to people who already share similar interests and concerns to those of the movement. Bridging is particularly useful in linking previously disconnected movement networks to one another. For example, in 1960’s era mobilization, the civil rights and anti-war movements were “ideologically congruent, but structurally unconnected frames” (Snow et al 1986:467). Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Beyond Vietnam” address at Riverside Church in which he linked civil rights, poverty and the anti-war movement was an example of frame bridging (King 2001[1967]). The goal of this bridge was to link the two movements to increase their potential for mobilization. Similarly, the efforts to link the feminist and ecological movement and civil rights and ecological movements (environmental racism) are also examples of frame bridging.

Frame extension is the process of expanding a frame or modifying a frame to add new issues, not previously viewed as relevant to the frame. Frame extension is similar to frame bridging but, in this case, the SMO expands its frame (e.g., program) to include issues important to potential movement constituents. During the 1980's, predominantly white peace organizations included anti-racism to their analysis and programs in an effort to increase participation of racial and ethnic minorities. Frame extension is also used in religious conversion or recruitment practices. In this case, activists seek to discover potential adherents interests and then make connections (expand the frame) between their religious ideology and the recruit's interests.

As a practical matter, frame extension is a way to redefine the frame for purposes of broadening the appeal of the collective action frame. There are risks and benefits to a strategy of frame extension. The benefit lies in the potential to attract new constituencies to the movement, the risk lies in weakening the appeal of the frame by diffusing the core concern – “trying to be all things to all people.”

The final alignment process, frame transformation, is the most challenging, and most far-reaching of the framing processes. Frame transformation, refers to “changing old understandings and meanings and/or generating new ones” (Benford and Snow 2000: 625). Frame transformation must be utilized when the movement's frames “may not resonate with ...or even appear antithetical to conventional lifestyles or rituals and extant interpretive frames” (Snow et al 1986: 474). While the previous alignment processes build upon pre-existing cultural frames, frame transformation entails the adoption of new values and meanings. This involves the re-interpretation of activities and events that were previously meaningful in one framework “in terms of another framework” (Snow et al 1986: 474). Important events and actions previously

interpreted through one schema are now interpreted through another. Religious conversion is the most obvious example of such radical reframing of experience. Frame transformation is particularly required when changes in attributional framing are needed to initiate mobilization. A shift from victim blaming, or self-blame, to system blaming is a necessary step for the constitution of many social movements seeking changes in the sociopolitical structure

The processes of frame alignment is “not always easy, clear, or uncontested.”

Movements, or more narrowly, movement leaders, face competition from other actors in society – other movements, the media, and the state for both public attention and the framing of the movement’s issues. Movements who align their frames too closely to the dominant cultural interpretations lose their militancy and urgency, the emotive driving force for change. Finally, movement leaders must contend with the interpretations of events by the potential constituents of the movement. Both potential movement participants, as individuals and organizations, may interpret the situation very differently from the nascent movement’s leaders. The framing challenge facing social movements is the construction of frames that provide the new interpretive language serving to mobilize. McAdam (1982) identifies the need for “cognitive liberation” as an essential component of a movement’s reframing of the situation.

The Material Consequences of Framing. The outcomes of framing contests have material consequences for social movements and other interested actors. The alternative framing of social problems lead to different policy initiatives and consequences. Particular framings have a paradigmatic quality; that is, different framing results in making meaningful different types of questions in turn, leading to qualitatively different solutions to perceived “problems.” The way a problem is framed, and particularly the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational elements of the frame, leads to different forms of action. In the case of homelessness, homelessness framed as a

social control problem may lead to the criminalization of homelessness. Alternately, framing homelessness as a housing problem lends credence to initiatives leading to the development of affordable housing. The prognostic framing of homeless persons as drug addicts or criminals, who are reaping the fruits of willful choices, leads to fear, exclusion and criminalization. Framing homeless persons as people like ourselves who have fallen victim to structural displacement or bad luck generates sympathy.

Such framings in turn have material consequences for the social movement organizations promoting them. Successful framings, framings that “resonate” with publics, lead to heightened engagement and resources for the movement (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). In turn, increased resources increase the likelihood of the movement achieving its objectives (Gamson and Meyer 1996).

While the process of framing is a collective process within the social movement network, deploying and disseminating frames is typically the province of social movement organizations (SMO's). Here framing theory returns to the insights of resource mobilization theory. SMOs have the organizational identity, financial and human resources to disseminate the movement's interpretation of events. Concretely, through flyers, news releases, or websites, SMOs articulate the frame. As such, organizations are important, though not exclusive, sites for supporting and promoting these emergent understandings (Morris 1984).

Gaps in Framing Theory Research. Despite the explanatory appeal of framing analysis, empirical studies to date have tended to explore specific time limited framing contests (Benford 1997). Consequently, several dimensions of framing have been relatively unexplored. First, little is known about how frames are constructed in the early phase of social movements (Snow and Benford 2000). Second, research has largely neglected internal framing contests, that is,

struggles within the movement over differing definitions of the situation (Benford 1997). Third, few studies have explored the way social movements adapt and extend their frames over time in response to changing opportunities. Fourth, related to this, studies have rarely explained the success or failure of framing efforts over time. Studies of the framing failures of movements have been particularly neglected. Finally while framing literature acknowledges framing contests (counterframings) with adversaries, little empirical research has explored the ways that social movement framings compete with and challenge other elite framings. It is to these gaps that I hope this case study will provide some deeper understanding.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have constructed a definition of social movement which embraces the diversity of the diffuse and, at times, contested groups, networks and individuals who participate in social movement activity at the local level. I have reviewed the three dominant perspectives on social movements within which I hope to situate the case study that follows. More attention was given to the framing perspective than the others because it is the most relevant for the research questions I pursue in this study. Finally, I have identified the gaps in framing theory that I hope to address in part.

In the chapter that follows, I turn to the origins of the homeless movement in Atlanta.

CHAPTER 3: ATLANTA'S RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS 1880-1975

Homelessness has been an enduring fact of American life (Kusmer 2002; DePostino 2003). In periods like the Great Depression, homelessness expanded rapidly appearing ubiquitous becoming a vivid and salient presence in American life. In other periods, homelessness moved to the margins of public awareness and concern. The shifting tides of public concern over homelessness have generated the development of a variety of social movements.

These movements responded to homelessness, or more specifically, persons identified as homeless, in a variety of ways. At times, social control approaches dominated, with the homeless perceived as either dangerous threats to social order or persons needing transformation. In other times, the homeless were viewed as victims of circumstance and deserving of immediate relief. Regardless of the framing, the visible poor have served as powerful foils for the actors framing their condition and offering solutions.

This study examines the response to homelessness in the City of Atlanta. When I first began this study, I thought the story of homeless in Atlanta was a simple narrative describing the emergence of a social problem in the late 20th century. As I have dug out the roots of the movement that emerged in the late 1970's, it is clear that homelessness has been an enduring feature of life in the City of Atlanta. Even as a new movement emerged in Atlanta, there were established institutions and practices representing survivals from earlier waves of mobilization. In this chapter, I examine these earlier periods of mobilization, focusing particularly on how emergent leaders and organizations viewed the causes of homelessness (diagnostic framing), proposed appropriate solutions (prognostic framing) and provided the reasons for action. In the next chapter I will look at the emergence of the modern movement.

In exploring this early movement, I divide my consideration into three historical periods. First, I will describe the responses to homelessness during the period from the late 1800's to the beginning of the great depression. As I will show, this was a period of tremendous social reform. The broad progressive movement led efforts to end corruption, cleanup and improve the efficiency of the city by reforming government and fostering organizations to solve social problems. In the South, these reforms had a strongly religious flavor parallel to, and merging with, activist Christians that sought to address the social problems of the day through a range of initiatives. The combination of these two movements created the nascent social service system and early initiatives of social control. The second period is the great depression, roughly from 1929 to 1939. This period of massive economic displacement, and the sheer size of the problem, transformed the social service system. Finally, I will look at how homelessness as a matter of public concern submerged into the great prosperity and period of economic growth from the Second World War until the mid-1970. This will set the stage for looking at Atlanta in the last quarter of the 20th century.

ATLANTA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Atlanta, Georgia lies in the Piedmont section of the State of Georgia in the Southeast United States. There is little in the physical geography to explain Atlanta's location, no harbors or navigable rivers. Instead, Atlanta owes its existence to the vagaries of a railroad surveyor. Atlanta was founded on transportation links and became a critical node of the transportation infrastructure of the Southeast United States. Beginning with its establishment as the end of a railroad line (Atlanta's first name was Terminus), Atlanta had developed as an important railroad junction for the shipment of agricultural commodities and manufactured goods across the Southeast. Train lines also facilitated a central event in Atlanta's narrative. It was by following

the train lines south from Chattanooga that General Sherman entered the city during the American Civil War and burned the rail and warehouse system that supplied the Confederacy. The small, wrecked city that emerged from the Civil War was creatively re-imagined as a phoenix rising from the ashes. The energetic, entrepreneurial Atlantans rebuilt the city quickly after the war and, within two decades, were seeking to position the city again as a key node in the commercial system. Henry Grady, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution* was one of the principle purveyors of this new dream. Through his writing and speaking tours in the North he sought to sell the South and the city. In 1886 he delivered his “New South” speech claiming: “There is a New South, not through protest against the Old, but because of new conditions, new adjustments and, if you please, new ideas and aspirations.” And the centerpiece of this New South was the progressive City of Atlanta, Grady claimed: “we have raised a brave and beautiful city; that somehow or other we have caught the sunshine in the bricks and mortar of our homes, and have builded therein not one ignoble prejudice or memory” (Grady 1971[1886]). Grady’s mission was simple – first, to encourage and solicit northern industrial investment in the South; and second, to raise the status of the City of Atlanta as the central place in that New South.

By 1890, eleven rail lines ran through Atlanta, bringing people and material. Supporting the rail system constituted Atlanta’s primary industry (Ambrose 2003). The connection to this mode of transportation continued to grow and, ten years later, fifteen rail lines reached the city, connecting it with the burgeoning development to the South as well as the industrial developments to the North. Over 150 trains arrived daily from all directions. Railroad transportation was central to Atlanta’s economic success. Railroad lines cut through the heart of the city and provided justification for the claims of Atlanta’s fervent boosters that the city was the “Gate City” and the “Chicago of the South” (Ambrose 2003).

Atlanta's reliance on rail transportation and as a trans-shipment point had a number of implications for the local economy. The dependence on commerce rather than on manufacturing served to heighten Atlanta's concern about image. To attract investment in the South required a positive image. This was Grady's passion, and in this, he reflected the concerns of Atlanta's political and economic elites. Using the bully pulpit of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Grady and his successors pushed the importance of creating and promoting an image of Atlanta as a progressive, modern city. In Grady's view, selling this progressive modern image to northern elites was the key to investment and the city's commercial vitality. Grady and other Atlanta boosters emphasized the city's central location on the railroad transportation grid as a key to the city's economic future. But they perceived that central location was not sufficient to distinguish the city from other competitor's. Grady and his followers emphasized the progressive political and economic leadership of the city. Establishing Atlanta as the "capital of the New South" required cultivating a good business climate. Grady and his followers sought to remake the city into a gleaming, progressive place, using the modern methods to address its social concerns. Central to this campaign was positioning Atlanta as a progressive city that had addressed social problems energetically.

The same railroad lines that brought new ideas and commerce to the city also brought people seeking a new opportunity. Following the abolition of slavery, Atlanta's black population increased throughout the late 19th century, with freed blacks seeking escape from the South's agricultural economy. The bulk of this new population was poor working menial contingent employment, but a black commercial and intellectual elite quietly developed in a parallel society (Hunter 1997).

The unregulated capitalism of the late 19th and early 20th century resulted in a series of boom and bust cycles that led to regular interruptions in stable employment. Lacking a social safety net, workers were moving regularly in search of employment. In times of expanding employment, workers were drawn to urban centers to provide work and were relatively stable. During economic recessions, a huge body of itinerant labor took to the roads and rails to find employment. While this was a heterogeneous group, for the most part they were young males. These marginal men and (many fewer) women were an essential but always threatening component to the social order. While the availability of their labor was essential to maintaining low labor costs, their presence in times of slack labor potentially threatened stability. As we will see, city leaders utilized a variety of practices to control this population. In turn, the homeless and poor engaged in a range of strategies to survive and resist the pressures. It was a dilemma. On the one hand a pool of surplus labor was needed to meet employers' desire for a low wage flexible labor force; on the other hand, vagrant or idle laborers tarnished the city's image.

Vagrancy statutes were one of the mechanisms used to insure a labor force and to control idle labor; and Georgia, like most of the rest of the former Confederacy, used vagrancy statutes as a means to control labor. State legislators gave local authorities broad powers to arrest any poor person lacking a labor contract. While the chief victims of these laws were black men, the laws were used more generally to control the poor population. The Georgia law was particularly sweeping in its scope. Passed in 1866, the statute defined vagrancy as: "any person wandering or strolling about in idleness, who is able to work, and has no property to support him; or any person leading an idle, immoral, profligate life, having no property to support him" (Cohen 1976:48).

Along with the sweeping scope of the vagrancy law, the penalties for a vagrancy conviction were severe, even as compared to other Southern states. The maximum penalty for vagrancy was one year of incarceration, with judges given the discretion to impose “a \$1,000 fine, six months on the state chain gang, or 12 months on the county chain gang” (Cohen 1976:48).

Georgia was not alone in establishing crimes to control the mobile work population. In 1904, drunkenness was the most common reason for incarceration in penal institutions in the United States; vagrancy was second. Combined, drunkenness and vagrancy accounted for 43 percent of the incarcerations in 1904 (Lewis 1912). Some southern states considered establishing dedicated labor farms to require labor from hoboes and tramps convicted of vagrancy. Georgia’s use of the chain gang at both the county and state levels was one of the more aggressive ways to use surplus labor to build the state’s revenues. Georgia also allowed for those convicted to be rented out to private enterprises (Blackmon 2008).²

Atlanta’s media outlets provided regular cautionary tales warning the public about the dangers posed by the homeless poor. A standard variant of this narrative was the professional beggar seeking to play on the charitable impulses of generous public. Many newspaper stories appear about beggars and the threat of idle persons on the street. Social control measures were presented as the progressive solution. The *Atlanta Constitution* served as the visible and vocal advocate of social control. For example, in 1903, the headline “Vagrancy laws helping the south” (Vagrancy 1903:3) supported social control measures; while in 1910 Atlantans were warned: “Sow wind of neglect and reap whirlwind of crime” (Penn 1910: C3). Reviewing news reports and editorials, what is presented is a stark image of the city without a social welfare

² Blackmon (2008) provides an overview of the system of convict labor contracting that remained an important component of the Southern economic structure and institutionalized racism from the end of Reconstruction until the Second World War.

safety net. Lacking organized charity, the destitute relied on a variety of means to seek relief. Begging was one of these means.

Atlanta engaged in periodic campaigns against beggars and vagrants during the late 1800's and early 1900's. The 20th century opened with a police crusade on idlers and vagrants. Vagrancy was defined less as visible presence on the streets or lack of housing, and more as lack of regular employment. At the center of this concern was the portrayal of persons who were unwilling to work. "While the actual number of people who do absolutely no work is comparatively small, there are hundreds and perhaps thousands who work just barely enough to keep from starving" ("Facts" 1903:3). It is the failure to engage in full-time work that attracts attention and public sanction.

RESCUE THE PERISHING:1880-1929

Atlanta's public provision for the indigent poor was extremely limited. Fulton County had established a poorhouse in the mid-19th century, but served very few. On the one hand, the existence of the poor house proved the city was generous and charitable to the deserving poor, but seeking admission was to invite suspicion and skepticism. Newspaper accounts reveled in revealing the efforts of the able-bodied or person with means seeking to avail themselves of the charity of Atlantans.

The first charitable institutions to open in Atlanta that served the homeless were designed for white women and orphaned or abandoned children. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Women's Christian Association established a lodging called simply "the Home" on Peters Street. Its purpose was to provide emergency housing for abandoned and "fallen" women and their children. The latter had been displaced from employment due to anti-prostitution campaigns conducted by religious and civic leaders in the last years of the 19th

century and early 20th. The closure of the brothels and dance halls served to displace single women who had used them as sources of employment. In addition, the irregular employment of men in late 19th century Atlanta placed tremendous pressure on families. Lacking employment, men would take to the road, leaving families and children behind. In addition, large numbers of black and white women migrated to Atlanta. Atlanta, as a central transportation center, served to draw both transients and economic migrants seeking employment.

The WCTU's interest in establishing shelter for homeless women was an extension of their framing of the problem of drinking. "Women saw in temperance salvation from poverty, domestic violence and abandonment"(Murdock 1998:9). The white middle-class women who established The Home soon had a falling out over the rules and expectations that residents were expected to follow. The final break was precipitated by the summary expulsion of ten women from the Home based on the determination they had other family resources that could provide them lodging. Defenders of the move argued, "the Home is meant to be only a temporary home for the unfortunate inmates and not a poor house." The conflict over this action led to the establishment of a new organization, the "Home for the Friendless," which has continued to this day.³

The evangelical revival of the late 1800's combined with the progressive movement's orientation for increasing efficiency to social reform and good government (Young 2007). Throughout the late 1800's into the early 20th century, religious and police power was used in

³ The Home for the Friendless provided shelter for women and children. Initially it operated out of a 10 room house in downtown Atlanta. Demand outstripped the space and the Home was moved several times, first to Peters and Fair Street in 1889 and later to Highland and Randolph Street. During the early period, the Home worked with working class women to assist them in self-sufficiency. They also accepted sick women whose illness threatened the family with penury. In the 1920's, the Home made its final move to 690 Courtenay Drive in Northeast Atlanta and became a shelter for school-aged children. At this time it was renamed Hillside Cottages which it retains to the present (Hillside 2008).

Atlanta to undertake a series of campaigns to improve the city. Campaigns were undertaken to end prostitution, and close the saloons and the dance halls that had prospered on Decatur Street in downtown Atlanta. Police power was aggressively used to pressure these establishments to close or to relocate. The moral reform campaigns initially focused on closing these institutions, but gave little thought to how those displaced would be housed and maintained. Despite this oversight, the progressive religious forces were not interested in just the closure of these institutions, but in the redemption of those who, in their view, were the victims (i.e., patrons and employees).

The recognition of this oversight inspired the development of new religious missions in the vacated spaces. Central Presbyterian Church, founded in 1858, led the campaign to close the saloons and brothels. In the vacuum that followed, Central saw the opportunity to establish an outreach mission to the unchurched. The Young Men's Prayer Association of Central Presbyterian Church opened the first mission in downtown Atlanta on October 25, 1896 at 49 ½ Wall Street. The Central Union Mission,⁴ from its beginning, provided both spiritual and physical sustenance. "The mission will be kept open day and night and no one who is deserving the charity will be refused admittance" ("To help" 1896:22). The mission provided concrete services in addition to religious instruction. C.H. Burge reported the mission was open "when cases of need are attended to, old clothes distributed, etc." But there was suspicion about motives, and donors were assured that only the deserving poor received assistance: "Every case that comes before the mission is thoroughly investigated before giving help" (Burge 1896:4). The mission had a chance to broaden its outreach and visibility in its first winter. The winter of 1897 combined both bitter cold and an economic recession, increasing the suffering of the poor

⁴ The term union is frequently used in the mission movement, Union refers to the "joint action of several churches" (Bonner 2002)⁴

in the city. Central Union Mission volunteers solicited donations from downtown merchants.

Atlanta merchants rose to the occasion. According to *The Atlanta Constitution*:

The charitable association humanitarians are active today in relieving the poor and destitute.

This morning early the Central Union Mission secured a wagon and made a canvass among the merchants for provisions and food.

On each side of the wagon hangs a banner bearing the inscription "Help the Poor."

Every merchant responded liberally and all day long the wagon has hauled supplies to the mission rooms and at the hour of going to press the storeroom is stocked with provisions of every kind (Working 1897: 8).

Unlike the destitute poor who portrayed as a threat to public order, the activities of the mission volunteers represented the best of Atlanta. They served to "throw Atlanta's good people into a thoughtful state of mind and hearts have been touched because of the appeals of the poor and need" (Working 1897: 8).

Other institutions soon followed the Central Union Mission's lead. In 1900, a new institution simply known as the Rescue Mission opened. In a former saloon located at 3 Wall Street, in the "heart of the business district, Lawrence Turner set up his mission. "He announced last night it was his intention to give men a practical religion. He would have meetings every night, he said, and during the day conduct a free employment agency, endeavoring to secure work for those who needed it. He will have reading and writing tables at the mission." ("Rescue Mission" 1900:8). In 1905, yet another rescue mission, Central Rescue Mission, opened at 72 ½ North Broad Street ("Central Rescue" 1905: 6).

The rescue missions of this early period were the efforts of small inspired groups of men operating under the conviction they could change the lives of the men and women who were unchurched. They lacked organization, a stable source of funds and the institutional backing to establish them as enduring enterprises. The typical pattern was for the mission to open, exhaust

their funds and volunteer resources and close in a relatively short period. But as the city entered the second decade of the 20th century, new, more enduring forms of mission begin to develop.

In the spring of 1911 the Union Rescue Mission opened at 224 Marietta Street with the aim to reach “men who are ‘down and out.’” Upstairs were five rooms that were available to be used for lodging later on when finances are in place (“Union Rescue” 1911:3). This was also a successful program and by 1912 had started a weekly feeding program.

In 1907, the young men of Central Presbyterian Church, now renamed The Brotherhood, undertook an expanded mission effort.⁵ Leasing a building on Decatur Street they began offering shelter, food and bathing facilities, along with religious services, for the growing number of men in the downtown area. Demand was so great that they quickly outstripped the volunteer and material resources of the Central Brotherhood. The Brotherhood called a meeting at Central Presbyterian in downtown Atlanta of men from all the Presbyterian Churches in Atlanta and formed the Christian Helpers League. The expanded base of support brought by this new organization permitted the expansion of services and a more sustainable support (Smith 1979).

By 1913, a media report favorably described the Christian Helpers shelter in a former “tenderloin dance hall” at 106 ½ Decatur Street. The Helpers were one of the more successful of the mission efforts. Like other missions and the Salvation Army, the Christian Helpers mission provided cheap lodging and meals, housing was 15 cents a night and meals were 10 cents (Craig 1913:C1). But more than this, the Christian Helpers League represented an increased sophistication in the approach to responding to underserved groups. In addition to providing housing for the itinerant laborer, the “down and out,” the Christian Helpers established an

⁵ This paragraph follows the account in Smith, 1979, pp. 58-59.

arrangement with the court system to provide housing for probationers. Christian Helpers argued that by providing a supervised living environment, these inmates could be placed on probation thereby providing support for their dependents and reducing the costs of the city jail. This was so successful that the city's Adult Probation Officer Coogler held regular office hours at the Christian Helpers each evening. Probationers lived in the shelter and signed in nightly. This had the double advantage of providing a regular source of income to maintain the shelter and providing opportunities for probationers to secure employment.

For the Christian Helpers, the provision of meals, bathing facilities, and lodging was in the service of creating the opportunity for change. In a sermon delivered in September of 1913 to the gathered men of the shelter, Marion Jackson, a volunteer shelter leader, described their approach:

Men, I am glad to be with you, it fills me with pleasure to be among a group of men who have cast aside the rags of sin and donned the garments of nobler lives. It is enough to swell the soul of any man with pride.

You are to be commended – every one of you – and you will all be blessed. You are capable of redeeming yourselves, and you will. You have shown by your determination to live better that you have force of character and you have strength.

Most of you are whipping that most damnable of masters, drink, thank God, you are doing good jobs of it. It isn't too late. It's never too late. You can always find a helping hand. You can always be raised above the gutter's level. There are places for all of you in society.

You are building yourselves anew, and, by the help of God, you will be made entirely anew (Craig 1913:C1).

Jackson highlights the damage caused by sin and virtue of remaking lives by self-control.

Jackson also implicitly highlights what he views as the dominant cause of their condition – “drink.”

By 1916, the Christian Helpers facility had grown to include a larger dormitory, kitchen, restaurant and chapter house at 105 ½ Decatur Street. The Christian Helpers also developed other sources of revenue to support their mission. Like their contemporary the Salvation Army,

the Christian Helpers established a “junk warehouse” at 44 Courtland Street with an associated thrift store at 261 Edgewood Avenue (“Reclamation” 1916:B1). Two years later this strategy led to the establishment of new quarters for Christian Helpers’ League in an old Hotel at 17 ½ Fairlie Street (“Engineer-Preacher” 1918:5).

Every day men come to him to whom life has shown its darkest side, and in the new home on Fairlie Street they are lodged, warmed and taken care of until they are fit to go out and make a place for themselves in the world’s society. Then the league finds jobs for them, and a wrecked human vessel is once again patched up and made seaworthy. (“Engineer-Preacher” 1918:5.)

National revival movements inspired the emergence of the Rescue Missions in Atlanta in its various forms, but each mission was organized and coordinated locally. The Christian Helpers represented an innovation by bringing together the resources of one element of an entire denomination to bear on the problems of the “down and out.” The Salvationists, to whom I now turn, brought a unified national organizational structure to bear on the problem of the visible poor, an approach successfully combining local and national resources.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army began in England in 1865 as a rescue mission in the slums of London. By 1878, the movement had adopted its distinctive military government and undertaken the mission to fight sin and poverty. The movement quickly became international in scope with the first soldier arriving in New York City in 1879. In 1880 Commissioner George Scott Railton and seven women officers (“Hallelujah Lassies”) arrived in New York. Within three years, Salvationists were in 12 states (Taiz 2001).

On October 19, 1890, the Salvation Army held their first street meeting in Atlanta. The Salvation Army presence was militant and evangelical including street sermons, distributions of their newspaper, *The War Cry*, and marching bands. In Atlanta, as elsewhere, the Salvationists

were militant evangelists and regularly invaded saloons to convert the unchurched. In 1892, two Salvationist women engaged in a series of invasions into Atlanta saloons to sell the *War Cry* and sing hymns (“In a saloon” 1892). They purposefully created conflict and courted arrest for their evangelical mission. Their activities garnered press coverage and established their religious zeal.

In early January of 1899, the Salvation Army announced its intention to develop its first shelter in Atlanta. Adjutant Price of the Salvation Army was “detailed to come to Atlanta and raise money and put in operation a home in this city” (“Home” 1899:9). Price, and the Salvation Army built on Price’s earlier experience establishing a shelter in Nashville. Under his leadership, the Salvation Army proposed to establish a home for working men. “The object of the home is to provide poor men with shelter and food at a price within the means of the majority. Beds for the night will be furnished for a dime, Breakfast may be had for 5 cents; dinner for 10 cents and supper for 5 cents. Any man in absolute want will be given a chance to earn his bed and food” (“Home” 1899:9). For this purpose, the Salvation Army leased a building in January and on February 2nd; the Salvation Army opened its Workingman’s Home at 145 Marietta Street (“Salvation Army” 1899:10).

While the Salvation Army was similar to the other evangelical efforts to save the poor, it brought a depth of management experience and clear ideology to the project that distinguished it from the other efforts. “All who sleep or eat at the home will be allowed, even forced, to preserve their self-respect by paying for accommodation, either in money or in labor. ‘Which plan,’ says Adjutant Price, who is in charge, ‘also operates as to make the institution self-supporting, once it is fairly started’” (“Salvation Army” 1899:10). The Salvationists were concerned over the possible abuse of charity, a recurrent theme that was to recur later. The problem was how to provide assurances to donors that those seeking assistance were using the

assistance given for legitimate purposes. The solution developed by the Salvationists was similar to one that emerged again in the latter part of the 20th century.

A few days ago tickets which sell for 10 cents apiece were issued by the home. These tickets when dated by the party purchasing them, are good for either a meal or lodging. A person buying these tickets can give them to beggars if he chooses to, with the absolute knowledge that the money it has cost him will not find its way to a saloon. ("Home" 1899:9.)

This was an innovative strategy; the ten-cent tickets permitted the generous public to support the Salvation Army, building a donor base. It had the added benefit of providing to the skeptical public the means to insure their donations were used as they determined.

The Salvation Army had an advantage over other local efforts to address the religious and practical needs of establishing a shelter. Its labor costs were low, as Salvationists officers were full-time professionals living on subsistence and dedicating their lives to the army. Drawing on a reservoir of talent, the Army brought an experienced administrator and had a basic model of rules and regulations to establish a shelter. It brought a clear plan placing the shelter on a solid financial basis using local donations and residents' payments. While a favorable local press supported the Salvationists, it appears that the first effort was unsuccessful in securing the funds needed to underwrite the operations. Practical as always, the Army refused to go into debt and closed the home.

By the end of 1899, the Army had found another location, but applied a similar model for operation. "The Salvation Army opened a shelter for the poor at the corner of Decatur and Ivy⁶ streets last night. ...the place will be run by the Army as a cheap lodging house where poor worthy men can secure a clean bed, a bath, a locker...and laundry for their clothes for 10 cents a night" ("Salvation Army's Work" 1899:12). In addition to lodging and meals, the army planned

⁶ Ivy Street was named after Hardy Ivy, Atlanta's first white settler. The street was renamed Peachtree Center Avenue in the early 1980's.

to provide a labor referral service and assistance with legal services. The workingmen's home filled an important niche in the city - cheap housing to the working poor. By June of the following year (1900), over 3,082 nights of lodging had been provided (Bonnett 1900). The workingmen's home provided a "clean bed, coffee and bread before leaving in the morning at the nominal sum of 10 cents." By the Salvationists' account those coming to the home fell into three categories: those who paid cash, a small number sponsored by charities, and transients who comprised approximately ten percent of the total nights.

The Salvationist Staff Captain Bonnett portrayed the men using the workingmen's home in a sympathetic manner. They "stranded and submerged" will be rescued by the work. But Bonnett called on the community for assistance. "It will be easily understood to carry on a work like this cannot be done without considerable expenses and that the shelter is not self-supporting, although the strictest economy is practiced" (Bonnett 1900: 6). *The Atlanta Constitution* shared Bonnett's sympathy for the Salvationist's work. They editorialized the Salvation Army undertook work "in the city towards helping the unfortunate people who happen to be here" and "those who frequent the home are some deserving cases, such as men who are thrown out of work for a time through sickness, etc. and others who come in search of employment with very small means" (Bonnett 1900:6). Staff Captain Bonnett appealed to sympathetic Atlantans to donate towards the retirement of the debt of the home.

Apparently his appeals were successful and, by 1907, the workingmen's home had become self-sustaining ("Report" 1907). As funds were raised locally in Atlanta to underwrite the initial operation of the Home, Salvationist officers published a detailed report in *The Atlanta Constitution*. During the year 1907, 9,893 lodgers had paid cash, another 193 were "paid by

businessmen and association charity” and 963 were “charity cases, mostly transients.” For the year, the Salvation Army reported 11,059 lodgers (“Report” 1907:B4).

In addition to lodging, the Salvation Army quickly developed an array of auxiliary programs to both provide income and activity. In 1902 a Salvation Army salvage store was opened at 178 Decatur Street. “The goods are mended and cleaned and sold at very low prices to the poor...The work of cleaning and mending is given to men and women who are out of work and by this method a double purpose is served” (“Salvage” 1902:12).

The Lodger’s Strike

Little information has survived to give us the point of view of the lodgers or how they felt about the conditions under which they were living. Salvationists were great publicists and the press was generally sympathetic to their mission. An episode in 1901 provides a glimpse into the agency of the lodgers. The Salvationist insistence on the maintenance of self-respect by paying for lodging appears to have (reasonably) created expectations on the part of the lodgers for a minimum level of service. In the late summer of 1901 a group of lodgers complained about conditions at the Salvation Army lodge and withheld their ten-cent payments. The lodgers’ central complaint was the lack of “water, bread and towels” (“Ten cent” 1901:9). Following a scuffle and the police being called, the leader of the strike was arrested. The acting recorder fined the strike leader \$5.75 and sentenced him to two weeks on the city chain gang. The recorder⁷ noted: “Charity does not run a first-class hotel free for deadbeats and bums and does not intend to support whisky bloats and sots. The strike at the 10-cent lodging house is declared off” (“Ten cent” 1901:9).

⁷ The recorder is judicial official similar to a magistrate’s court, handling minor offences. The recorder acts as judge and jury.

While the shelter was framed as a hotel and its lodgers were required to pay for their lodging, neither the city official nor the *Constitution* reporter appear to consider whether or not the demands of the residents were justified. The attitude expected of lodgers was one of gratitude.

Salvationists were not, however, universally admired for their facilities and services. The lodgers' strike provides a glimpse into the life of the poor. The Salvationist excelled at propaganda in support of their organization and mission. Internal discipline and the commissioned officer corps carefully guarded the organization's image. Carstens (1907) complained that the services and the programs of the Army lacked accountability and often failed to live up to the promises made by the religious body.

Organizing Charity

As we have seen, most of the earliest responses to homelessness in Atlanta were initiated by the evangelical impulses of activist religious movements. The progressive political movement also became involved in the operation of charity organizations. Dismayed by the haphazard approach to the distribution of relief services and their failure to fundamentally address the problems, a new movement emerged to address the organization and delivery of services to the needy (Watson 1922). Broadly, this new method of structuring the delivery of charity was known as Charity Organization Societies (COS). The COS movement began in England in 1870 and spread rapidly to the United States. In 1892, there was an attempt in Atlanta to organize a local COS group, which failed to materialize and Atlanta lagged behind other Southern cities in their organization of such societies (Barclay 1892). By 1895, COS locals had been organized in New Orleans, Louisville, Chattanooga, Richmond (Green 2003), Charleston (Jordan 1987) and Wilmington (N.C.). The COS was part of a broader urban

movement in major cities in the county to coordinate the delivery of relief services to the poor.

In line with the progressives' emphasis on effective and efficient government, COS locals sought to bring a similar approach to the delivery of services to the indigent. To this end they focused on the means by which the wealthier segments of the community provided effective assistance to the needy. Central to this approach was the monitoring of those seeking assistance. The primary agent of this monitoring was the Friendly Visitor. The Friendly Visitor, usually a middle or upper class woman volunteer, visited the homes of the poor and needy to address their problems through education and example. As described by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1910: "All who will work together to find out, need by need, what the best way out of each difficulty is, best for those on whom the need presses most heavily and best for the community at large; and to see each problem through to a final solution" (Lee 1910:11).

The central argument of Associated Charities was that effective charity was qualitatively different from the giving of hand-outs, which they referred to as relief (Hubbard 1901). In principle, most COS groups did not maintain funds for direct relief when they initially formed.

Charities sought to provide a broad approach to the needs of the poor. An early proponent of organized charity divided the work into children, child labor, adult workers, tenants, the man on the street (viz., beggars or vagrants), families, and invalids (Richmond 1907).

At the encouragement of Dr. H.L. Crumley, a fundraiser for religious charities in Atlanta, a group of "prominent Atlantans" founded an Associated Charities organization in 1905 to coordinate fundraising and support effective work along the COS model ("United Charity" 1905; "A Central Charity" 1905). By late 1906, Associated Charities had 740 members providing financial support to the organization. Atlanta's Associated Charities, in a similar manner to other

COS groups, laid out five basic goals of their work: investigation; adequate relief; registration; to bring all unwilling to work under correctional influence and; to protect the people against habitual beggars and frauds (Johnson 1906).

The leaders of Associated Charities argued that individuals seeking assistance frequently approached donors. Out of charitable impulses well-meaning Atlantans were inclined to provide immediate relief. While this approach served to meet an immediate need of assuaging the donors' sense of obligation, it failed the recipient by neglecting the underlying problems of the needy. To address this question, Associated Charity offered itself as a service to assess the needs of the indigent and to provide effective relief to their condition. First, the legitimacy of the claim had to be established. This required investigation of the particulars of the individual's situation to determine their situation. Second, was the assurance adequate relief would be brought to bear to remedy the specific problem. Associated Charity promised to coordinate a range of services to meet the identified needs, but also promised a balance, too much service bred dependency, while too little failed to solve the problem. Third, Associated Charities sought to create a record keeping system that documented individual cases. Registration had a dual purpose, first to insure that the information on a particular case was gathered in a systematic manner and followed to completion, second, to insure that the indigent did not go from one charitable organization to another. The public and civil authorities were encouraged to refer persons seeking assistance to Associated Charities for registration. Registration insured the public that the worthy poor were provided the assistance they deserved and the unworthy were prevented from exploiting the good will of the community. Registration led to an emphasis on self-help. If investigation and registration revealed an unwillingness to work, Associated Charities was charged to bring them the attention of the giving public and city authorities.

In Atlanta, one of the first initiatives of the new charity society was to discontinue a long-standing

habit of shipping paupers from one community to another and wasting money on a form of relief which imposes an unjust burden on some other place and at the same time leaving the beneficiary worse off, was very general, and through the efforts of the Board of Directors of the Associated Charities the city council of Atlanta adopted rules which put a stop to this practice (Johnson 1906: D5).

Associated Charities received an enthusiastic endorsement by *The Atlanta Constitution* as an approach to the city's social problems. It was viewed as modern, progressive and representative of the Atlanta Spirit. But the Association continued to have problems with fundraising. The 1918 campaign for donations experienced great difficulty competing with the competition from relief requests associated with the First World War. Lee Ashcraft, director of Associated Charities appealed to Atlantans to contribute to local needs. In addition to competition from other funding and a national recession, Ashcraft attributed the failure to the continuing practice of contributing to beggars on the street. Atlantans were, in his view, giving directly to personal solicitations. He cautioned the public about this practice and the consequences of closing the charity "to have to close the Charities would be, no only a calamity to the helpless poor, but it would drive beggars to every home in Atlanta, and to every office and business institution" ("Atlanta Charities 1918:1).

The shelters and homes run by religious organizations were, along with the police, an essential part of the social control system and social safety net of early 20th century Atlanta. The 1920 annual report of the City Warden singled out the police and a religious shelter for special appreciation.

We are under many obligations [to police] for their co-operation in making investigations [of charity cases]. We are glad to call attention to the kindness of Chief Beavers in taking care of those addicted to the drug habit and are a menace to the public. The American Rescue Workers have been of great assistance in looking after women and young girls

until our office could make necessary investigations for sending them to their legal residence” (“City Warden” 1920:2).

The American Rescue Workers like other charities had become adept at drawing on the resources of the community. In May of 1922, Atlanta’s Mayor Key endorsed the work of the workers and encouraged Atlantans to contribute also (Mayor 1922:2). He particularly praised the fact that the American Rescue Workers⁸ have established an emergency relief home for “widowed mothers and orphaned children.” at 26 Capitol Avenue (“The Rescue” 1922:4). Their mission was to “feed, shelter and clothe stranded humanity.” The purpose of the home became an integrated part of the Associated Charities plan. “During the recent hard times (“Rescue Workers” 1923 in 1925 the home, located at 206 South Pryor Street, was transferred to another group (“Group takes over” 1925:20).

Organizing Charity, Second Act – Coordinating Fundraising

The Associated Charities approach focused on the coordination and evaluation of services to individuals. The growth of multiple charitable organizations led to increased competition between groups for resources. In 1923, 21 Atlanta charities joined together to form a Community Chest. Like Associated Charities two decades before, the Community Chest was a nationwide movement to coordinate the fundraising and funding of charitable organizations. The goal was to “conduct a subscription campaign of approximately \$500,000 to be divided among the organizations engaged in relief work in Atlanta, thus eliminating the necessity of each body conducting its own drive for funds”(“21 Agencies” 1923:2). With one exception, none of the local rescue missions for the homeless were involved in the Community Chest. The Salvation Army in a nationally coordinated strategy was an early member of local Chests around the

⁸ The American Rescue Workers formed in 1885 were originally known as the Salvation Army of America. It was a splinter group from Booth’s Army. A court battle with the William Booth’s English Salvation Army led to a name change in 1913.

country, as was the case in Atlanta. The Salvation Army was sufficiently convinced of the efficacy of the new one campaign approach that it agreed to suspend their kettle campaign.⁹

A contemporary social scientist writing for other Southern sociologists shared this view:

Atlanta is joining the 187 other large American cities in establishing a full-fledged Community Chest for the practical and effective financing of all its social service activities. Twenty-five local agencies¹⁰ have joined the Chest organization and teams are being prepared under Chairman Eugene Black for a week's intensive financial campaign, beginning November 11th. Atlanta businessmen are behind the undertaking and little doubt is expressed that the \$600,000 needed for this year's budgets will be raised" (Blackburn 1923:78-79).¹¹

The establishment of the Community Chest also provided the city with a way to provide support to charitable organizations without assuming direct responsibility for service delivery. The Community Chest received support from the City of Atlanta, after 1924 the city contributed to the family agencies associated with the Community Chest. In addition, it provided funds for indigent care at Grady Hospital (Biles 1990:79).

The Salvation Army in the 1920's

The Salvation Army was also a part of this increasingly differentiated network of groups serving the homeless and displaced. By 1923, the Army was operating two facilities. The first was a men's hotel, for "the man who is 'down but never out' [and] is conducted on the idea that if a man can pay, even though it be little, he should pay; that no many ever be assisted to lose his self-respect" ("Salvation Army" 1923:7). In addition, the Salvation Army operated a women's

⁹ The kettle campaign was the practice of Salvation Army bell ringers on city streets soliciting the donation of funds directly into a small kettle. The suspension did not last and the Salvation Army practices this fundraising technique to this day.

¹⁰ Blackburn (1923) says it is 25 agencies, *The Atlanta Constitution* reported 35, see ("Community Chest" 1923:1).

¹¹ The Community Chest was the forerunners of today's United Way. Rochester, NY first used the term Community Chest in its fundraising campaigns. The decade after the First World War led to phenomenal growth in this approach; there were 39 Community Chest organizations nationwide in 1919 and 353 in 1929. By 1948 more than 1,000 such groups had been formed. From < <http://www.liveunited.org/about/history.cfm>>

emergency home at 128 East Pine Street that provided “shelter and protection for stranded women and girls.” The capacity was 15 guests (“Salvation Army” 1923:7).

The Salvation Army’s decision to join the Community Chest was a part of a national policy by the movement to develop a secure funding stream for the services they were providing. This decision was mutually beneficial; the Army developed a source of funding, and the Army’s positive image legitimated the Chest’s approach. In turn, the Community Chest featured the Army as one of its principal agencies. Articles supporting the 1925 Community Chest campaign literature prominently featured the work of the Salvation Army and described the range of services the Army provided.

Emergency relief work of the Salvation Army is handled at the headquarters at 38 ½ Luckie Street under the direction of Adjutant Eunice McCrae. An emergency home for women is operated on Williams Street and an emergency home for men and a hotel is operated at 217 Luckie Street, under the direction of Staff Captain William H. Range. (“Salvation Army” 1925:8).

Affiliation with the Chest also legitimated the Army’s niche in the emerging system of programs serving Atlanta’s needy population. What had originated as independent initiatives serving discrete populations merged into a community-wide response. In this new network, the Salvation Army served as the specialist agency for services to the poor and homeless in Atlanta.

In January of 1927, The Salvation Army had gathered sufficient resources and standing in the region that it established their Southeastern headquarters in Atlanta. To do so, it exchanged its location at 37-39 Luckie Street for the Elks Club at 54 Ellis Street NE. The Salvation Army chose the location for its southeastern headquarters because “Atlanta has both a cosmopolitan atmosphere and cleanliness - something rarely combined. Despite its growth, it still retains a respect for the Sabbath, and that almost gives it a distinctive classification” (Salvation Army” 1927:9).

Salvation Army, the Community Chest and the Anti-Begging Campaign

The Community Chest positioned itself as serving the community needs and taking a proactive approach to solving community problems by using its funding allocations and intimate knowledge of the city. Donors were solicited to provide funds to the Chest as a means to effectively address the problems of needy Atlantans. In 1926, the Community Chest turned to the Salvationists to address the problem of begging on the streets. The Chest reported, “some prospective givers complained at the prevalence of beggars on the streets and blamed the Community Chest for not taking care of them” (Salvation Army 1926:3). In response the Chest requested the Salvation Army prepare a report describing the problem and the condition of Atlanta’s beggars. After a period of investigation, Major Rhodda of the Salvation Army reported to the complaints and appeals committee of the Atlanta Community Chest in October of 1926 that:

Beggars in Atlanta are on the streets from personal preference and not from necessity.

The Salvation Army has work that the lame, the halt and the blind can do to support themselves, in comfort and self-respect even if not in luxury. It has offered this work to any one who has asked for it during the entire period that is has been dependent upon gifts through the Community Chest for its support. Hundreds of hopeless cripples who were too proud to beg have taken advantage of the chance we give them to earn their own way at task they are able to perform.

We have offered jobs, each suited to the special disability in each case to no less than 40 of the beggars who are now asking personal charity on the streets and each has preferred to continue in his own ‘business’ rather than earn his way at some useful task. (“Salvation Army” 1926:3).

The Army was the designated expert on the needs of the poor. The Army brought a coherent ideology of work and a program of work. The Chest brought a promise to the community that it would effectively solve community problems. The Chest undertook a two-pronged strategy. First it provided leadership for a campaign to end begging on Atlanta’s streets. Second, it

highlighted the work of the Salvation Army as the lead agency on homelessness. In its 1927 campaign literature, the Chest described the work of the Army:

the Salvation Army, another agency associated with the Community Chest, relieved 5,260 persons in 1,365 families, with 137,500 pounds of coal distributed, 724 garments distributed, and Christmas dinners supplied for 735 families. Temporary aid and lodging were given to 1,156 transient men by this agency, and its emergency home for women and children, 196 women and 128 children were given temporary care, including 20,300 meals. Medical attention was given to 301, positions were found for 70, and 138 were returned to homes or friends (“Chest Work” 1927:14).

Implicit in this description is the idea that the Army is the most effective avenue for concerned citizens to remedy the condition of the needy poor. At the same time, begging detracted from the work of the Chest, eroding its support and the image of the city. The Community Chest campaign against begging continued through 1927. It garnered a number of influential allies including *The Atlanta Constitution*. In September 1927 *The Atlanta Constitution* editorialized against begging on the streets. Under the heading of “The Burden of Beggary,” *The Constitution* complained about “the increasing infestation of the city streets with mendicants asking alms of every passerby.” The editorial continued: “Atlanta seems to have become a real ‘beggars’ paradise’ and they are congregating here in apparently greater numbers almost daily” (“The Burden” 1927:4).

By 1928, the Salvation Army had decisively moved from being a well regarded church effort to being recognized as a “distinct part in the closely knit scheme of charity administration by agencies of the Community Chest” (“*Activity*” 1928:E7). Under the division of labor, coordinated by the Chest, the Salvation Army administered

emergency relief and care of the destitute transients. Salvation Army work was divided between the relief department, which served families, and shelters for single persons. Two shelters were operated, the emergency home that sheltered “lone women” and the industrial home that housed lone men. This particular department is not supported by gifts of money, through the Community Chest or any other medium, but is supported

entirely by the work of the men who come to us for help, in collecting and sorting (*“Activity”*1928:E7).

The provision of these services and the promotion of the Army’s role in the charity system further buttressed the campaign against begging.

By late 1929, the Community Chest and its allies successfully lobbied the Atlanta City Council to debate an ordinance banning begging. Atlanta’s Mayor Ragsdale mobilized his considerable political capital and pushed the City Council to approve the ordinance. Ragsdale declared a “war on beggars” (*“War”* 1929:1). The Chest’s campaign against beggars garnered the support of downtown merchants (*“Retail”* 1929:9), the American Legion (*“American”* 1929:4), and the Disabled American Veterans (*“Atlanta DAV”* 1929:5). The Chest solicited the support of veterans’ organizations to counter claims beggars were deserving veterans.

The major institutional opposition came from the Chief of Police James Benvers. Benvers raised both practical and philosophical questions about the efforts to remove beggars from the street. As a practical matter, he argued, it was difficult for police to differentiate between the deserving poor and disabled who sold pencils and small items on the street and the “professional” beggars who were the object of concern. Furthermore, the Police Chief believed that the beggars posed little danger to the city - “beggars never hurt anyone” and were deserving of support. “Many of our shell shocked war veterans do not get adequate compensation and are reduced to supporting themselves and their families by begging” Parish & Parish 1929:1). Rather than banning begging, Beavers reminded citizens of the city of their duty of charity (Parish & Parish 1929).

Opposition to a begging ban outraged Community Chest leaders. Roy LeCraw, the chairman for the Chest’s campaign for public support, asserted, on behalf of the Chest, that: “We

have made a pledge to the people of Atlanta to remove beggars from the city's streets by providing shelter and means of independence in worthy cases" ("Chest" 1929:4).

In December, the Ordinance to bar beggars from public solicitation of alms was tabled by the city council, further outraging LeCraw. LeCraw commented:

We have sought for years to protect Atlanta from imposters who have evaded every attempt to guide them into self-supporting and honest toil and who continue to prey upon the public. We have offered care, medical attention, and the chance of self-support to every worthy case, but whether for political motives or otherwise this offer has been rejected by the City Council ("Chest" 1929:4).

While the Chest's campaign to ban beggars from the street was not successful, the Mayor's administrative power was mobilized to accomplish the goal. Mayor Ragsdale directed the city to reduce the number of licenses issued for peddling. The campaign had the benefit of raising the visibility of the Chest and encouraging citizens to refer the needy to their offices. The Chest and its member agencies argued they were able to provide for the needs of the poor. This was soon to be challenged.

Black Homelessness in the Early Period: Hidden or Convicted

The institutions we have examined so far claimed to serve the "down-and-out" of Atlanta. In all of the cases so far, it has been the religious community that established these alternatives. What has been missing is the fact that the development of these facilities took place within the context of a racially segregated society. The question becomes, given the high rate of poverty and poor housing conditions faced by black Atlantans, where were the black homeless? The historical documents make little mention of black homelessness in this early period. Understanding the more general situation in the South and in Georgia provides insight into the problem of the scant records on black homelessness in the early 20th century.

An *Atlanta Constitution* article in 1903 shared “facts about vagrancy.” The article asserted:

Of course the negro vagrants greatly outnumber the whites. There is a place in the city, in Darktown, a ramshackle old two-story building which furnishes “sleeping apartments” at a rate of 10 cents a week. A negro can pay 10 cents and have a place to sleep for seven days. The bed consists of a piece of old blanket or a corn sack. Eight or ten men can live in one room, the alleged pallets being made up on the floor. (“Facts” 1903:3)

The article describes the budget possible for poor black men earning 50 cents a week. The article highlights several important points. First, it gives an image of what life was like for poor black men at the dawn of the century. Second, while the article is about vagrancy, it is the vagrancy of working men who must work in order to secure lodging and food. Third, it provides a justification for the low labor rate for black men. Based on the article’s calculation, a black “vagrant” can live on half the wage of a white “vagrant.”

Since the end of Reconstruction, white political leaders had sought to control and restrain black labor. Georgia’s vaguely worded vagrancy statutes were used to secure bargain rate labor, for “anyone without proof of steady employment” was fair game for court officials (Georgia Laws, 1903, 109-111). The mere threat of enforcement was often enough to force unemployed blacks to take undesirable low paying jobs as servants and common laborers (Dittmer 1977:86-89). Georgia’s Calvin Vagrancy Law, passed after the turn of the century, sought to “ensure a cheap labor supply and to control the growing urban black population” (Dittmer 1980:115).

Vagrancy laws and the threat of vagrancy laws may have posed sufficient incentive to avoid the attention of authorities or to seek to establish institutions to provide for the needs of the black homeless. So even while black unemployment was very high in Atlanta, the threat posed by the vagrancy laws provided great incentive to avoid the attention of authorities. Conviction under the Calvin laws led to state prison and predictably to the convict chain gang.

While state prisons were threatening, the criminal justice system in Atlanta and Fulton County were also a dangerous threat of liberty for black citizens. According to Dittmer “men, women and children convicted of misdemeanor offences such as vagrancy, disorderly conduct or drunkenness were tried by the city recorder, who served as both judge and jury and often imposed stiff sentences. Nine out of ten persons arrested for municipal offences in Georgia were black” (1977:115). Indigent individuals convicted of vagrancy or other misdemeanors in Atlanta were put to work on local chain gangs or confined to jail. Fulton County had pioneered chain gangs for misdemeanor convicts in 1876 when a local judge decided the solution to impassable roads in the county was convict labor (Lichtenstein 1993).

Black religious institutions initiated small efforts to assist the most vulnerable of the homeless. In 1908, Central Congregational Church, under black religious leadership developed a home for working women as part of its social outreach (Luker 1984). In addition, a variety of programs served poor and orphaned children in the black community. Perhaps the most famous and enduring of these initiatives was the work of Carrie Steele (1829-1900) who founded the Carrie Steele Orphan Home in 1888. Steele’s home served black orphans. She is reported to have described “the orphanage is meant to care for and train to honest labor the hundreds of colored orphans who are growing up as material for the chain gang”(“Black Georgians” 1989:A10).¹²

The Salvation Army did make attempts to reach out to the black community in the early 20th century. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Army “made its first attempt to reach Negroes through Negroes, by training workers in New York for the Southern Fields. (Fisher

¹² The home Steele founded still exists. For more on its origins and social welfare services in Atlanta’s African American community, see Beconte (1958) and, more generally, Lindsay (1956).

1925:493). However, these efforts never appear to have reached Atlanta or the shelter. But in the segregated South, a Salvation Army shelter for blacks would have destroyed the reputation it had built up. So while some tentative efforts were made, Salvation Army official realized they would be unable to operate in the South if they sought to promote integration (McKinley1995).

While Atlanta had a sizable black population, there were few charitable services available. Nonetheless, the Community Chest appeals highlighted their efforts in the black community, and sought donations from both the white and black community to its general fund. Several black charities including the Phyllis Wheatly YWCA and Carrie Steel Logan Home were Chest agencies and received support. In its 1929 appeal, the Chest promoted its support for these black organizations. “There is a considerable floating urban and rural colored population which must be taught fixed habits of self-support and wholesome measures of sanitary living” (“Chest Activities” 1929:F5).

HOMELESSNESS IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1929-1942

At the time of the stock market crash of 1929, the city and its existing nonprofit network was ill-prepared to respond to the massive dislocation that was to occur. While Atlanta’s middle and upper classes were relatively secure, the poor and working classes were devastated by the collapse of the economy. Large segments of the population were quickly unemployed. In 1930, Atlanta’s total population was 270,366, of which 90,075 (33.3%) were black (Biles 1990: 93).

Atlanta, like many other Southern cities, did not have a municipal funded relief bureau and the city’s support for the needy was limited to small contributions to several of the local Community Chest’s thirty-nine charitable agencies (Biles 1990:79). But even compared to other Southern cities, Atlanta ranked very low in its provision of social services. In 1930 Atlanta ranked last among similarly sized cities in its per capita expenditures for welfare, and few

municipal agencies or programs existed to help the rapidly growing number of unemployed (Ambrose 2003:149).

Demands for relief soared to the point that by early 1930 the Community Chest was already near collapse and began seeking increased financial assistance from the city. But the City of Atlanta was poorly positioned by either culture or financial capacity to meet the need.

In the early years of the Great Depression, community kitchens were established around the city. While the churches sponsored most soup kitchens, the business community also became involved. The most interesting of these was the Community Kitchen that opened in November 1930. The Community Kitchen was organized by the Atlanta Restaurant Association as both a charitable enterprise and as a place to direct the growing demand of the hungry. According to *The Constitution*, “the Restaurant Owners’ Association conceived of the idea to eliminate the giving free meals over the restaurant counters” (“Community Kitchen” 1930). Initially, the Association supported the whole operation from its members, going so far as to decline donations from the public or state. Drawing on food and equipment donated by Association members, the kitchen provided the needy one meal each day between 11am and 2pm. While segregated, dining rooms were established for both whites and blacks. The kitchen was located at 134 Nassau Street, NW, away from the city center. The choice of the location was strategic in the hope that it “is expected to prevent the kitchen from becoming a meeting place for hoboes and other undesirables.” The Association was unrepentant in the inconvenience of the kitchen’s location, an association leader stated, “any person who is too lazy to come down here and get it deserves to go to bed hungry” (“Community Kitchen” 1930:7). The use of volunteer labor, donated food, and loaned equipment made for a very efficient operation, with a per meal cost of

2 cents (approximately \$.24 in 2009 dollars).¹³ By January 1931, the Association estimated that between 1,000 and 1,200 were fed daily. The early optimism that the cost of providing the meals could be borne by the Association was challenged by the growing demand. By August of 1931, the Restaurant Association publicized the need for additional financial and volunteer support to meet the growing demand (“Public Kitchen” 1931:11A).

The new Community Chest was challenged by the growing demands of the needy. In 1931 Community Chest established a fundraising goal of \$803,000 “of which \$465,000 is to go to the Chest and \$340,000 to an emergency fund for the destitute unemployed” (“1931 Chest” 1931:1). Facing difficulty meeting their fundraising goals, the Community Chest advanced the same arguments that Associated Charities had used two decades earlier in encouraging that the public donate to the Chest rather than to the appeals of needy individuals. A promoter of the Chest’s campaign, Mr. O’Brien, argued that the “organized, cooperative fight against the greedy jaws of poverty and destitution is a comparatively recent development, and persons living the spirit of the past generation who liked to feel the tinkle of the money in the cup must be brought to realize that that cannot be done any more because the worthy poor have too much self-respect” (“1931 Chest” 1931:1). Like Associated Charities earlier, the Chest positioned itself as the arbiter insuring the public’s donations were directed to the worthy poor. The Chest quickly discovered the deepening Depression made for an inauspicious climate for fundraising, and failing to meet their goals, the Chest approached the Atlanta City Council for an increase in public funding (“Charity Leaders” 1931:8A).

The efforts of private business association and the Chest resulted in a fragmented approach to meeting the needs of the hungry and homeless in Depression-struck Atlanta. The

¹³ Still a remarkably efficient service. Amount calculated using the Inflation Calculator at www.dollartimes.com.

City of Atlanta had a small relief program of its own. Those unable to find assistance from churches or private charities could make requests for assistance through the city warden's office, "where families and individuals were furnished orders on local stores for supplies. The cost of this measure of relief mounted rapidly in 1931 to staggering proportions" ("3,442,381 Meals" 1933:5C). To meet the demands that only the deserving receive relief, the City Warden attempted to apply the same investigation techniques as used by Associated Charities. However, "the cost and difficulties of paid investigators to reduce impostors and duplications" quickly swamped this system.

Growing agitation for relief and the failure of the traditional institutional approaches together created a crisis that led to a reframing of the problem. Atlanta's Mayor James L. Key realized a new approach was needed. In the fall of 1931, Mayor Key met with leaders of the business and philanthropic community to create a coordinated response. The collapse of the city warden approach "led to a plan of affording direct relief to the hungry by feeding them at a centrally located station with a carefully considered plan of administration that would combine efficiency and economy" ("3,443,381 Meals" 1933:5C). Key anticipated and reflected a national trend to enhance the distribution of relief services through better centralization and coordination.¹⁴

Key proposed the establishment of a City Relief Center in the city auditorium annex. The Relief Center had three components: "a kitchen for free distribution of food to the needy," a "depot for the collection and distribution of clothing," and "a lodging house for white men with army supplies, containing facilities at start for 200 sleepers. Central to this plan was the idea that

¹⁴ The scale of the economic crisis overwhelmed charity. The idea of reorganizing the delivery of emergency assistance was a radical departure from earlier practices. See Franklin Deleano Roosevelt's first inaugural 1933 "It can be helped by the unifying of relief activities which today are often scattered, uneconomical, and unequal."

relief services were fragmented and needed greater coordination to meet the need. To accomplish this goal, Key envisioned that: “it is hoped that every organization or individual who aids in any kind of relief work will enable this committee to do the distributing. It will prevent duplication and will help meet the demands which are to be made” (“Charity Leaders” 1931:8A). Key’s plan drew many organizations to cooperate. The Community Kitchen was relocated to the auditorium, as were other church based soup kitchens. The Salvation Army, in addition to maintaining its other programs, set up shop in the Relief Center, as did the Junior League (“Charity Leaders” 1931:8A).

Atlanta’s City Relief Center opened on November 1, 1931 in the City Auditorium Annex. On Christmas day 1931, 10,000 Atlantans were fed by the center. A March 1932 interim report claimed that 500,000 had been fed and 20,000 housed since opening of (“500,000 fed” 1932:7).

While the city was able to mobilize its physical resources to provide the physical facility for establishing the center, money was also needed to support its ongoing operation. The City’s Relief Center, jointly funded by the City and Fulton County, was threatened by the county’s lack of funds and closed briefly on June 17, 1932 (“Funds” 1932:1). The Community Chest agencies appealed to the city and county to resolve the impasse pledging they would continue to provide services from their funds. On June 19, 1932 the *Constitution*’s front page headline read “22,000 imperiled as relief ceases for jobless here – Many homeless, all without food.” Into the breach, Wesley Memorial Church provided beds for the needy

The city’s hotel for the destitute reopened Saturday night in the auditorium-annex under the direction of Wesley Memorial Church following the completion of arrangements between Mayor James L. Key and Rev. Felton Williams, pastor of Wesley.

Under the church’s agreement with the mayor, the church will run the 200-bed sleeping quarters. Lodging will be given free to those who are unable to pay for a bed. The quarters have been unused for several months. (“22,000 imperiled” 1932:1A)

Once again, it was the religious community mobilizing its resources of facilities, funds, management skills and personnel that supplied the social safety net.

The disruption in the delivery of relief provided a catalyzing moment for the city's unemployed and poor. On June 30, 1932, between 500 to 1,000 unemployed demonstrators marched on the Fulton County Courthouse to demand food and protest the plan by the county to cut its relief appropriations. What made this group unique was the black and white composition of the marchers. This demonstration of inter-racial militancy resulted in quick action by the County and, within 24 hours, \$6,000 was allocated for relief. The Unemployed Committee of Atlanta that organized the march targeted the County, but it was the Community Chest that received the greatest attention in the flyer calling for participation in the march.

Thousands of us, together with our families, are at this time facing starvation and misery and are about to be thrown out of our houses because the miserable charity hand-out that some of us are getting has been stopped! Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been collected from workers in this city for relief for the unemployed, and most of it has been squandered in high salaries for the heads of these relief agencies. (Unemployed Committee [1932] 1991:464-5)

They also challenged a plan to send the unemployed to abandoned farms.

At the meeting of the county commissioners last Saturday, it was proposed by Walter S. McNeal, Jr. to have the police round up all unemployed workers and their families and ship them back to the farms and make them work for just board and no wages (Unemployed Committee [1932] 1991:464-5).

The agitation of the marchers had an immediate stimulative effect. The Fulton County Commissioners quickly passed an increased appropriation, while claiming the march had nothing to do with their action. At the same time they acted to suppress the rising militancy of the Unemployed Workers. They arrested one of the leaders, Alonzo Herndon, a young African American communist and charged him with inciting to riot. His case became a cause célèbre for the American Left nationwide and continued for most the rest of the decade, before the case was

dismissed.¹⁵ The reopening of the relief center and the arrest of Herndon quickly quelled the insipient movement.

While the City Relief Center provided emergency assistance to the destitute, other government and private projects were also initiated. Fulton County developed a self-help program that offered \$1.25 (\$16.32 in 2009) towards groceries and a free lunch in return for a day's labor on county projects. The Atlanta's Chamber of Commerce Forward Atlanta campaign was intended to boost Atlanta's image and position for investment. The growing poverty and displacement of the Depression threatened this image. Forward Atlanta launched a campaign that proposed to resettle Atlanta's unemployed families on abandoned farms around the city. Willing families were offered use of farms to grow subsistence crops. The Chamber launched the program to send 1,000 families back to the farm in November of 1932 with great publicity ("Move" 1932:9). However, the Chamber found few residents wanted to return to subsistence farming. Indeed, the problem was the in-migration of displaced tenant farmers and rural farmers.

By the spring of 1933, Five Points, the retail center of the city, was deserted. Over half the businesses along Peachtree Street were closed and unemployment relief requests averaged over 12,000 a month, with only \$10.12 (\$132.14 in 2009) allocated per family per month (Fleming 1986; Goldfield 1982:180). Approximately 60,000 Atlantans were on the relief rolls by mid-summer (Ambrose, 2003:149). An Atlanta social worker estimated that unemployment reached 30% citywide and exceeded 75% in black neighborhoods (Biles 1990:79). One of the effects of high rate of white unemployment was the willingness of whites to demand jobs held by black persons. Jobs formerly relegated to the lowest echelon of society became desirable and

¹⁵ Herndon's case became an important rallying point for the American left and the Communist Party. Herndon's account *Let Me Live*, (2007[1937]) told the story of his experience. Herndon later became disenchanted with the Communist Party (Martin 1979).

whites displaced blacks as household servants, laborers, and elevator operators. This further heightened the burden on the black community (Greene 1979).

Meals other services were to both blacks and whites, but only 200 white men received lodging with demand for these accommodations far exceeded availability. (It is worth noting that here is little record of accommodation for black men, perhaps due to their diversion into the chain gang system.). The responsibility for meeting the needs of indigent women and children fell to the Community Chest agencies. The 1933 Community Chest Appeal describes the work of Salvation Army:

Salvation Army – Cares for families contacted by Travelers' Aid Society. Provides emergency lodge for stranded women alone or with children and assists in locating them more permanently. Operates a temporary lodging for transient men and gives assistance to lone resident men. ("38 Agencies" 1933:4A)

Increasingly, the emphasis of the Salvation Army role in the relief system became short-term assistance to the transient. In this role, the Army established an enduring relationship with the Traveler's Aid organization receiving payment for providing temporary housing for the dislocated.

The City Relief Center continued operation until November 10, 1933 when responsibility for emergency relief was assumed by the federal relief authority established as part of Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives. Mayor Key praised the work of local leaders: "The relief committee did a fine piece of work. When a man is hungry, he wants food, and he doesn't want a lot of red tape and long investigation" ("3,442,381 Meals" 1933:5C).

The actions of the Atlanta's political and philanthropic institutions were constrained by the actions of the state and federal government. While Mayor Key had assertively worked to coordinate shelter and feeding services in the City of Atlanta by urging the coordination and amalgamation of the work of the religious, philanthropic, and political institutions of the city,

these combined forces failed to address the depth of the problem. In the early 1930's, Georgia's Governor Eugene Talmadge was one of the most vociferous opponents of any provision of federal relief in the nation. Talmadge owed his position to the rural electorate and shared with them a deep suspicion of urban life. While he supported relief for the farmers, "city dwellers" were "bums" and "chiselers." His remedy for those seeking relief was to "line them up against a wall and give them a dose of castor oil"(Herndon 1986:99). Talmadge's opposition to providing support to urban workers impacted the entire state. In order for the Georgia to receive funds under the New Deal, the state was required to pass enabling legislation and impose new taxes, when these bills were approved by the legislature, Talmadge vetoed them (Holmes 1975). The opposition and obstruction by Talmadge finally resulted in Harry Hopkins federalizing the relief program in Georgia in 1935, an action taken in only three other states (Herndon 1986). There was hope for relief when the speaker of the Georgia House E. D. Rivers broke with Talmadge and ran for Governor, defeating him in 1936. But the conservative legislature opposed many of the New Deal reforms proposed by Rivers, particularly the new taxes to draw down New Deal funds. In 1938, the failure of the state to allocate the matching funds resulted in President Roosevelt cutting off federal funds (Biles 1990: 65).

Problems of the Transients

While Atlanta political and religious leaders responded with sympathy to the relief needs of Atlanta residents, they showed much less sympathy to the increasing flow of transients. While most cities made a critical distinction between residents and non-residents, Atlanta as a transportation hub, faced a particularly acute problem of non-residents seeking assistance. As Watkins notes,

Many towns refused to feed or shelter transients for more than a day. Atlanta, Georgia more practical in such matters, offered them a generous thirty days of meals and lodging – on chain gangs rented out to the highway department or local farms and private quarries (Watkins 1999:70)

The harsh response of many localities led to a constantly churning transient population seeking work and relief. As a practical matter, many local authorities refused to even arrest or jail non-residents without housing for fear of having to pay for their food and lodging and of overwhelming the jails (Cole 2003). Police power was used to compel transients to move on.

In October of 1932, 14 national organizations formed the National Committee for the Care of Transient and Homeless (Potter 1934). The coalition worked to coordinate a national response to the problems of transients and to document conditions. Included in the coalition were the national representative of many of Atlanta's local organizations, most notably Y.M.C.A, Y.W.C.A, The Salvation Army, and Traveler's Aid.¹⁶

The fruit of the national coalition documentation efforts was the establishment by Congress of a new Federal Transient Program (FTP) within the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The FTP made available millions of dollars for relief of "transients" (defined as "needy persons" who had no legal settlement in any one state or community (Hahamovitch 1997:138). The Federal Transient Program established several local offices in Georgia, (including Macon, Savannah and Atlanta) along the major transportation routes. The FTP offices and their associated camps registered transients and generally attempted to assume the responsibility for settling transients -- responsibility that local governments were unable or

¹⁶ The national committee was a coalition of the following organizations: Association of Community Chests and Councils; American Public Welfare Association; Bureau of Jewish Social Services; Child Welfare League of America; Family Welfare Association of America; International Migration Service; National Association of Traveler's Aid Societies; National Social Work Council; National Urban League; Y.M.C. A.; Y.W.C.A.; Joint Application Bureau; Salvation Army.

unwilling to assume. A contemporary social scientist reported in 1934 that one of the unintended consequences of this effort was that: “The transient is everywhere better cared for than is the local homeless, and as a result there is a constant recruiting into the transient army” (Potter 1934).

The problem of the transient in the Great Depression was framed as a federal level problem. In part this was due to the fact that most localities were hostile to those who were non-residents. The goals of the new federal program were to create a national set of standards. Dr. Ellen Potter of the National Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless, in her testimony before Congress in 1935 described the transient population

In the moving army there are estimated to be 10 percent of the chronic hobo type, but the remaining 90 percent are found to be average normal individuals with at least a common-school or high school education; older men with good work habits; boys and younger men with no work records because of the depression; family groups moving from place to place; and little children growing up with no sense of security, no background, and no normal community contacts and education. (Potter 1935:527)

The sheer size of this mobile transient population required federal intervention, but Potter also provided motivational framing to her analysis of the problem.

If we do not handle the situation wisely and constructively, we run the risk of developing a nomadic tribe, irresponsible in its habits of life, subsisting ultimately as parasites upon society and a potentially dangerous group, contaminated, as it is bound to be by the “chronics” who begin as petty thieves and end as criminals. (Potter 1935:527)

Potter raises the specter of a large transient population broken loose from their home communities and rejected in receiving communities who lose the connections and the controls that community life provided. Government failing to act leads to the creation of a disorderly and dangerous transient underclass.

Federal Intervention and Atlanta's Homeless

The Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 (FERA) passed the U.S. Congress, was signed by President Roosevelt in May of 1933, and was in operation by July of that year. FERA was a dramatic federal relief effort in response to the nationwide disruption. FERA initiated a variety of programs, which provided both work and direct relief, including the Federal Transient Program. In practice FERA worked through state and local organizations. In Georgia FERA worked through the Georgia Emergency Relief Administration that “oversaw county relief organizations, which in turn directed local projects” (Fleming 1986). FERA coordinated work projects for the unemployed through the Civil Works Administration (CWA). One project was to run a transient shelter in Atlanta. The Atlanta Transient Bureau “served the urgent function of caring for the thousands of jobless drifters who traveled through Atlanta.” In Atlanta, shelters and intake facilities were established for the many transients, who were otherwise ineligible for local services. In Atlanta, then, the unemployed and homeless had two routes. They could be given employment through a variety of programs provided by the CWA or receive shelter assistance through the Transient Program (Fleming 1986).

A major purpose of the Transient Program was to stabilize the sizable working army of unemployed. The Federal Transient Program largely ended in 1935 with the initiation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the summer of 1935 (Herndon 1986). Some of the FERA projects were transferred to the WPA, the Atlanta Transient Bureau was one and outlived FERA, operating from 1933-1936. The transition from FERA to the WPA was a move from a Federal relief program aimed at sustaining and stabilizing the population to a massive Federal work program. Those left out of the new programs became the problem of the states (Crouse 1986).

Limits of the New Deal

By 1935, Atlanta ranked 31st in population in the country. In the period from July 1934 – June 1935, the average relief benefits per family per month was \$21.13, slightly above the average for Southern cities (\$20.44), but below the national average of \$32.96 among similar sized cities (Biles 1990: 85).

While the new federal programs enacted under FERA and WPA were an important national step, there continued to be substantial local need. Initially, the Federal programs of the New Deal were promised to relieve local government of the responsibility for providing direct assistance to the poor. But the new federal programs failed to meet the needs. It quickly became evident that additional assistance was necessary for the homeless who were not served by the federal programs. Despite the new federal initiatives, many fell between the cracks. The Salvation Army had continued its men's lodging. Rev. Felton Williams of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church provided a description of the state of homelessness in Atlanta in 1935: "There are hundreds of men in Atlanta sleeping every night in vacant houses in the railroad and bus depots" (Jones 1935). Williams of Wesley Memorial who had assumed control of the city's shelter in 1932 and ran it until its closure in 1933, determined to continue providing shelter to homeless men in his church. Initially, Williams sheltered 25 men each night and provided food to another 75, but the numbers continued to grow. Williams represents an evolution of the mission movement. He wrote:

The primary purpose of this church is to preach the gospel. But we feel we must feed the hungry and provide for their essential material needs first. We feel this is the work the church always should do, but so many do not.

There is too much ‘campaigning’ and money raising in many churches, Christ said Himself He came not to be saved, but to save others and the church’s mission is still the same as His (Jones 1935:7B).

Williams used the annex for shelter and also developed a shelter for women and children

Williams also initiated a massive publicity campaign. A local radio station, WGST, offered him airtime each day to describe his work for Atlantans. In 1936, Williams took over 123 Ivy Street, a building formerly occupied by the Federal Transient Bureau. Williams and his Atlanta Mission “become one of the city’s outstanding institutions for the needy.” The mission served “poor folk of the city have flocked there in their distress, as well as homeless men, unemployed youths, and scores of transients” (“Atlanta’s Mission” 1936:5K).

The Williams Mission was part of the social safety net constructed to catch and stabilize the large pool of unattached and unemployed men. The Unemployed March and the increasing agitation in the city had shaken the city’s business and political elite. Support for the provision of shelter arose from this concern. A *Constitution* article noted “Leaders who were familiar with the situation voiced privately their belief that Atlanta stood on the edge of riot and bloodshed unless some care was taken of these homeless men” (Jones 1935:7B). Out of a concern to avert riot and bloodshed, the leaders of the city provided minimal accommodation to the surplus white labor.

The Great Depression decimated the charity sector of the city. The effort to respond to the massive need posed by high unemployment and poverty radically transformed the charity sector. Lacking donations and overwhelmed by the demand many organizations ceased to exist and few of the small shelters survived. However, the core groups serving the homeless poor did survive. In addition to the Salvation Army that continued to serve women and children referred

by Traveler's Aid, a few other groups also survived during the Depression. In 1938, the American Rescue Workers reported they had provided 6,000 nights of lodging to women and children the previous year (1937-1938) in their home located at 420 Piedmont Avenue ("Rescue Body" 1938).

By the late 1930's, the Atlanta Mission under Felton Williams leadership successfully established a broad based program that included outreach to the poor, housing for homeless men, and a children's camp for impoverished children. In late 1938, the mission was split into two entities. One organization (which became Felton Williams Mission, Inc.) continued the work of outreach to poor Atlantans and the children's camp; the other formed a new organization, the Atlanta Holding Mission, to continue the work of housing the homeless poor.

The Atlanta Holding Mission was governed by a group of ministers and laypeople, most of who were closely associated with Central Presbyterian Church. They opened, in January of 1939, the Atlanta Hospice on 320 Crew Street, SW on the grounds of the old Atlanta hospital. The Hospice promised:

Each night we will have a preaching service and after that we will serve food. We will give the men lodging until they can find work. There will be facilities for caring for the sick. Actually, it will be a place that a stranger can call home ("Old Atlanta" 1939:2).

By April, the hospice was providing housing for 100 men a night with capacity to serve an additional 15 to 75 men sleeping on the floor "depending on the condition of the weather." A visitor to the shelter wrote the *Constitution* praising the work of the Hospice and described the men who resided there:

you will find them - men of all ages and from all stations of life. Bums? Some of them – and even they are responsive to kind treatment. Men who have lost out – have given up; men without jobs – without food – and too often without God. Here they are taken in and in their brief staff they are given a new outlook on life. In many cases, through the untiring efforts of Superintendent Thomas Lovern, they are provided with work or transportation home (Seward 1939:13A).

The mission provided food, shelter, and counseling. The mission thrived and in 1942 it changed its name to the Atlanta Union Mission (Sack 2001). The first executive director of the Mission was a Presbyterian minister (Dr. William Huck), and among the charter trustees were the pastor of the prominent Central Presbyterian Church and several other active members of the church. Dr. Huck was well qualified to manage the Mission, in addition to being a Presbyterian minister; Huck had served as the acting administrator of the Fulton County Public Welfare department in the last years of the Depression and was well connected with the Presbyterian Churches in Atlanta (“Dr. Huck” 1937).

POST WORLD WAR II ATLANTA RESPONDS TO HOMELESSNESS

The Second World War ended the Great Depression by providing employment opportunities and provided the occasion for substantial federal investments in the nation’s economy. Wartime labor shortages assured that even the marginally skilled found employment. For the most part, services to the homeless declined in the period of economic prosperity that followed the war. Atlanta, like other Sunbelt cities, underwent a massive transformation as the population shifted.

In 1950, the standard metropolitan area population of Atlanta was 505,983 of whom 165,814 were nonwhite. Atlanta’s white population grew by 35% between 1940-1950, while its black population grew by 15.6 percent. In the Central City 209,898 were white and 121,416 were nonwhite. Atlanta’s white population grew by only 6.2%, while the nonwhite population grew by 16.1%. African-Americans made up an even greater proportion of Atlanta’s central city population in the post war period (Weaver 1953).

Atlanta's rapid growth during the 1950's and 1960's involved construction and redevelopment that was very disruptive to several areas in the city. According to Leon Eplan, Atlanta's head of planning:

In fact, we almost lost Atlanta during that period. In one ten-year period, between 1955 and 1965, due to public actions alone (primarily highway construction and urban renewal), we displaced 67,000 people. Fifteen percent of all Atlantans were moved out of their homes during that era, very few with public help. Commercial development, in addition, ate into the neighborhoods. Apartments replaced single-family dwellings. Highways ran through and divided and isolated communities, racial groups, and economic classes. Tens of thousands of dislocated people were simply shoved off the land and pushed into the adjacent neighborhoods, which were themselves fragile (Eplan 1978:39).

The demographic and racial transition that Atlanta was undergoing in the post-war period placed particular stress on the downtown area. Many white residents fled the inner city for the developing suburban ring. Black populations also shifted, but not nearly as much as the white. Housing remained a critical problem for the black community. Despite internal agitation, Atlanta's black elite negotiated a series of political compromises with the white political and economic leaders that provided incremental improvements. Direct confrontation with segregation was postponed in the name of civic stability.

Despite the changing demography of Atlanta in the 1950's and 1960's, the typical homeless individual person was white, male, and in his 50's (Kusmer, 2002). Both the Salvation Army and Union Mission primarily served this population with their services. In many ways, the services for the homeless that survived the Great Depression continued to operate beneath and in some isolation from the massive changes in the city. Both the Salvation Army and the Atlanta Union Mission survived the Great Depression and the War years to continue as viable institutions serving the homeless poor. The Army remained a member agency of the Community

Chest, which adopted the new name of the United Way, but in the post-war years, its services to the homeless were less visible than in the second quarter of the century.

The Salvation Army continued to operate Adult Rehabilitation Programs and transient shelters, but came to broaden its program into a series of centers in poor and working class sections of the city. While the Army had maintained separate black and white facilities in the aftermath of the Second World War, these barriers began to slowly fall everywhere but the South. In a mid-1940's survey of eastern service centers [Salvation Army Branches], a Salvation Army leader found that every center "imposed a 'usual restriction' that clients would be accepted if they were white, unattached males not obviously drunk." This was true even for centers in predominately black neighborhoods (McKinley 1986:184). The Salvation Army reported they saw few black transients anywhere in the nation, a finding that reflects what social scientists were finding at the time. In the South, the Salvation Army effectively followed a "Jim Crow standard," meaning that white clients were unwilling to tolerate blacks in the same facility. (McKinley 1986:185). It was not until the 1960's that resistance to integrated facilities began to break down.

In 1956, the Salvation Army sold its Southeastern Headquarters at 54 Ellis Street to the Atlanta Union Mission (Pousner 1986). In part, this was an expression of the growing program of the Salvation Army and a desire for larger accommodations, but it also was an indication of the declining involvement of the Army in serving the homeless and transients. While the Army had earlier been the United Way organization most identified with the homeless and poor, Salvationists had increasingly come to emphasize other parts of their program. The Salvation Army established and expanded community centers and youth programs in poor and working

class neighborhoods. The Army continued to provide temporary housing for the transient, the Salvation Army but scaled back its services for what was viewed as a declining population.

The Union Mission remained the dominant organization serving homeless men and women. In 1956, the Atlanta Union Mission was serving three hundred meals a day to its residents. As a publicity piece at the time noted, many of the men were “from good homes. Most are worthy men who are simply victims of misfortune, men who have lost everything that gives men courage and hope. Of course, others are derelicts, drunkards, thieves, drifters, but they are all human beings” (Sack 2001:101). The mission offered them “friendly understanding and that understanding beings with the fact that you can’t talk to a man about a new beginning when he is starving.” While the mission declared it was open to all, it based itself on “teachings of Jesus Christ is the heart of the Mission work. All else it does – the free meals it gives, the free beds it supplies – are but a means to bring men under the Grace of the Gospel of our Lord.” (Sack 2001:101)

While the Atlanta Union Mission had begun as an expression of the relatively mainstream Presbyterian Church, it’s ministry became increasingly evangelical in outlook during the 1950’s and 1960’s. The Mission declined public funds in order to be unrestricted in undertaking their mission of conversion. Volunteer ministers who conducted the nightly services at the mission preached a conservative theology of sin that was skeptical of government.

Despite the increasingly conservative theological bent of worship leaders, the mission provided a safe place for men to spend the night in downtown Atlanta. While most men paid a small amount for their lodging, the mission faced recurrent financial problems. A large direct mail campaign provided some support, but securing adequate funding was always a challenge in this period.

The late 1960's were a period of expansion for the Atlanta Union Mission. Responding to a need for alcohol rehabilitation, the Mission opened a rehabilitation farm in a rural setting near Athens, Georgia in 1967. The rehabilitation farm (Potter's House) provided a rural setting for recovering alcoholics. On the farm men in the rehabilitation program worked repairing items later sold in Union Mission thrift stores in Athens and Atlanta. The mission also expanded its program for women. In 1969, the Mission Board of Directors approved opening a Women's mission at 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue, establishing a 59-bed center on Ponce de Leon Avenue for the city's mentally ill, substance-addicted and homeless Atlanta women.¹⁷ The Mission board hired Mrs. Elise Huck to open the mission (Cowan 1985).

In 1972, the Mission celebrated its 30th anniversary and reported in the previous year it had "provided beds for 121,000 persons, served 265,000 meals and distributed 18,000 articles of clothing" ("Mission Celebrates" 1972). As part of the 30th anniversary celebration, speakers quoted with approval the statement of their first executive director Dr. William Huck: "It is good to put a new suit on a man but much better to put a new man in a suit." Media coverage of 30th anniversary highlighted the changing role and community perception of the mission. The mission "taking as its parish the streets and sidewalks, the mission attempts to reach the city's alcoholics and derelicts through counseling, referral and rehabilitation services" ("Mission Celebrates" 1972).

A total of 300 men were sheltered, clothed, and fed in the Ellis Street building for an annual budget of \$120,000. The mission received support from individual business and civic leaders through a successful local fundraising effort and a capital campaign envisioned expansion. The mission provided an array of services in one location, chapel, kitchen,

¹⁷ This is the same building which later housed the Open Door Community, a Catholic Worker Community that serves the homeless and prisoners.

barbershop and six dormitories. The mission catered to two different groups of men. First, it provided semi-permanent housing to 170 men who lived there year round. Most of these men drew on social security and welfare to pay for their lodging and meals. Many were elderly or disabled. Some of these men received room and board by working providing basic services for the mission. Many of these men lived in private or semi-private rooms in the 5-story mission. In addition to this relatively stable population, the mission provided short-term dormitory lodging to transient men who were given three free days after which they were expected to pay \$1.00 a night (Garnet 1973).

Between Potter's House (the recovery farm), the women's mission on Ponce de Leon Avenue, and the original Ellis Street location, the mission provided almost 500 beds a night to Atlanta's homeless poor. In addition to serving the old white alcoholics and transients, the Union Mission increasingly served former psychiatric patients who had been released from Georgia state mental institutions in the early 1970's.

Despite a changing clientele at the mission, the basic framing of homelessness remained the consistent. A 1973 sermon preached to men at the Mission by a Brother Doug, a Baptist minister, illustrates this approach:

We can't go off and blame somebody else for our own personal sin. Don't allow your sin to stand between you and God.

If a man doesn't put down the bottle and quit drinking, if he doesn't quit chasing after wild, wild women, he's gonna die and go to hell (Garnet 1973:28).

The mission aimed to provide the opportunity for redemption for the down and out.

Changing Understandings of Homelessness in Atlanta 1960's-1970's

In the 1960's and 1970's, changes in medical science and public policy altered how various publics framed the homeless. The first was a change in the understanding of alcoholism, second in the treatment of mental illness and third, changing racial politics in Atlanta.

Changing views of alcohol and alcoholism

As we have seen, the use of alcoholic beverages was frequently ascribed as a cause for homelessness. This had been a persistent theme in a range of initiatives throughout the previous century. The WCTU viewed it as a direct cause of displacement and abuse of women, while the Salvation Army viewed it as a damaging failure of self-respect and will power. In either case, the use of alcohol and the consequences of its use were regarded as acts of will. Two developments changed this view. First was the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in the late 1930's. The slow development of the movement and its self-help nature resulted in gradual acceptance by the public. But the core of the AA movement was the concept that the use of alcohol was an addiction over which the abuser has no power. This new framing of alcoholism was challenging to the established religious organizations. The Salvation Army strongly resisted the AA approach and particularly the idea that alcohol is something over which one has no control. (McKinley 1986).

The second development, related to this, was the construction of alcoholism as a disease. First proposed by Dr. E. M. Jellinek of Yale University in the 1940's, the disease concept formulated alcoholism as "a disease entity that is diagnosed by 'loss of control' over one's drinking that progresses through a series of clear cut 'phases.' The final phase means that the disease renders a person powerless to drink in a controlled, moderate, nonproblematic way" (Borgatta & Borgatta, 1992: 45; Lewis, 1988:241). The idea that alcoholism was a disease conceptualized the problem differently. The alcoholic was a sick person for whom treatment was required, rather than a sinful person needing salvation, or a criminal requiring incarceration. What is important in these two developments was a change in the way in which the alcoholic was treated. While public drunkenness has been a criminal offense, a willful violation of public

order, the alcoholic was now viewed as an ill person. One of the policy implications of this new approach was the move to decriminalize public drunkenness. The State of Georgia was an early leader in the decriminalization of alcoholic behavior.

This had implications for how the homeless were perceived. The use of alcohol has been a persistent explanation to the problems of the “down and out” or the homeless. For providers of services to the homeless and poor, the abuse of alcohol was viewed as a vice. Georgia, as most other states, had laws prohibiting public drunkenness. Thus, alcohol abuse was viewed as criminal on the one hand, and as a failure of will (character) on the other. The state used its police power to control public drunkenness, and the missions used their control over the access to their facilities to proselytize the poor

The new disease model of alcoholism brought increased attention to the problems of alcoholics. The promise of an effective treatment approach brought Atlanta’s downtown churches back into the provision of services. In 1962, two downtown churches, All Saints Episcopal Church and St. Luke’s Episcopal Church established St. Jude’s House the “first long-term residential treatment program for male alcoholics in Atlanta” (Mallard 1986). Initially, St. Jude’s served street alcoholics and those who lived in the downtown area. In many ways, St. Jude’s served a population similar to that of the Union Mission – white older alcoholic men. The Union Mission also embraced the frame of homelessness and alcoholism. In 1967, they established Potter’s House near Athens, Georgia, as a rural rehabilitation center for recovering alcoholics. Men entering the downtown mission in Atlanta could be transferred to the Athens facility for a period of treatment.

As the addiction model gained broad acceptance, a standard treatment regime became accepted practice. The addict would have a crisis requiring intervention. A period of inpatient

treatment would follow to deal with the physical symptoms of addiction. Upon release, an extended period of transition and recovery was required. Downtown churches also became involved with this final stage of the recovery regime. In the early 1970's Trinity United Methodist Church founded the Atlanta Recovery Center in downtown Atlanta to serve as an alcohol free transitional facility for recovering alcoholics.

Changing views of the mentally ill

In the late 1960's Georgia's Central State Hospital was the largest mental health institution in the world. Over the next decade, Georgia, under the pressure of legal rulings, advances in psychiatry and fiscal pressures adopted the policy of deinstitutionalization by which mentally ill patients who had been receiving custodial care were returned to their home communities. In the Atlanta area, many mentally ill persons returned to privately run boarding homes that provided lodging and meals (board and care homes). Most of these were in intown Atlanta neighborhoods where cheap housing was available. For the same reason many former mental patients gravitated to downtown Atlanta, occupying old apartment houses in the central city area and along Ponce de Leon Avenue. The Union Mission was an additional source of cheap housing, and by the mid 1970's the permanent population at the Mission included a sizable number of older, white ex-psychiatric patients.

Changing views of Race and Public Space

The racial composition of the visible homeless also began to change in the late 1960's. Atlanta had a century long pattern of endemic black poverty. Segregation and the use of formal and informal social controls had the destitute black population from public view concentrated in the poor black community, and in crowded and substandard housing. The growing power of the

black electorate and the white flight from the inner city provided greater opportunity for all black residents to use public spaces. This included the most impoverished.

In 1973, Maynard Jackson was elected Atlanta's first black mayor. The election of a black mayor, the changing racial composition of the police force, and the downturn in the economy in the central city all served to make the downtown less forbidding and the services available more accessible. Jackson had run on a platform calling for greater racial equity in the city. Many of his early initiatives alienated the white business community (Holsendolph 1973).

The greater accessibility of public space to Atlanta's black population provided greater opportunity to shop, conduct business and enjoy the amenities of the central city. But this also changed the perception of the city. A white manager in a downtown business commented – "I know this sounds racist, but I don't really like to come downtown any more on the weekends because it's really just black. I don't feel like it's my city any more. Even the stores seem black" (King 1974). As this Atlantan showed, the perception of racial disorder threatened many white business people. Downtown business interests complained that downtown was perceived as unsafe and threats to its vitality endangered the city's future.

The homeless and marginally housed had previously been almost invisible in the fabric of downtown. With the declining white population in downtown Atlanta, the poor and homeless became more visible. The 1973 oil price increase was followed by the worst recession since World War II. In 1974, St. Luke's Episcopal Church opened the first daily soup kitchen in the city since the Great Depression. The kitchen started serving home-made sandwiches and grew into a soup line serving several hundred a day. As the recession deepened, unemployed workers increasingly turned to day labor for income. Initially, these unemployed men stood on the corner of Decatur Street in downtown Atlanta waiting for opportunities for day labor. Downtown

business interests demanded the Mayor address the problem. In 1975, the Jackson Administration established the Downtown Day Labor Center. According to Dan Danner, the director of the program, the Day Labor Center was originally intended “as a means of getting the quote-unquote derelicts and drunks from being visible downtown.” (Graham 1987:C1)

Two downtown parks emerged as battlegrounds in the late 1970’s. Central City (now Woodruff) Park and Plaza Park (now demolished for Underground Atlanta) both were locations where single black men gathered. Downtown business official complained to Mayor Maynard Jackson pressing him to clean up the parks. In August of 1979, City officials assigned police officers and clean up crews to work in the parks “in an effort to clear Central City Park and other municipal parks of drunks and litter” (Willis 1979:10A). The Jackson administration linked social control with park maintenance claiming, “besides leaving litter, the drunks have been smothering the grass” (Willis 1979:10A). Mayor Jackson, seeking to explain Atlanta’s high crime rate blamed the crime problem in downtown Atlanta on “drunks, claiming they commit many of the thefts” (Willis 1979:10A). Failing to clear the parks using police and parks maintenance workers, the Jackson administration took the additional step of designating the downtown parks as “neighborhood parks.” This new designation permitted the city to close parks from 11 pm to 6 am. Persons staying the park after these posted hours could be arrested.

For most of the period following the Second World War, homelessness received little public attention in Atlanta. The post-World War II boom had fueled continued expansion in the metropolitan area. Atlanta’s white business and political leaders aggressively undertook to restructure the city for future growth and development. Large scale highway construction was undertaken which drove interstates through the heart of the city. Federal urban renewal slum clearance funds were used to remove thousands of homes around the city center. The burden of

much of this displacement continued to fall primarily upon the black population of Atlanta (Stone 1976, Bayor 1996).

During this period the housing needs of the destitute white poor continued to be served primarily through the two venerable and well-established community institutions, the Salvation Army and the Atlanta Union Mission. By the late 1970's, the Salvation Army's workingmen's lodging was a thing of the past. The Red Shield Lodge, the Army's new shelter, provided housing for nine men and 16 women. The Union Mission's primary shelter on Ellis Street averaged 200 men per night and between 40 to 50 women. The Salvation Army had evolved to serve a primarily transient population, the Union Mission offered, for the most part, semi-permanent housing for a population of largely white urban poor. While these two institutions provided the public response to housing the single poor, most of the precariously housed relied upon the cheap residential hotels that remained in Atlanta's downtown area to provide lodging. Surrounding these low cost hotels were a variety of other institutions – day labor centers, plasma centers, bars and liquor stores.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the history of the response to homelessness in the century preceding the emergence of a new movement related to homelessness. The many early groups and individuals involved with addressing homelessness brought a variety of frames that motivated their involvement and shaped how they thought homelessness should be responded to. As we have seen, for the most part, educated leaders have provided programs to address what they perceive to be the needs of the homeless and have developed prognostic solutions to remedy their state. In the next chapter, I will look at the emergence of the next wave of this movement,

which also grew out of the religious community of Atlanta, but which had a different analysis of the causes and conditions of homelessness.

CHAPTER 4: BEGINNING THE MODERN MOVEMENT 1979-1982

In the last chapter I described the evolution of responses to homelessness in Atlanta from the late 1800's to the mid 1970's. In this chapter, I examine the emergence of the modern movement that grew in response to homelessness in the late 1970's. In some ways it was similar to the previous movement – rooted in religion, but, as we will see, shaped by a different era and context. Unlike the earlier period, the movement entrepreneurs of this phase actively focused on building a movement to address both the immediate needs of the homeless and to address what they perceived to be underlying structural problems.

The visible poor on the streets of downtown Atlanta were largely regarded as threats to public order. In response to business community concerns, Mayor Jackson had ordered police to “clean up the parks” of idle men. On the north side of the central business district, St. Luke's Episcopal Church was serving a daily lunch to the destitute. The long lines of men and, to a lesser extent, women, who gathered for the daily meal provided tangible evidence of a growing population of poor individuals in the downtown area.

St. Luke's Episcopal was one of several mainline churches scattered through the downtown area that had been largely abandoned by their white congregations as a result of white flight from the city. The dwindling congregants remaining were long-time members of the church who retained allegiance to the place even when this entailed long trips into the inner city. The declining membership and increasing distance from members resulted in declining utilization of large physical facilities. The situation facing Atlanta's intown churches differed little from those in other large cities. And like those churches, Atlanta's mainstream churches had created a variety of services under the general heading of “urban ministry.” Trinity Methodist Church, for instance, had created an outreach program into the poor housing projects

that were nearby. Central Presbyterian Church created a low-cost medical clinic. The Christian Council had created a network of Christian Emergency Help Centers to provide food, clothing and other assistance. Several of the downtown churches had designated pastors engaged in community ministry with the poor and homeless in the downtown area and close in neighborhoods.

Atlanta's Skid Row

As late as 1980, the visual image of a homeless person in Atlanta was that of a white, male alcoholic. For the most part, Atlanta's leaders thought the Salvation Army and Union Mission met the needs of this marginal population. In February 1980, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* devoted a large section of its Sunday *Magazine* to Atlanta's Skid Row:

Geographically, skid row begins at the two interstate bus stations on International Boulevard and runs up International across Peachtree Street and down the hill to I-75. From there it is south to Decatur Street, back to Spring, and down to the bus depots. It is almost a perfect rectangle, touching or encompassing the hotel, business and shopping areas of downtown. With the Atlanta Union Mission on Ellis, the city jail on Decatur, Grady hospital at the foot of Coca-Cola Place by the Interstate, Central City Park in the middle of the rectangle, and a number of cheap hotels, liquor stores, commercial blood banks, and day-labor offices in between, it encompasses everything a derelict needs for survival in metropolitan Atlanta. (Foster 1980:22).

According to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the problem was stark. "Every city has a derelict problem. In most places, skid row is on the edge of the central business district. But in Atlanta skid row *is* the central business district"(Foster 1980: 24).

The Atlanta Journal Constitution recalls Robert Park's depiction of the order of the city. In Park's urban zones, the Central Business District is adjoined by a "zone of transition," marginal property surrounding the urban core and available for redevelopment.

PROVIDING HOSPITALITY: CLIFTON PRESBYTERIAN

The first shelter of the modern era did not arise from one of the downtown churches in the urban core, but from a small congregation several miles from the city center. In 1977, Eduard Loring, a Presbyterian minister, came to Clifton Presbyterian Church in the Lake Claire neighborhood. Clifton Presbyterian was a small church with 25 enrolled members and an average attendance of 30 at weekly services. Clifton Presbyterian faced the same problem as downtown churches. The white flight that followed the racial upheaval and suburban development of the 1960's and 1970's had drained off many members, the core that remained were committed to intown living, but were also challenged to mobilize sufficient resources to insure the survival of the church. Loring was overeducated for his pastorate, having earned an advanced degree and served as a seminary professor. In addition, Loring was already a committed activist deeply influenced by the life and words of Martin Luther King, Jr. and was increasingly drawn to undertake concrete action. Loring was not alone in his commitment to activism. Loring's spouse, Murphy Davis, was at the same time developing a ministry in Georgia's prisons focused on opposition to the death penalty. So Loring came to Clifton Presbyterian in 1977 with an interest in an activist Christianity and a desire to do something to address what he perceived to be social injustice in the city.

The late 1970's were a complicated time for white religious activists. No single issue mobilized and united a movement. The Civil Rights movement, which had engaged many white religious leaders concerned with social justice in Atlanta, had entered into a black nationalist phase that had closed off much of the service in the black community. Likewise, the entry of the black elite into politics provided little opportunity for religious activism. Poverty, the issue which had energized the religious community during the decade of the 1960's, declined as an

issue of policy, even as it persisted as a social problem. The Nixon Administration's creation of the block grant program had placed responsibility for the alleviation of on local governments, while at the same time, it had reduced the funds available. The results decimated community institutions and services to the poor, particularly in the South.

In the fall of 1978, Eduard Loring convened a core group of members and leaders of the congregation to study the future of the church and what its mission should be to the neighborhood and community. As Loring later described the situation a few years later:

Located in an inner city neighborhood, racially and economically mixed, we felt several pulls and tugs towards ministry for justice. Already we were visiting prisoners on death row, advocating for legislation against the death penalty and protesting executions as they occurred in various states. But something was missing and for many months we did not understand what it was. So with the tools of social analysis and historical consciousness, we turned to Bible Study and prayer. (Loring 1982:8)

Loring, and Davis were searching for the “something” that would provide a higher level of commitment and authenticity to their activism. In framing terms, they were searching for a prognostic frame to answer the core question of what is to be done. In January of 1979, Loring and Davis were in New York City for a conference on prison ministries. As part of that trip they visited the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in lower Manhattan.

Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded the Catholic Worker movement during the Great Depression. Central to the Catholic Worker movement is the philosophy of personalism, that is, the view that persons have meaning and value. Catholic workers assume a personal responsibility for being in relationship with the poor. The typical practice was to live among the poor in voluntary poverty, providing food and limited lodging to those in need. Above all, their practice was small scale and personal engagement with those in need. This personalism was a central tenet of Catholic Workers. The poor are “ambassadors of God.” In the words of one of Peter Maurin's “Easy Essays”:

People who are in need
 And are not afraid to beg
 Give to people not in need
 The occasion to do good
 For goodness' sake.
 Modern society calls the beggar
 Bum and panhandler
 And gives him the bum's rush.
 But the Greeks used to say
 That people in need
 Are the ambassadors of God
 Although you may be called
 bums and panhandlers
 you are in fact the Ambassadors of God.
 As God's Ambassadors
 you should be given food,
 clothing and shelter
 by those who are able to give it (Marin 1977:123).

From the Catholic Worker perspective, the poor provide those with more a special opportunity to serve God by “doing good” and providing “food, clothing and shelter.”

The core institution of the Catholic Worker movement is the House of Hospitality. In a house of hospitality Catholic Workers live in free association with others in voluntary poverty, and seek to extend hospitality to the poor and downtrodden. Catholic worker houses are typically located in marginal neighborhoods. The first Catholic Worker house had been located in the Bowery of New York City during the Great Depression.

In addition to its hospitality services to the poor, the Catholic Worker movement was deeply involved in advocating for social justice, particularly on issues related to war and justice for laborers. Dorothy Day had been an activist journalist before her conversion to Catholicism and she carried this approach to her new vocation. Throughout her life she continued to speak out on issues of social justice particularly issues of the rights of laborers, unionization and opposition to war. Dorothy Day was a journalist and Catholic Worker houses carried on a

tradition of publishing. Their signature publication the *Catholic Worker* sold at “a penny a copy.”

The Catholic Workers provided tangible example of providing services to the poor and living a committed life of activism for peace and justice. The Catholic Worker model provided a concrete model of committed action. On their departure from New York City, Loring and Davis were given a copy of the Dorothy Day’s autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*. During their bus ride back to Atlanta, Loring and Murphy read the book and were inspired by the vision it provided of a personal direct response to the poor. The Catholic Worker model provided a concrete example of a way to articulate their concern for the poor in Atlanta. Thus, inspired by the example of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement, Ed Loring and Murphy Davis returned to Atlanta and began advocating in the study group and among the congregation to establish a shelter.

Sheltering was a new idea in Atlanta, particularly the idea of providing shelter in the church sanctuary, the only space available in the small Clifton Presbyterian Church. While Loring and Murphy were deeply influenced, perhaps even transformed, by the example of Catholic Worker Movement, members of their congregation who lived in the community were less convinced. For several key members of the congregation, particularly those who lived in the Lake Claire neighborhood, the decisive factor was their familiarity with a homeless man living in the community. Joe Copping was a young man who had grown up in the Lake Claire neighborhood; in early adulthood he developed severe mental illness. He was a familiar figure to the members of the congregation, walking the streets of the community wearing several layers of clothing and overflowing pockets filled with items. Copping slept on community members’ porches and received food assistance. Members of the congregation knew Joe Copping, and

through this knowledge, it became imaginable that a shelter could provide refuge for people like him. It was personal experience – a shelter for people like Joe – that was more persuasive than the Catholic Worker example.¹⁸

While the Catholic Worker example is portrayed vividly by Dorothy Day in her writings, these provide little concrete direction for actually operating a shelter. For this assistance, Loring and Davis turned to Mitch Snyder, the leader of the Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV) in Washington, D. C. In the late 1970's Mitch Snyder was emerging as a national leader among religious activists concerned about homelessness. Moreover, Snyder's approach of direct action and direct service appealed to Loring's activist sensibilities. The CCNV began during the movement to end the Vietnam War. In the mid-1970's, CCNV began using nonviolent direct action campaigns, demonstrations, fasting and vigils to highlight the problems of the homeless in Washington, D.C. Snyder, along with his colleague Mary Ellen Hombs, began working to build a national movement to end homelessness. In August of 1979, Ed Loring invited Snyder to visit Atlanta and provide information on homelessness. On his arrival, Loring told Snyder the small congregation was too exhausted to consider undertaking the creation of an emergency night shelter. As Loring remembered it shortly afterwards:

We rationalized. We were too far from downtown. We didn't have much money. We were just too damn tired. But Mitch 'promised' to come anyway, and when he did, he offered a clear direction: "not only can you do this, you must. You must open the doors, because people's lives are hanging in the balance" (Loring 1982:75).

Snyder challenged the 30 members of Clifton Presbyterian Church to open their space to provide shelter.

¹⁸ The role of Joe Coppage in the origin story of the Clifton Presbyterian shelter has grown more prominent over the years. It is now the dominant account of how the shelter came to established.

In Loring's account of the opening of the Clifton Shelter, Snyder provides a key spark closing the gap between the idea of starting a shelter and its actual establishment. The Catholic Worker writing provided a vision and a compelling prognostic framing of the responsibilities of those who have to those who do not. Inspiring Catholic Worker writing did not provide the compelling motivation for the congregation to establish a shelter for the homeless. It was not clear that shelter was the appropriate action. Indeed, with the exception of Coppage, members of the congregation had no previous contact with the homeless poor. Mitch Snyder's presence made the challenge personal and immediate. He combined a dramatic personal story of activism for social justice with a demanding call for personal engagement.

On November 1, 1979 Clifton Presbyterian Church opened the first free emergency night shelter in Atlanta. The Clifton congregation had only a rudimentary understanding of how finding people to shelter and managing the shelter once they had been gathered. Mitch Snyder recommended offering food as a way to build trust with homeless individuals on the street. He advised, the shelter to avoid distributing greasy food as it attracted rats. Instead, the shelter offer boiled potatoes. In addition, the fact that Clifton Presbyterian's shelter was located several miles from downtown, where most of the homeless men were, meant that guests had to enter a unfamiliar vehicle to be transported to the church. On the first night, only three men were persuaded to come to the shelter; two nights later only one guest was in the converted sanctuary. As word of free shelter began to spread among the loose network of homeless individuals, the shelter found more men were asking for shelter than had been anticipated. At first, the desire to respond to the need outweighed the physical limits of the facility. Overcrowding resulted in conflicts and fights. Through experimentation, the leaders of the church accepted they must limit the number of men permitted to spend the night.

The decision to limit the capacity of the shelter created a sense of scarcity among the men. Wanting to secure a bed for the night, men began gathering in the mid-afternoon on the lawn of the church waiting for the shelter to open. To address this problem, Clifton created a system of transportation and ticketing.

The transportation system involved a volunteer driving a van (later a small bus) to several designated stops in the downtown area. Only men carried by the bus were permitted to stay in the shelter. Men would gather for the bus. Tickets were issued each morning as men left the shelter. The ticket constituted a “reservation” for the next night. The guiding rationale for the ticketing system was that those who had been to the shelter the previous night deserved the first call on shelter space. The bus driver would accept first those with tickets. If guests from the previous night failed to keep their reservation the bus driver permitted other men to stay for the night. He in turn received a ticket the next night. Each night van was met with more men than they could accommodate.

The ticketing system and the limitations on the shelter’s capacity were acknowledgements by Loring and volunteers at Clifton Presbyterian of the bounds of hospitality. Small scale became a strongly held value as it provided an intimate environment where a person-to-person encounter between host and guest was possible. In this milieu, sheltering became a total environment of hospitality and much more than a bed for the night. This small-scale approach to sheltering had been a key element of the Catholic Worker movement that Clifton shelter emulated. It came to characterize the approach taken by the many of the new shelters that were to develop.

The Clifton Presbyterian model of sheltering differed from the Salvation Army and the Union Mission shelters in several ways. First, shelter was provided free and without a time limit.

Second, religious participation was not a requirement for receiving shelter. Third, sheltering was conceptualized as a form of hospitality, not conditioned on payment or deservingness.

We take seriously the word ‘hospitality’ and we are attempting to offer hospitality, not just shelter. Theologically, hospitality means to us trying to offer space where the men are not only sheltered and fed, but also given friendship. And the basis for that is God’s friendship with us. (Tribble 1980:1)

The motivation to establish the Clifton shelter was, like the evangelicals preceding them, deeply grounded in religious convictions. It was explained in religious terms to the religious network and various publics who were seeking to understand the purpose of the shelter.

This emphasis on personal contact was a core component to the vision of sheltering being advanced by the Clifton Presbyterian model. Personal contact enabled the development of relationships between the shelter guests and those who provide the food and lodging.

Another key element of the new shelter was that it ran primarily on volunteer labor. While the core volunteers were drawn from the congregation and ministers of the small congregation, others were drawn from a diffuse network of nearby churches. The experience of volunteering in the shelter was fulfilling and inspiring to many who participated.

The Clifton Shelter also garnered the attention of other church-related groups providing services to a growing body of poor and hungry in Atlanta. Bill Bolling, a lay worker at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church who was working to serve daily meals to the poor in Atlanta’s first soup kitchen since the Great Depression wrote:

Each day I am told by our friends in the Community Kitchen what a wonderful place Clifton Presbyterian Church is providing the men. Several have shared from their hearts how much it means to be treated with respect when it seems the whole world is too busy to express that love and concern for them. (Bolling 1980:1)

Leaders of the Clifton shelter faced several choices. They might have expanded the size of their shelter or been content operating the shelter as their primary form of ministry. The

leaders of the congregation were torn between the need to increase the shelter capacity in the city and their personal limits. They lacked the resources or energy to establish new shelters by themselves. The Clifton shelter was physically limited by the size of its facility, but more so, by the desire to maintain the person-to-person interaction of a small shelter. At the same time, the leaders of the Clifton Presbyterian Shelter became the local experts on the congregation-based response to homelessness. Using the network of the Atlanta Presbytery and media attention to the new form of congregational service, the leaders of the Clifton shelter urged other churches to develop ministries responding to the needs of the homeless.

The inability to directly oversee the establishment of new shelters did not represent any reduction in commitment on the part of the core leaders of the shelter. Indeed, Loring and Davis, along with their associates, Rob and Carolyn Johnson, were becoming more committed to serving the homeless poor in Atlanta. The excitement of sheltering, and the possibility of engaging more deeply with the issues of poverty and housing were more compelling than continuing to provide pastoral duties to the congregation.

Becoming Full-Time: The Open Door Community

In July of 1980, a core group from Clifton Presbyterian, including Ed Loring, Murphy Davis, and his associate, Rob Johnson, decided to leave Clifton Presbyterian Church and establish a new organization to serve as a vehicle for serving the growing needs of the homeless and prisoners. They outlined their vision in a covenant committing them to service to the homeless poor. In this covenant, they promised to establish an “intentional Christian Community, covenanting to share our lives together with ministry as the central focus.” (Open Door Covenant, n.d.). Central to this new vision was the establishment of a physical presence

close to the homeless poor with whom they could share their lives. It took over a year of planning for them to identify a location and raise funds for the new place.

The Clifton Presbyterian Shelter heightened the awareness of homelessness as an urban problem within the network of Presbyterian Churches in Atlanta. At the same time, Clifton's services to the homeless and the deaths of homeless persons on the streets of Atlanta had heightened public awareness. From this advocacy, new participants were drawn into the emerging network (see below). This heightened awareness provided a political opportunity for the covenant signers to appeal for financial resources from the network of Presbyterian Churches. This heightened visibility also provided credibility when it came to purchasing a location for the new institution. In 1969, the Atlanta Union Mission had opened a Women's Division housing 50 women at 910 Ponce de Leon. In 1980, the Women's Mission was moved to Howell Mill Road in order to expand to 96 women, leaving the former mission vacant in a marginal real estate market. Loring and the covenant signers approached the Mission and arranged the sale for \$150,000. Using money from the sale of the Loring-Murphy house, funds from the Atlanta Presbytery and other individual donations, the first new institution serving the homeless was established. On December 16, 1981, the community moved into the building. By January 30, 1982, the new community was serving a regular meal to homeless and hungry. The Open Door became a recognized ministry of the Atlanta Presbytery, the local body of Presbyterian Church government and first new organization responding to homelessness in Atlanta.

DISASTER RESPONSE: CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN NIGHT SHELTER

The opening of the Clifton Presbyterian Shelter had revealed a large pent-up demand for night shelter. Being part of the religious network provided Loring with a mechanism for

disseminating and highlighting the need for shelter. While Loring was still at Clifton Presbyterian, he actively encouraged other churches to undertake sheltering. One result of these efforts was the recognition of the expertise that Loring had developed. He became the resident expert on religious-based sheltering in Atlanta. The empty church buildings in downtown Atlanta were a valuable potential resource for sheltering. One result of Loring's advocacy was the offer from a downtown church to make its premises available for emergency night shelter. In the fall of 1980, representatives of Central Presbyterian Church on Capitol Square in downtown Atlanta approached Ed Loring offering its church gymnasium available for emergency sheltering when the Clifton facility was full. At that time, the core group managing the Clifton shelter and developing the Open Door Community were exhausted by their effort to maintain their current responsibilities. While the offer of space was acknowledged as a necessary condition for sheltering, additional human resources were needed to take advantage of the offer.

In November of 1980 Rev. Bob Bevis, outreach minister of First Presbyterian Church, wrote to Ed Loring describing his difficulty finding shelter for an injured woman on the streets. In the letter he laid out a desire to create a solution to the problem of homeless persons. In their subsequent meeting, Bevis asked for Loring's assistance in opening a shelter. Following this meeting with Ed Loring, Bevis quickly emerged as an important early leader of the sheltering effort.

Like Loring, Bevis was part of a network of church leaders, but Bevis had a higher profile than Loring. Bevis was the key contact giving access to network of intown churches that worked together as the Ecumenical Community Ministry. Members of this network included First Presbyterian Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cascade United Methodist Church and

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. Within two years, two of these four churches would establish winter emergency night shelters and a third would develop a year-round family shelter.

The record is unclear about the exact sequence of events that led to the establishment of the Central Presbyterian Shelter as stories of the principals differ, but the key elements appear to have been 1) the willingness of the church to make its gymnasium available to Ed Loring to provide emergency night shelter, 2) the new interest and energy that Bob Bevis brought to assume responsibility for day-to-day coordination to the effort and 3) the deaths of homeless men on the streets of Atlanta.

The catalyzing moment for moving from talking about developing a new shelter to opening it occurred in early January 1981. Three homeless men had died in downtown. These deaths provided the sense of emergency that eroded resistance to establishing new shelter space. Bevis recalled: "It was the week that it got really cold. One man had died in the streets and two others had died in a fire in a vacant house. We weren't really prepared, but decided we had to do something" (Johnson 1981:1).

Bill Bolling, by then director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, called Central Presbyterian Church to explore opening an emergency night shelter. Joanna Adams, the Associate Pastor for Community Ministries, talked with the Senior Pastor, and together they decided to make the space available. They made the decision without consulting other church bodies. Within 36 hours, Ed Loring of the Open Door Community, Bill Bolling of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and Rev. Bob Bevis, worked together to open the shelter. On January 14, 1981, the Central Presbyterian night shelter opened. Drawing on the Clifton Presbyterian model, the Central Shelter provided basic shelter from the elements on the floor of the church gymnasium, relying upon local churches to provide the volunteers and resources to run the

shelter. Bevis believed that the large Atlanta church community would rise to the occasion and provide the volunteers needed to sustain the shelter. The first night the shelter opened, approximately 37 individuals slept on the church gym floor, as the winter season progressed, up to 250 a night were using the shelter.

Initially, the shelter at Central was rudimentary compared to Clifton. Guests were permitted to enter at 7:30 p.m. and made to leave early the next morning. Sleeping space was provided on the hardwood floor of the heated gymnasium and pieces of cardboard to cushion the floor. A bathroom was available and hot tea was served. As the winter progressed and more resources were mobilized, food was provided, but in general Central provided the bare rudiments of shelter. A shelter volunteer described the conditions in the shelter – “It’s totally bare bones – just a warm place to spend the night on a floor that’s safe”(Jarvis 1981:1).

The size and location of Central Presbyterian shelter immediately presented new opportunities and challenges. Unlike the Clifton Presbyterian Shelter, located several miles from the downtown area with a transportation system and a ticketing system for admission, the Central shelter was located in the downtown area. The proximity of the shelter to the downtown labor pools, residential hotels and social services began to draw an increasing number of residents.

While the Central Shelter was planned on the template of the Clifton night shelter, it quickly diverged from the Clifton model. In a large part this was a matter of scale. While the Clifton shelter limited themselves to 35 men, the Central shelter quickly grew to house up to 250 on cold nights. Like the Clifton shelter, volunteers were key to Central’s operation; but unlike Clifton, the sheer demands of size provided fewer opportunities to create the personal relationships that were central to the view of sheltering as hospitality.

The large capacity of the Central Shelter was driven by a sense of urgency to prevent the deaths of men and women on the street. Many of the essential elements of the Clifton/Catholic Worker model were put aside in the interest of survival. The shelter “showed how desperately shelter is needed in the community. There was wall-to-wall flesh. It was not so much a question of offering hospitality but really an issue of how to shelter as many as possible” (Jarvis 1981:1).

Management of the Central shelter fell to a small group of volunteer clergy and lay people led by Bob Bevis. This core group took primary responsibility for running the shelter. In addition, several hundred church volunteers were involved with welcoming guests, maintaining order and providing basic foodstuffs. The Central shelter developed the practice of having volunteers assigned to stay awake during the night to resolve problems and maintain order. While there was an emphasis on framing the service of sheltering as on the model of hospitality, the primary focus of the shelter was to provide the minimum needed for survival from the cold. Like the Clifton shelter, Central also experienced difficulty. Homeless single women, a small percentage of the street homeless, began using the shelter. Concerns about mixed gender sleeping arrangements led to opening new space for single gender sleeping arrangements. Unlike the Clifton shelter, which remained open year round, the Central Presbyterian Shelter was planned as an “emergency” night shelter providing the minimal accommodations to secure safety from the cold. The Central Presbyterian Shelter closed in the spring of 1981 for the summer.

The ongoing challenge of the Central shelter was recruiting and retaining a sufficient body of volunteers to insure that the basic duties were covered. Bevis assumed this role of recruiting and training volunteers the first year. On nights when volunteers were not available, the core group had to fill in. The result was an exhausted core group at the end of the first year.

While the expectation of a massive outpouring of volunteer support by mainline churches was not fulfilled, the experience provided a powerful motivation for a group who went on to create new shelters in their own congregations. The energy and enthusiasm generated by sheltering, and by participating in something new was by most accounts, creative and stimulating. The experience of offering shelter provided a tangible opportunity to be of service to the poor. Sheltering provided a place through which homelessness became visible to middle class volunteers who, while aware of poverty in Atlanta, had little direct experience with it.

Providing emergency night shelter in response to the visible poor had, in turn, generated evidence of the extent of need in Atlanta. In addition, the provision of shelter revealed the hidden homeless. The frustrations and problems of encountering new dimensions of homelessness, such as homeless families or homeless women, galvanized some volunteers to undertake new forms of action. An immediate response to the problem of housing single women in the Central Shelter led to the development of a year-round night shelter at First Presbyterian Church in midtown Atlanta.

Through the summer of 1981, sheltering was promoted through the religious network as a new form of service. The experience of sheltering during the winter of 1981 had provided a graphic example of the need and of the difficulties of mass sheltering. The leaders of the Central shelter became, along with Loring, defacto experts on homelessness serving to provide both descriptions of the problem and providers of the solution. Bevis and Loring provided one of the first descriptions of the homeless population in Atlanta. Bevis “estimated that the city’s homeless fell into three categories: the homeless mentally ill, the public inebriate and those with drug problems. They range in age from the late teens to the elderly, and perhaps more than two-thirds are black” (Lamb 1982:20-B).

For Bevis, the crisis of homelessness and the resources of the religious community provided an ideal opportunity to create a network of small shelters, returning to the model created by Clifton and Oakhurst Baptist. Bevis outlined his vision:

Our goal is to open up many small shelters all over the city. Breaking down into smaller groups makes the situation more manageable. We have 1,200 religious congregations in metropolitan Atlanta. If only 10 percent of them would open their doors, we could address the needs of Atlanta's homeless (Lamb 1982:20-B).

In the fall of 1981, several more downtown churches opened up more emergency shelters. Most of the leaders of these new shelters had had experience in either the Clifton or Central Shelters. Trinity United Methodist and All Saints Episcopal subsequently opened shelters combining elements of the Clifton and Central shelter programs with a maximum of 30 guests.

The core challenge facing the volunteer run shelter system was the recruitment of the volunteer labor required to operate the shelter. While the Clifton Presbyterian model had required a relatively low level of volunteer effort, the several hundred guests coming each night required greater organization and sophistication. In the first year, Bevis had optimistically assumed that the church community would readily volunteer. When this expectation failed, responsibility for operating the shelter fell to a small group who were exhausted. In the second year of sheltering, several leaders of the first year's sheltering had gone on to create their own shelters. A new network of shelter volunteers was created. Betti Knott, executive secretary of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a Catholic relief organization assumed responsibility for coordinating volunteers.

Knott brought organizational and volunteer management skills from her professional duties; indeed, the coordination of the shelter program became an extension of her paid regular employment. Knott assembled a volunteer organization that drew from the coalition of groups

that supported the shelter including “the Open Door Ministry, the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Sandy Springs Interfaith Council, Evangelicals for Social Action and churches throughout the Atlanta area” (Jarvis 1981:1). The key innovation Knott brought to bear was asking organizations (e.g., congregations) to assume responsibility for assisting in the sheltering process. Before this, shelters had largely depended on motivated individuals to volunteer to serve. Knott’s innovation reduced the “cost” of participation by increasing the comfort level of participation by volunteers with a familiar group.

Another innovation was the development of a structure of a routine for the shelter. Volunteers, under the direction of shelter directors, filled designated responsibilities. Volunteers arrived at the shelter in the early evening and prepared the shelter for the evening. The doors to the church were opened to the shelter guests already lined up around the building promptly at 7:30. Shelter guests were greeted with a standard speech:

We welcome you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are happy you can share our hospitality. There are a few rules for the safety of all. No fighting. If a fight breaks out, all parties must leave. No weapons or alcohol. If you have them, please give them to one of the volunteers. They will be returned in the morning. We hope you have a restful night. (Burtenshaw 1982:1)

Each shelter required volunteers, resources, and the development of procedures. In the early days, Ed Loring and the Open Door Community offered support and training to churches as they formed new shelters. While each shelter built upon the evolving experience of Clifton Presbyterian and Central Presbyterian, each shelter operated independently often developing idiosyncratic responses

The 1981-1982 winter sheltering season brought increasing development and complexity to the sheltering system. Close contact with the homeless revealed gaps in the network of survival services which new groups served to fill. One of these was food. While shelters

increasingly provided a limited meal, homeless individuals unable to find work relied upon the St. Luke's Soup Kitchen for their main meal. St Luke's only served meals during the week. On March 25, 1982, the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, a historic Catholic Church abutting Central Presbyterian in downtown Atlanta, developed a feeding program on Saturday. The Shrine provided its commercial kitchen and church social hall with its central location for serving the poor downtown. Drawing on the network of local parish groups associated with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Francis Kitchen was staffed by volunteers with financial contributions drawn from the Catholic Church network. The kitchen was immediately successful, serving 85 individuals lunch on the first day. In the following weeks, an average of 200 to 300 homeless men and women were served each Saturday (Dolman 1985:B4; Keiser 1983:1).

Shelter directors again faced the quandary of closing their shelters in the spring of 1982. The primary issue was not funding. Volunteer-run shelters relied upon donated food and existing facilities and relatively low-cost operations. The principal problem was the maintenance of volunteer labor. Central Presbyterian's Adams described the challenge shelters faced:

Those of us who work closely with Central Presbyterian and other shelters cannot maintain this mammoth project for 12 months out of the year. It's a big deal to have approximately 170 people sleep here each night. It takes a lot of work just to coordinate the volunteers, sandwiches and teapots. (Barnes 1982:1)

The decision to close the Central and Trinity shelters at the end of the second winter was not uncontested. In Loring's view, the framing of shelter as an emergency response to prevent death from hypothermia failed to address the realities of homelessness. He commented:

a psychology has developed that suggests that real shelter needs are related to cold weather. The attitude is that after the last frost the severity of the problem of homeless people diminish and so our volunteer support diminishes.

We have found however, that the issues of violence, robbery and life without a home are just as important in June as in January. (Barnes 1982:1)

In the second year, the Central Presbyterian sheltering experience served as a catalyzing experience for many volunteers. Knott's reorganization of the volunteer recruitment system has served to systematize the provision of sheltering. Hundreds of volunteers representing churches and schools were exposed to homelessness for the first time.

THE TUESDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP: BUILDING THE NETWORK.

The sheltering movement had grown rapidly following the opening of Central Presbyterian Church shelter in January 1981. The use of bloc mobilization had the effect of diffusing the idea of sheltering throughout Atlanta's religious network. This had two effects first, a growing interest in homelessness and second, the acceptance of sheltering as a legitimate and feasible way for the religious community to address homelessness. The shelters at Clifton and Central and the evidence of the need provided both the diagnostic and prognostic frames sufficient to organize action. The sense of collective efficacy and excitement felt by early leaders led to their increased interaction in the homeless network. The establishment of the Open Door Community as a full-time religious institution serving the homeless poor, provided an institutional presence and site for organizing action. Beginning in February of 1982, shelter directors and volunteers from Clifton Presbyterian, Central Presbyterian, All Saints Episcopal, Oakhurst Baptist, Trinity United Methodist, First Presbyterian, St Luke's Community Kitchen and the Open Door Community began meeting on Tuesday morning at the Open Door Community for a breakfast and discussion. They called this informal group the Tuesday Morning Fellowship.

The Fellowship served an important function. It was a place for movement leaders to see one another and to share experiences. Successes and failures, as well as practical advice, were

shared. The Fellowship served to coordinate the activities of a number of independent operations and created a network of communication and support.

Over the summer of 1982, the Christian Council and the ad hoc Tuesday Morning Fellowship continued promoting the idea of the religious community's role in providing shelter. This was a successful strategy, and by the fall of 1982, 16 emergency night shelters were open. At the same time, advocates were revising their estimates of the number of homeless. Ed Loring of the Open Door estimated that over 2000 people were homeless in the city. In November of 1982, Loring compiled the first shelter list for the new movement:

Table 1: Partial List of Metro Atlanta Shelters, November 1982.¹⁹

| | |
|---|--|
| Central Presbyterian Church 201 Washington St, SW | Will house and feed 150 persons per night Dec 1-Mar 31 |
| Trinity United Methodist Church 265 Washington St SW | A non-smoking shelter housing and feeding up to 30 men per night Nov 15-Mar 31 |
| Open Door 910 Ponce de Leon Ave | Offers a variety of services, including a luncheon program, clothes closet, limited shelter and bathing facilities |
| St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 1790 La Vista Rd, NE | Will house and feed three to four families per night, depending on size, Dec 1-Mar 31 |
| All Saints Episcopal Church 634 West Peachtree St NW | Will house and feed up to 50 men per night Dec 1-Mar 21 |
| First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta 16 th Street and Peachtree St. | Will house 15 women per night |
| Oakhurst Baptist Church 222 East Lake Drive Decatur | Will house and feed 12 men per night open Nov 15 to March 31 |
| Clifton Presbyterian Church 369 Connecticut Avenue NE | Shelters and feeds 30 men per night open year round |

(Open Door 1982)

Inspired by her experience at the Central Night Shelter, Martha Evans approached the leadership of her Episcopal Church in northeast Atlanta asking for space to open a shelter. A steering committee was formed and St. Bartholomew's family shelter opened in December 1982 providing the first shelter for homeless families in the religious education wing of the church.

¹⁹ This list contains only eight shelters. Not included were the Union Mission, the Women's Mission, the Atlanta Recovery Center, and the Salvation Army.

By the spring of 1983, an ad hoc system of survival services for homeless individuals had begun to form in downtown Atlanta. While most of the new shelters were open only during the winter, they had developed a basic set of amenities: an individual bed (typically a mattress on the floor), restroom and bathing facilities, a rudimentary evening meal, and breakfast. Shelters used the services of the Atlanta Food Bank, securing donated food at a low cost per pound. A mid-day weekday meal was available to homeless people at St. Luke's Episcopal on the northern end of the Central Business district. The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception ran the Saturday soup kitchen. Finally, the problem of where to go during the day was solved when, a coalition of 20 downtown churches, utilizing startup funds provided by real estate developer Tom Cousins, opened Samaritan House, a day shelter, in the spring of 1983.²⁰ Samaritan House provided a place where they could use restrooms, showers, washing machines for their clothes, and find protection from the elements during the day.

Conclusion

In the period from 1979 to the spring of 1983, the religious based system of services to the homeless poor expanded rapidly. The early leadership by Edward Loring and the Clifton Presbyterian Church provided a concrete example of both the need and the possibilities of providing shelter. Loring's participation in a network of white, well-resourced churches in the downtown Atlanta, provided a vehicle for the dissemination of the Catholic Worker model of hospitality. Loring's spoke the language of religion and he used his facility with theological language and writing skills in ways that resonated with other religious leaders.

²⁰ Samaritan House was located at the First Baptist Church on Peachtree and 5th Street. \$38,000 was used to renovate the church's building. The shelter operated for 18 months before conflicts with the First Baptist and the exhaustion of its initial grant forced its closure in the fall of 1984. Samaritan House reopened on the campus of St. Luke's Episcopal in July 1985. The story of Samaritan House is told in Chapter 9.

Appreciation for Loring's example did not immediately translate into the creation of new shelters. Awareness did not translate into personal commitment. Religious leaders wanting to be supportive of Loring's ministry offered him the use of their facilities for emergency use. Safe and warm spaces were a necessary condition for shelter, but lacking food and volunteers they were an untapped resource. There is little indication prior to January of 1981 that any other church was prepared to develop a shelter.

It was the deaths on the streets of Atlanta due to hypothermia that provided the catalyzing event for the next phase of the movement. The depiction of shelter as an emergency service fit more easily into the existing frame of the role of the church than the idea of creating a new program. The establishment of a large visible downtown shelter that relied upon volunteers in turn exposed middle class volunteers to the difficulties and problems of the homeless poor. As Loring explained:

People from different parts of the metro area were able to take their concerns for hunger, shelter and clothing and make them personal. They were able to meet Jesus Christ in a new way – in the body of the poor. There among the volunteers. One of the reasons we can open this year is because the transformations have been extensive. (Jarvis 1981:1)

The personal "transformations" of church members who were deeply embedded in their particular religious networks served to diffuse the salience of homelessness throughout the extensive religious communities of metropolitan Atlanta.

At this point, leaders began emerging in a variety of congregations who developed innovations and increased the complexity of the homeless system. New soup kitchens, specialized shelters, transportation systems were created to provide for gaps in the provision of shelter. In the early 1980's, the sheltering movement was largely a project within the church community, and there is little record of engagement with other nonprofit organizations or with

state agencies. Framing the problem of homelessness as an opportunity for personal engagement with individuals in crisis relieved state actors of culpability.

In the next chapter, I will look at how the leaders of the both the early movement and this new movement framed the homeless poor and shaped the responses to it.

CHAPTER 5: WHERE FRAMES COME FROM: INITIAL POSITIONS ON HOMELESSNESS

In the previous two chapters I have traced the evolving response to homelessness in Atlanta over the last century. Growing out of the evangelical religious revival and progressive movements of the late 1800's, the Mission Movement, Salvation Army and Charity Organization Society created a basic safety net for the homeless and poor. The Salvation Army became integrated into the organized charity system in the 1920s with the creation of the forerunners of the United Way system. The Great Depression strained but did not break this system, and the Atlanta Union Mission emerged as the premiere agency serving the homeless. More broadly, the triumvirate of institutions represented by United Way, the Salvation Army and the Atlanta Union Mission were legitimated as the primary institutions providing a social safety net for the visible poor. The deaths on the streets of Atlanta during the winter of 1980-81 revealed the insufficiency of this system and led to the reemergence of the movement in the form of a new church based volunteer shelter movement in the late 1970's.

In this chapter, I return to this story and explore how homelessness was framed by leaders of the movement during the early and later periods of movement activity. First, I will compare and contrast from a framing perspective how the Salvation Army and Union Mission articulated their responses to homelessness. Second, I will examine how the business community responded to homelessness. Finally, I will examine how early leaders of the modern homeless movement (introduced in Chapter 4) began the process of articulating a frame to explain and respond to homelessness.

In this chapter I return to the model of framing I use as the principal tool in this analysis (Snow and Benford 2000). Social movement actors create a package of interpretations – a frame

– that answers the question, what is going on here? There are three framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. A diagnostic frame identifies the problem and establishes who or what is responsible. In this case, I will be demonstrating how the various actors described (explained) homelessness. Prognostic framing explicates what is to be done about the condition (homelessness), who is to do it, and how it will be addressed. Finally, motivational framing provides the emotional and inspirational exhortation for action. The motivational frame provides the sense of urgency that motivates individuals and groups to become concerned and take action.

EVANGELICAL RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

The Salvation Army and the Atlanta Union Mission are two institutions that grew out of the evangelical revival movement of the mid-1800's. The Salvation Army can trace its history directly back to that movement, while the Atlanta Union Mission is, the most recent and most enduring of a series of missions which developed in Atlanta. The evangelical movement from which both spring was the enduring expression of "a large body of earnest evangelicals who entered the slums because of their concern for the souls of men, but who developed wide-ranging social services programs" (Magnuson 1977:ix).

SALVATION ARMY: "Throw Out the Lifeline"

Throw out the lifeline across the
 dark wave
 There is a brother whom someone
 should save;
 Somebody's brother! O who then
 will dare
 To throw out the lifeline, his
 peril to share? (Crosby 1897:136)

For over a century, The Salvation Army has been responding to homelessness and poverty in Atlanta. From the early days of evangelism in the saloon district, with the signature marching brass band and distinctive uniforms, the Salvation Army has moved in the public

perception from an amusement to a well-regarded part of the social service system. Watson (2001) claims it is the “most effective organization in the U.S.” Currently, the Salvation Army describes itself as:

an international movement . . . an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible, its ministry is motivated by the love of God, its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination. (Salvation Army 2005)

The Salvation Army traces its origins to the work of William Booth, a Methodist minister who established the Christian Mission in the East End slum of London in the in 1878. Initially, Booth intended to follow the same pattern as that of other rescue missions – that through evangelical efforts, the poor and working class would be brought into the established churches. The depth of the misery he encountered led him to reorganize his mission into the Salvation Army in 1878 and to adopt the distinctive military structure that has been its hallmark since. Booth’s Army declared war on sin and poverty.

Booth lays out his analysis and prescription in his most well known publication, *In Darkest England* and *The Way Out* (1984 [1890]). *In Darkest England* graphically depicts the life of the poor and homeless in late 19th century England. The military discipline of the Salvationist made *In Darkest England* a critical piece of literature that guided the Salvationist framing of homelessness. Booth provides a vivid description of the conditions of the poor, evoking the images of Dante’s *Inferno*.

Darkest England²¹ may be described as consisting broadly of three circles, one within another. The outer and widest circle is inhabited by the starving and the homeless, but honest, Poor. The second is those who live by Vice; and the third and innermost region at the center is people by those who exist by Crime. The whole of the three circles is

²¹ The term “Darkest England” alludes to Henry M. Stanley’s (1888) account of his travels in Africa, which captivated the interest of the English speaking world in the late 1890’s with tales of the exotic. Booth plays on this interest by using jungle metaphors for the situation of the poor in England. Stanley, Henry M. 1890 *In Darkest Africa*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons

sodden with Drink. Darkest England has many more public houses than the Forest of Aruwimi has rivers, of which Mr. Stanley sometimes has to cross three in half-an-hour. (Booth 1984[1890]:32)

Booth offers a complex presentation of the state of the poor in England. They are a heterogeneous group, but central to their destitution is the use of alcohol – Drink.

The borders of this great lost land are not sharply defined. They are continually expanding and contracting. Whenever there is a period of depression of trade, they stretch; when prosperity returns, they contract. So far as individuals are concerned, there are none among the hundreds of thousands who live upon the outskirts of the dark forest who can truly say that they or their children are secure from being hopelessly entangled in its labyrinth. The death of a bread-winner, a long illness, a failure in the City, or any one of a thousand other causes which might be named will bring within the first circle those who at present imagine themselves free from all danger of actual want. The death rate in Darkest England is high. Death is the great jail-deliverer of the captives. But the dead are hardly in the grave before their places are taken by others. Some escape, but the majority, their health sapped by their surroundings, become weaker and weaker, until at last they fall by the way, perishing without hope at the very doors of the palatial mansions which, maybe, some of them helped to build. (Booth 1984[1890]:32)

For Booth, the homeless poor are “gradually, but surely, being sucked down into the quicksand of modern life” (Booth 1984[1890]:39). The solution to this destitution and debasement is not relief “They stretch out their grimy hands to us in vain appeal, not for charity, but for work” (Booth 1984[1890]:39).

Booth presented dramatic descriptions of destitution and hopelessness as well as inspiring accounts of the work of his “soldiers.” The solution Booth proposed was to reform society and to organize the poor into collectives where work and discipline would provide stability. Essentially, he was proposed a policy and plan to create full-employment. Central to this plan was his analysis of work and the saving quality of work. Work was the tool to redeem the hell of the poor and to save them from the swamp of Darkest England. Lack of work, drink, and poverty were evil. Salvationists declared war on these. In his war against evil, Booth organized an army of committed followers in military discipline and with the distinctive emblems of

military life – hierarchical organization, uniforms, ranks and written orders. This army was organized to call people to repentance and salvation and to provide the way out of the jungle.

Booth's vision of a revolutionary reorganization of society was tempered quickly, in part due to the desire to attract and retain sponsors. Booth quickly found that wealthy donors were attracted to his emphasis on military discipline and reform of the poor, but put off by his plans for social reconstruction. To secure the future of the movement, the program for the indigent poor was emphasized. What remained was the focus on restoring discipline among the poor through limited assistance and self-help.

While the Salvation Army adherents worked in the slums among the poor, they “did not delve into the social and economic causes of poverty or formulate a systematic plan to relieve it”; rather, they believed that the primary cause of poverty was that “people lived sinful lives and needed salvation” (Winston 1999:71). Providing limited relief, shelter, food, and assistance were the means for developing relationships that led to personal conversion and salvation for recipients.

The prognostic model of the Salvation Army was moral reform achieved through acts of charity and disciplined opportunities for redemption. Hunger, poverty, homelessness and other social ills reached resolution not through change in social policy, but through individual reform and turning from sin. Social conditions are fundamentally caused by sin, both a sinful world and sinful behavior on the part of the poor. The solution to this sin is not condemnation, but the loving offer of another way. So the Salvation Army's diagnostic framing of homelessness was the reality of a sinful world. Redemption through work, self-discipline and, ultimately, acceptance of Jesus Christ provided the prognostic frame. The motivation for this work is fundamentally religious – Christian and evangelical – to win converts. Evangelicals are drawn to

what is referred to as the Great Commission – the charge by the resurrected Jesus to spread his teachings to the world. This commission has been the primary justification for missionary activity.

The signature Salvation Army Hymn “Throw Out the Lifeline,” excerpted above, provides a capsule of the Army’s approach. Booth used the image of rescue workers on the shoreline throwing the lifeline to drowning men. The scenario requires that rescuers, viz. the Salvation Army, go into danger, live with the poor in slums and saloons, to offer the chance of redemption. But central to this understanding of poverty and despair is the other aspect, the lifeline thrown to rescue sinners. A central evangelical teaching is the opportunity for free will; that is, individuals must be able to freely accept (and reject) the offer in order to be saved. The Salvation Army is offering their services – food, clothing, shelter, work and disciplined self control as a lifeline to a better life. The willingness of Salvation Army shelters to provide several nights of free lodging is tied to this concept. The Salvationist rendered service and provided the resources for redemption, but demanded disciplined evidence of rehabilitation from their recipients.

The Salvation Army’s message and methods received positive reception from donors from early in the movement to the present. The austere life of its adherents, the focus on individual acts of charity, and the religious emphasis, combined to create a favorable impression in the public.

The Salvationist demand for tangible evidence of change and for a disciplined approach was deeply in accord with societal concerns over the deserving poor and cultural values associated with work. Thus, the Salvationists framing of the homeless served to embrace and reinforce the well-established cultural values and norms concerning work and self-discipline. At

the same time, the Salvationists challenged dominant cultural depictions of the poor and homeless as undeserving and worthless. The Salvationist prescription provided a structured pathway to return to wholesome community life. The Salvation Army work program functioned as a process of status restoration, reversing their degraded status (Garfinkle 1956).

The Salvation Army promoted a Protestant work ethic (diligence, hard work, restraint of expenses) approach to social problems. In a 1927 letter to the *Atlanta Constitution* editor, the Salvationist program of work with single men was laid out by Staff Captain Range:

This department [Salvation Army Industrial Department] is responsible for unattached or homeless men who find themselves in distress in Atlanta, whose difficulties are not complicated by dependent families and who show a willingness to work and help themselves.

This particular department is not supported by gifts of money, through the Community Chest or any other medium, but is supported entirely by the work of the men who come to us for help, in collecting, sorting, repairing old clothing, old furniture and other waste material. This method is based on the belief, amply supported by experience, that a man can be rehabilitated only through his own efforts and that to provide support without effort is ruinous to self respect and encourages beggary, except in cases of actual sickness or other emergency which our relief department meets with funds supplied by the Community Chest, in addition to sharing responsibility for family cases with other relief and welfare agencies. ("Abolishment" 1927:3)

Here the Salvationist approach to the individual and rehabilitation is outlined; the process of rehabilitation is one that requires individual effort on the part of the distressed. Salvationists provide the opportunity for labor, not for wages, but for redemption [if not that, at least food & shelter]. Giving a man (sic) assistance without expecting him in exchange to work for that aid was "ruinous" to his self respect and only "encourages beggary" (unless due to illness or and emergency). In other words, giving funds or services to those who can do for themselves (viz., giving charity) damages the individual and prevents his restoration. This view legitimates the restriction of charity to those who are "deserving," and assists in distinguishing between the

deserving and undeserving poor. For Salvationists, work in itself is redemptive and restores the capable man to dignity.

To every able bodied man who comes to us we offer some sort of work which he can do, through which he can at least earn his board and clothing until he has learned some means of self-support or has been sufficiently helped toward normal, mental, spiritual and physical condition to obtain and hold employment in the calling he followed before he came to us. (“Abolishment” 1927:3)

Thus, Salvationists provided the homeless with the basic necessities –food, shelter and clothing in exchange for work. They maintain, “such men therefore found upon the streets of Atlanta are there of their own choice” (“Abolishment” 1927:3).

Choice implies decision and this is the key to the disciplinary component of Salvationist program. Salvationists’ offer rehabilitation, but the offer can be refused. Those who remain on the streets chose to reject assistance and must be rejected from charity. In one of their few statements of public policy toward the poor, local leaders of the Salvation Army asserted in a 1927 letter to the *Atlanta Constitution* (“Abolishment” 1927) its strong support for the efforts of the Community Chest and Chamber of Commerce to ban begging on the streets of Atlanta.

The Salvationist vision demands the poor and homeless change their behavior. Encouraging change requires persistence, diligence, and loving firm attention to the poor. For Salvationists, homelessness exists as a moral condition requiring change on the part of those suffering through it. Salvationists supported anti-begging legislation in the early twentieth century consistent with this frame. The homeless and the poor must receive compassionate tough love. The unemployed in the name of respecting their dignity of the and the value of labor, must work their way to redemption

The Salvationists were well established throughout the nation by the 1930’s. The addicted and the mentally ill complicated the Salvationist program of work and discipline.

Traditional Salvationist strategy rested upon the belief that alcoholism existed as a moral condition overcome through an act of disciplined will. Gradually, Salvationist approaches incorporated social work casework models of intervention. In the 1950's, Salvationists incorporated principles of alcohol recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous into their own assistance and recovery programs (McKinley 1986).

Considered in framing terms, the Salvation Army provides a tight and well-defined frame. This approach, articulated by Booth in the late 1800's, is instilled in the officer corps of the Salvation Army through a two-year training process, and maintained through a centrally organized disciplinary structure. The Army maintains its internal discipline and standards of service through a book of orders from superiors.

Diagnostically, the Salvation Army has consistently highlighted the problems of the poor and homeless and attempted to ameliorate them. But in general, the Salvation Army has avoided a structural analysis of homelessness or poverty. As the Salvation Army frames the issue, the core of the problem is the habits of the poor. While there is an implied critique of social structures, it primarily places the responsibility for these conditions on the individual who lacks the means or motivation for their rehabilitation.

Prognostically, the Salvation Army provides a practical and structured approach to how to rehabilitate the individual and who is to do it. This method is institutionalized in a series of officer's manuals and procedures that organize the work of different departments. The solution is for the Army to provide food, shelter and [unpaid] work to the able-bodied, who, in exchange, comply by participating in the Salvation Army work routines. While the Army provides temporary lodging for transients, this is universally time limited; the emphasis is on long-term rehabilitation of those who have fallen to the bottom of the social system. The central activity of

this rehabilitation is work assigned and supervised by the Salvation Army. In the Army's view, work itself is transformative.

When considering the motivational framing for the Salvation Army, it is useful to consider the motivation of the adherents who make up its Army of officers (ministers) and soldiers (members) and its much larger body of who provide substantial financial support. The extensive training of Salvation Army Officers is aimed at instilling the Salvationists procedures and doctrine. Central to this socialization is the cultivation of a deep commitment to the church and to its mission. But the Salvationists depend heavily on public support. The perception of the Salvation Army as an efficient dedicated organization, the visibility of the Army through its perennial Kettle campaign (red kettles are set outside commercial establishments accompanied by bell ringers who ask for donations), all heighten the motivation for supporters to participate in the work of the Army through financial contributions.

Union Mission: "Rescue the Perishing"

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the might to save. (Crosby 1897:136.)

Out of the evangelical movement of the 1800's, two institutional responses emerged sharing similar theologies, but diverging in their organizational forms. While the Salvation Army represents a highly centralized and rationalized approach to urban poverty and homelessness, the Mission movement grew from a similar social context and similar motivation. Like Salvationists; the rescue movement traces its origins to the 19th century evangelical movements. The Mission movement approached the problem of the homeless poor in a less systematized way than the Army. This reflects an organizational difference. Salvationists are a tightly controlled, centrally organized body directed through military discipline and "orders."

There is communication and learning within the organization. In contrast, the Mission movement, consisting of individual mission organizations, is loosely affiliated through an Association of Gospel Rescue Missions. Individual missions are independent, and manifest idiosyncratic practices emerging from local conditions and leadership. But while the Salvationists can be thought of as a disciplined army, the Mission movement has traditionally had a more individualistic character, tending to coalesce around a leader. “We have defined the work Mission as one sent from the church (a body of believers) with the Gospel (Good News) to a group of unbelievers to rescue from actual or impending disaster” (Paul 1959[1946]:14).

In line with this, the cardinal hymn played by the Mission movement was “Rescue the Perishing,” and again this provides an entry to understanding the Mission’s approach. Like the Salvationist, the Mission movement viewed itself as entering into the danger of the “dark streets of great modern cities” to rescue the fallen. Rescue “implies danger and risk on the part of the rescuer and rescued.” The rescue movement views these outsiders through the lenses of sin

and the penalty of sin – driven out of the garden into a country, the very ground was cursed; down through the ages, that is the story of the outcast, the man in the gutter, the homeless wanderer, the black sheep of the family. It is the story of sin, pleasure and penalty. The third Chapter of Genesis is a rescue Mission story. (Paul 1959 [1946])

The Mission movement shares the view that the cause of poverty and homelessness result primarily (if not exclusively) from sin and personal failing. The diagnostic framing of both the Salvationists and the Mission movement are similar. People are poor because of sin. Sinfulness, is not the occasion for judgemental rejection, services provide the opportunity to “rescue” the poor and homeless.

Salvationists and the Mission Movement have less similarity when it comes to the prognostic framing of homelessness. In part, this is due to the different organizational structure and approach. As we have seen, Salvationists place critical emphasis on the importance and

saving nature of work. Work, and the cultivation of the traits associated with work, is central to their prognostic framing. In contrast, the Mission movement varies greatly in the weight and prominence given to work and it is not the central feature of their approach.

The motto of the Rescue Mission Movement, “No creed but Christ, no law but love,” reflects its evangelical approach, but also provides another contrast with the Salvationist program. The Mission hopes to cultivate in its guests the experience of being saved and reborn. The other programs undertaken by Missions –shelter, food, and medical services – are to create the opportunity for this saving experience. A regular feature of the Mission experience is the required evening sermon.

The Mission creed also highlights the non-denominational approach of the Mission movement. While Salvationists are adherents to a particular denominational movement, the Mission does not attempt compete with other churches efforts and encourages their participation with them.

Salvationist emphasis on labor as the means by which the homeless will work out their redemption is also at variance with the Mission’s prognostic framing. The Mission, in the period we are considering, provided lodging, and for some residents, semi-permanent housing. The Mission provided a few days of free lodging, but after that required payment. The Mission didn’t inquire into the source of their lodger’s funds. Working in the labor pool, begging on the street, finding part-time employment, selling blood, all provided the funds necessary for the night. In some cases, the Mission provides work for those unable to pay, but this is not programmatic, or central to the prognostic framing, as it is in the Salvationist approach.

For evangelical Christians, the great commission is a compelling motivation to support the Mission movement. Like Booth’s imagery in *Darkest Africa*, reaching “the homeless and the

outcast, the man in the gutter, the homeless wanderer, and the black sheep of the family” is part of providing the opportunity for redemption. The call to redemption is fundamentally based in sin.

To motivate the financial supporters the Mission engages in a broad-based community funding appeal for support using direct mail and newspaper advertisement. A typical Mission solicitation from the middle part of the 20th century depicts an older seedy-looking white man sitting at a table with a full plate of food before him. The accompanying written material provides check-off boxes listing donations amounts to serve the needs of “hungry and homeless,” “hurting and hopeless,” “forgotten and discouraged,” “despondent and lonely,” and simply, “needy people.”

While early on, Salvationists emphasized labor as a central feature of their approach, the Union Mission movement has been much less programmatic. As the Mission movement adopted the disease model of Alcoholics Anonymous, they have incorporated work programs as both fundraising vehicles and sheltered employment. The Union Mission established a series of thrift stores and a work farm, Potter’s House, near Athens, Georgia to provide rehabilitation. Like Salvationists, the Mission movement had little interest in a political analysis of social problems. Its focus was on the redemption of individuals.

The Union Mission and Salvation Army share an individualistic perspective on homelessness and poverty. Diagnostically, it is the individual who needs to be redeemed both materially and spiritually. Prognostically, the Mission movement undertakes to be available to the “lost” by establishing a physical presence in the inner city. To draw men to them, the Mission provides a bed and food at a cheap rate. The Mission provides the setting in which spiritual tasks may be undertaken.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY FRAMING – CAPITOL OF THE NEW SOUTH

In Chapter 3, I reviewed how religious and the emergent charitable system served to provide alternatives for the homeless poor within the context of an aggressive campaign to position Atlanta as the Capital of the New South. In this section, I will review how this political/economic elite framed the homeless, focusing particularly on the period up to the emergence of the modern movement.

In Atlanta, the business community, through a variety of organizations and networks, has been a central engine for shaping the city. Emerging from the civil war, business leaders early assumed the leadership to reshape the city. Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* promoted the term “the New South” to describe the new conditions. The New South theme was delivered most powerfully in his December 22, 1886 to the New England Society of New York City.

There is a New South, not through protest against the Old, but because of new conditions, not adjustments, and, if you please, new ideas and aspirations. We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work.

We have raised a brave and beautiful city [Atlanta]; that somehow or other we have caught the sunshine in the bricks and mortar of our homes, and we have builded therein not one ignoble prejudice or memory (Grady 1971:8)

Atlanta was the capitol of the New South, presented as having a stable and contained workforce. Grady and his successors formed a cohesive political and business elite in the late 1800’s that worked to promote the economic interests of the city. Central to this project was the cultivation of a good image of Atlanta as a place for investment (Garofalo 1976). For much of the 20th century, business leaders and political leaders were closely connected and shared a common frame for positioning the city as an economic engine for the South. Central to this notion of image was the unchallenged view that economic growth and business were good for the city and central to its success.

White business interests dominated the coalition. As Grady had understood, the selling of Atlanta's "good business climate" was the key to attracting investment. Atlanta's reputation as a city with pliable workers and good race relations was critical to this image. A series of white mayors successfully negotiated to keep the black community sufficiently subdued to maintain civil order.

Within this context, the homeless represented both idle labor and, more critically, the threat of disorder. While idle black labor was problematic, black labor was largely controlled through the convict labor system and Calvin Vagrancy Statutes well into the 1960's.

The visible white poor, male and female, challenged city leaders and ignited civic concern. Business leaders and charitable organizations stigmatized the visible poor and fanned moral panics over the threat they posed to civil order. Campaigns of social control replete with new legislation and policing followed. The Missions and the Salvation Army provided opportunities for the down-and-out through programs of redemption and work. Homeless persons who failed to avail themselves of the carrot provided by such organizations received the attention of police control. The surplus labor supplied the flexible labor pool needed by a growing city. When labor conditions provided work, contingent labor worked, when labor conditions slackened, campaigns against vagrancy and begging maintained order. Business interests strongly supported these campaigns. The 1927 campaign against beggars, for instance, received the endorsement by a variety of business institutions, including the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

From the time of The Great Depression, the Atlanta Union Mission and the Salvation Army both represented the community responses to homelessness in Atlanta until the late 1970's. Both relied upon community financial support, the Mission through direct appeals and

the Salvation Army through the United Way. Atlanta's business leaders provided important support to both organizations and generally viewed them as meeting the city's need for such services.

The downtown business community promoted a vision for the kind of downtown community life they hoped to establish. From the standpoint of the organized business-government community, the visible homeless in downtown Atlanta represented an impediment to creating the kind of climate they hoped to create.

Downtown business leaders believed creating and maintaining a strong urban core provided the best hope for continuing regional success. Cardinal indicators of this strength were continued investment and growth. Prognostically, city leaders sought to undertake initiatives to make the city safe and accessible for investment. During white rule, urban renewal projects created large population transfers to meet the needs of the urban core. Even as white flight and disinvestment led to decline in the 1960's and 1970's, downtown place entrepreneurs continued to promote their vision (Logan & Molotch 1987).²² The Central Area Study I (CAS/I), produced in 1971 and provided a template for a revitalized urban core.

Central Atlanta's economy and that of the metropolitan region are closely interdependent. Without a strong central core, the metropolitan economy ceases to exert its critical leverage on the Southeast region; without the support of an expanding metropolitan area, the central area loses its capacity for offering the specialized services that are so obviously in demand. (CAS/I Summary 1971:1)

²² Logan and Molotch (1987) contend that the political economy of cities can be traced to a "growth coalition" composed of interests invested in place. Principal participants in these growth coalitions are "place entrepreneurs" defined as "the people directly involved in the exchange of places and collection of rents." (p. 32). The growth coalition is interested in promoting *value-free development* that increases the value of property. Central Atlanta Progress as the representative of downtown business interest has been a key promoter of place improvements and quality of life enhancements on the basis of attracting investment to the city. This was promoted as for the good of all, but the benefits were, in fact, unevenly distributed.

Although CAS/1 does not mention homelessness as an issue, other sources in the 1960s used homelessness to both explain the decline of downtown Atlanta and to mobilize white and black leaders. The homeless were visible markers of urban disorder threatening the urban core and served as part of the new diagnostic frame. If the central area was the heart of the city, the homeless threatened its life. “Homeless” and “winos” were blamed for the decline and closure of Underground Atlanta, a downtown entertainment complex. If the homeless and winos were a threat to urban life, then barriers must be created between them and the middle class visitors downtown interests sought to attract. As a prognostic strategy to increase the perception of safety, fences were erected around the Underground Atlanta complex. An Underground Atlanta Business leader defended the fences, John Stephenson told local television reporters in 1978:

People [visitors to Underground Atlanta] feel safer inside a fence... The problem of the winos and beggars and the panhandlers – that’s all but disappeared. The fence has an amazing constructive effect on bringing in the people you want and keeping out the people we don’t want. (Miyata 2008)

The visible homeless were associated with disorder and crime and business leaders lobbied relentlessly for more police and more arrests.²³ While the homeless were frequently used as the indicator of disorder, the safety factor also raised the sensitive issue of race. Black empowerment meant greater presence of black Atlantans in the central area.

For downtown business interests, and eventually for the Jackson administration, the critical issue became the *perception* of safety in the downtown area. Business judged the efficacy of the first black mayor by his response to these perception issues. In seeking to reduce the visibility of unattached black men on the downtown street there was a fundamental contradiction. The city’s businesses needed their labor. The hotel and convention industries

²³ The Central Business District was comparatively safer than many Atlanta neighborhoods. Nonetheless, business leaders regularly demanded increased police presence in the central business district to create the perception of safety.

were heavy users of low-wage employees and contingent employment. Atlanta's labor pools, which supplied tourist, construction, and industrial contingent labor, were also conveniently located downtown near the work sites. The challenge became how to maintain the pool of cheap labor while reducing the "threat" their visibility posed.

The most visible of the poor were day laborers who gathered at "hungry corner" on Decatur Street between Pryor and Ivy Streets. In 1975, the business community approached the Jackson administration to address the presence of day laborers in the downtown area. According to Dan Danner, a program director, the program was intended "as a means of getting the quote-unquote derelicts and drunks from being visible downtown" (Danner in Graham 1987). Using a combination of federal and city funds, the Downtown Day Labor Center was created to move day laborers off of street corners on Decatur Street and inside the building. Amenities such as restrooms, newspapers and refuge from the elements were provided. Dan Sweat, head of the Central Atlanta Progress, portrays how business viewed the issue. "While it didn't solve the problems downtown, it has provided a good resource for a number of those folks who do not want to work on a day basis" (Schatz 1980:1).

Visibility of homeless men continued to be the major complaint of the business community. In 1979, the business community pressured the Jackson Administration on threat to downtown safety and the perception of urban disorder posed by homeless persons occupying Central City Park and Plaza Park during the day. "Businessmen and community leaders have become increasingly upset over what they say is the growing volume of drunks and litter in Central City and other downtown parks." Jackson ordered city parks to be cleaned up, approving the use of water sprinklers to remove "drunks and litter" from the parks. Jackson argued that the

“crime problem in downtown Atlanta” was largely due to “drunks committing many thefts” (Willis 1979:10A).

Despite these initiatives, the perception of crime and disorder remained a central complaint of downtown business interests. In early 1980, Central Atlanta Progress began distributing ‘harassment forms’ to downtown visitors to document cases of threatening behavior on the streets leading to one of the first confrontations with the leaders of the new movement.

Atlanta’s business leaders continued to grapple with framing their policy response to the visible poor downtown. Homelessness and the visible poor were in the purview of the Public Safety Committee of Central Atlanta Progress. In August of 1981, that committee issued a preliminary report that revealed their framing of the issue. They argued, “rehabilitation is oversold” as a solution, and that “*Atlanta is a mecca for: Alcoholics/derelicts, Mental outpatients Street toughs, and Transients. THIS MECCA IN PART DUE TO A COMFORTABLE SYSTEM* [emphasis in original]” (CAP 1981). The analysis of the Rehabilitation Subcommittee reveals their framing of the visible poor. Again, the meta-frame is that the Central Area is vital to the life of the region, and threats to that vitality must be addressed aggressively. According to the subcommittee, Atlanta had become an attractive location, a “mecca” or a magnet. This idea that Atlanta provides a comfortable setting echoes Foster’s depiction of Atlanta’s downtown skid row, where “cheap hotels, liquor stores, commercial blood banks, and day-labor offices [in the urban core] encompasses everything a derelict needs for survival in metropolitan Atlanta” (Foster 1980:22).

Despite the strong language and urgency city leaders expressed to protect the urban core, it is not accurate to portray them as totally unsympathetic to the needs of the poor. The Rehabilitation Subcommittee report highlighted the basic requirements for effective

rehabilitation – “shelter, clothing, food, and education” and identified the problem of “lack of coordination” of the many programs. However, having diagnosed the problems of social service delivery in downtown Atlanta, it is less clear how motivated these leaders were to resolve what they analyzed as the underlying problems, rather than its manifestations.

Throughout the 20th century, the downtown business and political interests were preoccupied with maintaining a good climate in which to do business. Diagnostically, the challenge to city leaders was to establish and maintain the business conditions that encouraged and fostered a sense of safety, security and order in the central city. The coalition of the political and economic elites maintained a racialized system that controlled and excluded both black and white poor. But it was imperfect and crises occurred. The visible poor and homeless threatened this stability with disorder and were routine lightening rods for community concern. When they were viewed as threatening the good business climate, campaigns of social control were initiated.

In the 1970’s, diagnostic framing became complicated by the breakdown of the white-dominated political structure and the elimination of racial barriers. The central challenge became how to maintain a safe and orderly downtown environment lacking the social controls previously available. The visible poor on the streets threatened public order and safety repetitive.

Prognostically, this new order required more active intervention. Business community demands for increased police presence, the fencing of Underground Atlanta, the creation of the Downtown Day Labor Center, the clearance of the downtown parks and the solicitation of complaints of downtown “harassment,” all served to increase pressure on the visible poor to stay out of sight.

The homeless as targets of prognostic framing and the designation of the visible poor as threats to the city’s success reveals the intensity of the motivational framing underlying a century

of leadership by Atlanta's business/political regime. Any sign of disorder threatened and heightened concern over the image and the safety of downtown. Atlanta's place as a convention and tourism center, its racial divisions, and the poverty of the city served to create a potent mix. To preserve the image of order and safety, those with a stake in its fortunes must jealously guard the downtown.

MODERN MOVEMENT LEADERS DEVELOP A FRAME

In the last two sections, I have described how downtown business, the Salvation Army and the Mission Movement approached homelessness. These approaches represented the dominant frames for the first three-quarter's of the 20th century. These provide context out of which the new movement developed.

In this section, I return to the research question raised by Benford (1997), namely, how are frames constructed in the early period of movement building? I examine this question through the experiences of early leaders of the modern movement. We have already seen how these leaders created a small group of shelters in Atlanta beginning in 1979. The question now is: how did they frame these experiences? In other words, what did they think homelessness was about? As I will show, for many of these leaders, the movement began from a sense of crisis without a well-thought out vision. The experience of providing shelter and having to articulate what they learned provided the basis for their subsequent framing of homelessness. The importance of leaders is that in the early 1980's they were creating a new frame to explain and deal with homelessness. Drawing on this framing they created a network of new shelters, services and social movement organizations to address what they perceived to be the diagnostic and prognostic accounts of homelessness.

Framing Hospitality – Eduard Loring and Murphy Davis

As I traced in Chapter 4, Ed Loring and Murphy Davis came to Clifton Presbyterian Church as ministers in the 1977 with an interest and desire to work with the poor in Atlanta. But the simple motivation and interest to work with the poor provided neither a program nor a focus for action. They shared a deep commitment to a Christianity engaged beyond the church walls with matters of social justice. Loring had been involved in protest activities of the civil rights movement during the late 1960's. Both Loring and Davis combined a racial analysis to their criticism of the racial justice system. They based their social action orientation on their Christian roots and framed their interest in terms of justice. Central to this social action was an analysis of the state and economic order as new forms of domination. Building on the work of liberation theology, the state was part of the domination system that Christians were called to resist.

This religious ideology provided an orientation and fueled a motivation to engage in new forms of action, but did not provide a more precise program. In framing terms, Loring, Davis, and the core group at Clifton had the motivational framing to engage in action with the poor and had the rudiments of a diagnostic frame which critiqued the existing social order, but lacked specificity of either a particular issue on which to focus, or a prognostic frame which would provide a clear program for what should be done. By the late 1970's, in Atlanta, there was a small group of people motivated to engage in action, with a church base that provided basic resources for action, but lacked a particular target to direct their energy towards.

As I described in Chapter 4, the catalyst that transformed this situation was the visit of Loring and Davis to the New York City Catholic Worker House in January 1979. This Catholic Worker House of Hospitality provided a concrete example of how they might respond to conditions in Atlanta. Experiencing the actuality of the Catholic Worker Movement at the House

of Hospitality and reading Dorothy Day's autobiography provided a concrete example of a form of engaged Christianity that lived in solidarity with the poor. The central characteristics of the worker movement are personal responsibility, nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer and hospitality to the poor.

In addition to Day's autobiography, the Catholic Worker movement provided an extensive written record of inspirational books, newspapers and pamphlets describing their life. But while the Workers are voluminous writers, they are also anarchists, so operational manuals and precise programs were less a part of their culture of action than a general attitude towards the poor. This reservoir of inspirational writing and reflection provided the opportunity for creativity and innovation as they created their particular response to homelessness. However, the inspirational story failed to provide sufficient energy for mobilization. The Catholic Worker movement provided one element of the diagnostic and prognostic framing, as well as an inspirational example for them to emulate.

The simplest route would have been for Davis and Loring to simply replicate the Catholic Worker model at Clifton Presbyterian. Alternately, they could have migrated to participate in a Catholic Worker house to learn the ropes of such service. They chose to do neither. Instead, they creatively merged the Catholic Worker example into a progressively more elaborate program of action. As a first step, they took core elements of the Catholic Worker model – the image of hospitality, the framing of the homeless as “God's ambassadors,” and the personalist approach to assuming responsibility for action. Loring and Davis, along with their fellow congregants merged these elements into the existing congregation rather than creating a separate institution [that would come later]. Clifton Presbyterian became the crucible for experimenting with Catholic Worker teachings. The life of voluntary poverty, hospitality to the poor and social

activism that characterized the Catholic Worker movement were more in the character of a monastic order rather than a church congregation serving a diverse group.

Provided shelter at Clifton Presbyterian led Ed Loring, Murphy Davis and Rob Johnson to create a model of service with homeless men, but even as they engaged in this service, new elements emerged. The small scale of the Clifton Presbyterian shelter (30 men) and the semi-permanent status of regular shelter guests combined to generate a sense of responsibility for the shelter. Shelter provider (i.e., church members) and the homeless guests began to collaborate to create the shelter experience. Rather than passive recipients of church charity, homeless men began actively participating in the provision of the shelter. Men began volunteering to set up tables, wash dishes, clean the sanctuary space and clean up the grounds around the shelter. In turn, these homeless “regulars” provided orientation to newcomers to the church’s shelter. Such empowerment represented a new and unique innovation in sheltering. This dimension of sheltering had not been strongly emphasized in either the Catholic Worker or Snyder’s Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV) models of shelters. This outcome may have been a unique product of Clifton Presbyterian’s small size, a regular body of men, and relatively small core of volunteers who provided the service.

For Ed Loring and the group that later would form the Open Door Community, the problem of homelessness and the response to homelessness was by 1982 tied to larger societal issues. In his December 1982 testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, Loring described the extent of homelessness in Atlanta and then followed that up by saying: “We need to have conversations about housing and employment, to include decent shelter for those who may never produce rent moneys, and that they may find secure housing” (Loring 1982:2). Loring ties homelessness to the employment

system and to the private housing market. He is one of the first Atlanta leaders to highlight the connection between the ability of individuals to secure employment and to afford the private housing system. Diagnostically, Ed Loring connected homelessness to the problematic linkage between the housing and employment systems that do not meet the needs of people who cannot earn sufficient income to “produce rent moneys” to obtain “secure” housing. Prognostically, for Loring, the solution to this was to insure that everyone has “decent shelter.” Loring didn’t specify the form of that shelter. He continued:

There is in Georgia money being made available for the old poor and even some of the new poor. It is called construction monies for prison and jails. We are finding more and more people going to jails and precisely the people who are coming out onto the streets. There are more young black males in the State of Georgia going to prison, coupled with elderlies (sic) because there is no place for them and there is no housing. (Loring 1982:1)

In the first part of his statement Loring highlighted the need to provide decent shelter to those without. In the preceding quote and the one immediately below, he argues that this shelter is already being provided in the form of prisons and jails. Again he returns to a diagnostic account of the conditions leading to homelessness. He also implicitly answers the concerns over the cost of providing for those without secure housing. In his view, the state is already funding a housing program for the poor through the jail system. In turn, the incarceration system creates more homelessness. Loring’s diagnostic framing places highlights that the government was currently paying for housing (prisons and jails). The question becomes not whether to pay for housing, but the kind of housing that will be supported.

Millions of dollars are being put aside for new prison construction or enlarging prisons. The Federal Bureau of Prisons submits its budget. When the public [sic] submits its budget, it does it on the projected unemployment rate. It is a way in which we provide some housing for the poor and homeless in our midst (Loring 1982:1).

In response to objections to state support for housing (subsidized public housing had been declining under the administration of President Ronald Reagan), Loring reframes prison

construction by tying it to the growth of unemployment and homelessness. He contends that prisons were a form of publicly funded housing.

Loring then uses the word “home” to demonstrate his framing of the spiritual or social condition of American “abundance.” While many Americans are without housing, many more are desperately isolated; inequality has not built the sense of community that resolves his diagnosis of the spiritual malaise of American society.

We talked today; let me finally say, about homelessness. In many ways what we are talking about is houselessness. There are thousands of people not having homes and no place to go. We also have in this nation many people who own houses but suffer desperately from homelessness. Some people own two or three houses; yet suffer desperately from homelessness. (Loring 1982:1)

Loring offers a spiritual analysis of the growing problem. People without houses and linked to those with houses through their common alienation and loneliness. Loring links together those without homes (the homeless) with those who have houses, but lack a sense of home. While those without physical houses are “houseless,” many of those with houses are “homeless.” The homeless and the houseless share a common plight. By shifting the frame from homelessness to houselessness, Loring broadens the scope of his analysis and opens the way for a new prognostic solution to the problem.

One reason the divorce rate and one reason for unhappiness in the employment realm, one reason there is too much loneliness, hurt and brokenness in our society is because it is the fruits of injustice. Those who own houses may well be able to find homes, if we can open our hearts, our pocketbooks, our systems of justice so that everyone may have a house and all of us may work to having a home. (Loring 1982:1)

In this testimony, Loring provides diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing.

Homelessness is part of a much larger complex of problems facing modern America. Divorce, unhappiness, job dissatisfaction, unemployment and materialism are all “the fruits of injustice.”

Even those who are outwardly comfortable and secure may suffer from a society of injustice.

Loring’s solution, his prognostic frame, is to “open our hearts, our pocketbooks, our systems of

justice” so that all can have a physical house and create the possibility of a home. Loring called on Congress and the American people to move beyond acquisitiveness and to create a new sense of home, one creating meaning and space for everyone to be included. The problem of homelessness was much larger than the mere homeless on the streets; it is spiritual reframing encouraging inclusion.

Loring did not wait for Congressional action to create this sense of home. In a later interview Loring describes the climate the Clifton congregation hoped to create in their shelter: “We try to create ...space with the fewest demands, allowing for interpersonal relationships that grow and flower. Out of personal relationships comes advocacy. Out of need comes action” (Jarvis 1982:1).

Bob Bevis – Establishing a Sanctuary

Rev. Robert Bevis, Outreach minister for the Ecumenical Community Ministry (ECM), was the next religious leader to articulate a diagnostic and prognostic vision for the new movement. Ecumenical Community Ministry was a collaboration of First Presbyterian Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cascade United Methodist Church and St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church. By the late 1970s ECM and Bevis were already actively involved in responding to poverty in inner-city Atlanta, particularly in the public housing projects in the urban core. In November of 1980, Bevis wrote Ed Loring:

Saturday, October 18, I was awakened by a telephone at 3:20 a.m. It was a call from a person that had stopped on West Peachtree to aid a badly beaten woman. The woman is about 60 and is one of the homeless ones that wander the streets of the city. She has been by First Church on numerous occasions. We have helped her from time to time. Evidently she knew my home phone number and asked that I be called. Later at Grady I discovered she had been raped by two men and beaten so badly she was almost unrecognizable. (Bevis 1980:1)

It was clear also from this communication that he had provided his home telephone number, and his commitment to the street people was more than just a job. His desire to assist the beaten and raped homeless woman provides the activating event inspiring him to action.

After the call my mind wouldn't stop working. Why doesn't Atlanta have a place for those broken by the rigid demands of an aggressive, achievement oriented society...for those no longer able to cope... for those who fall in the gaps of services offered [sic]...and for those whose minds and/or bodies are worn out? Clifton's night program and St. Luke's soup kitchen are about the only two efforts I know that come close to addressing the need. (Bevis 1980:1)

Bevis provides a critique, a diagnosis of our society, and identifies a need. He frames the problem as the modern "aggressive, achievement" orientation and its "rigid demands" leading to people "fall[ing] through the cracks." The diagnostic frame deployed defines the problem as one in the structure of modern society that leads to the exclusion of those who don't fit in. Unlike Loring, Bevis is not calling for a revolutionary change to society. The "aggressive, achievement oriented" society, is taken as an unalterable, but unfortunate, fact of life, so the solution is to create free spaces within the existing order. Bevis sees the beginnings of a solution in places like St. Luke's Community Kitchen and the Clifton night shelter. These provide places of refuge for those who fail to make it in society. He thinks the model they provide might be replicated:

Why not a piece of real estate operated by caring people where anyone in need can go and spend a 24-hour day or the rest of his/her lifetime? A place with no rehabilitation programs or life changing expectations, but a caring atmosphere where people could feel accepted and possibly might even catch a vision of hope again. As a Catholic order serves the terminally ill cancer patient, why not ministry that serves the terminally ill social misfit? Perhaps it would take another order of nuns or monks to do this...or a community of caring Christians of any stripe. (Bevis 1980:1)

Bevis moves from a diagnosis to prognosis. The way that this situation might be solved is to create a physical and spiritual place where people could go and receive comfort and assistance rather than be bothered. Unlike the Salvationists or even the Union Mission, what Bevis

envisions is a place where people will be accepted as they are without the expectation of change or rehabilitation. Drawing on the model of the Catholic service orders, people who will provide a place of sanctuary and acceptance for those who aren't making it.

I am frustrated continually by the way such people are bounced from place to place, and by my own inability to offer little help that is more than stopgap in nature. Are you interested in discussing this need and possible solutions? (Bevis 1980:1)

Bob Bevis was drawn to participation in the movement as a result of a personal encounter with a homeless woman in crisis. Being called in the middle of the night and learning the rest of the homeless woman's story elicited a broader concern for those who aren't making it. He ties the woman's experience to the broader analysis of how the demands of modern Atlanta leave some people out. This is a critique of the instrumental rationality that dominates modern capitalism, but his critique is not revolutionary. He is not envisioning a change to the system; rather he envisions a place of refuge, of sanctuary for people who don't make it. In some ways, this echoes back to the poorhouse or poor farm idea, but there is a difference. He envisions a place with a minimum of expectations or demands for life change, rather a place like a hospice where those who are ill suited for the demands of modern competitive society could be allowed to be.

Bevis comes to this solution out of frustration that the existing systems of care are not working in any definitive way. The social service bureaucracy sends people from one place to the next for assistance. Bevis envisions something else.

Joanna Adams: Homelessness as temporary crisis

The Reverend Joanna Adams of Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Atlanta emerged as another central figure in the early movement to end homelessness in Atlanta. Like Bevis, Adams also served as an Outreach minister responsible for the Central's involvement in the community and was part of a larger Presbyterian Church network of communication. Central

Presbyterian Church, as we have seen, had a long history of engagement in social problems of downtown Atlanta, including development of rescue missions and medical services for the poor. Adams came to Central Presbyterian as Associate Pastor in 1979. In interviews, she described “her first major lesson as a minister,” concerned a homeless couple. During a welcome reception, she was directed to a “dirty and seedy-looking couple” asking to speak with her. They had arrived in Atlanta “without a home, without jobs, very nearly without hope.” After “three hours on the phone and many phone calls,” she located shelter for the couple, albeit separate shelters requiring the couple to be separated. For Adams, “They were sent from God to save me from thinking that the ministry was just being with nice people and doing nice things. It’s a hurt and broken world out there with a lot of hurt and broken people in it” (Sibley 1986:B1). While this is a powerful and evocative story, there is no evidence that incident immediately prompted her, unlike Bevis, to action. At best, it created openness when she was approached.

For Joanna Adams, sheltering emerged as a result of a personal appeal in her organizational role combined with a sense of crisis. For Adams, responding to homeless arose from the immediate sense of crisis “homeless people were just showing up in great numbers of the streets and sidewalks of Atlanta. A person froze to death a block from the State Capitol” (Adams 2004).

I’ll never forget this. A couple of friends of mine, including Bill Bolling, who was head of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, and that wonderful radical, Ed Loring. And several folks who were cognizant of this, talked to me about using Central’s gymnasium as a centrally located downtown shelter, in the face of this crisis. And I’ll never forget going in to speak to the senior minister, and my great friend and colleague, Dr. P. C. [Ennis], or as everyone called him, Buddy. Saying, “Buddy, they want us to open the gym.” We sat there and talked about it, and I said, “You know, this is a pretty dramatic thing, but I figure we don’t have any *choice*. This is a crisis. And maybe the thing to do would be to go ahead and open the gym temporarily in response to the crisis. And then when the session, that is, the governing board of the church meets, we can ask them forgiveness, rather than asking them for permission now, because we need to respond and there’s no way to get the session there. (Adams 2004)

Thus, what led to the shelter was the direct personal request from activists to use the physical facility of Central Presbyterian Church. Adams was not asked to start a shelter, but only to provide her church's space for it to be provided. In her account of the discussion with the head minister what stands is the sense of crisis, of emergency brought on by the deaths on the streets and the consequences of failing to act to provide shelter. In addition, Adam's thought they faced a temporary emergency crisis; the church space was made available as an emergency response. There was no indication she considered undertaking a long-term commitment. In this very early period, homelessness was, in Adam's view, primarily a crisis as evidenced by the deaths on the street due to exposure (diagnostic), the immediate solution to this problem (prognostic) is to permit church gymnasium space to be used as temporary shelter. Thus, in Adam's account, what stands out is the diagnostic framing of homelessness as a temporary crisis. While homelessness existed as a background condition, the particular crisis was due to the freezing weather that had led to death on the streets. It was the life-threatening quality of homelessness that winter that prompted action, not a larger diagnostic analysis of homelessness.

Once the shelter at Central Presbyterian began operating, Adams had the occasion for more reflection on the reasons for homelessness. Writing in her church newsletter she seeks to understand homelessness and sheltering:

I cannot begin to explain how it all happened. I don't know why so many people have ended up on the floor of this church's old gymnasium glad to have a little bit of space on which to make it through the night, protected for a few hours from the cruel, cutting cold of Atlanta's winter streets. I do not know what has done them in – alcoholism, unemployment, inadequate self-images, mental illness, flaws of character, ironies of faith, institutionalized injustice – I only know that our guests have wrestled with life and lost. I cannot explain it. I only know that the defeated are there –so many of them, hugging themselves to sleep on the hardwood floor! (Adams 1981:1)

In this meditation written at the end of the shelter's first season of operation, Adams provides neither a systemic analysis of the causes of homelessness or a clear indication of who is responsible for this situation. She "can't begin to explain" homelessness. She provides a list of possible factors that might have led to homelessness but in the end her assessment is that despite the disparate causes they share the experience that they "have wrestled with life and lost" and they are "defeated." In some ways, Adams framing echoes Bevis's analysis of homelessness.

Considering this early framing of homelessness, what comes to the forefront is not an analysis of homelessness or even an assessment of who is responsible (Diagnostic framing), rather what dominates is a sense that a particular response is required of her and other shelter volunteers (prognostic framing) – that they were obliged provide shelter because it is morally wrong (motivational framing) to sit or stand on the sidelines and do nothing when the need was so pressing. The dominant framing is prognostic and motivational. Assenting to the request to provide the church gymnasium as a temporary night shelter is a matter of having "no choice." While Adams is unable to explain why her homeless guests are coming off the streets to the shelter offered, she does provide answers as to why the volunteers are there.

I do believe, though, that I can explain why we are there. It is because of Jesus – because of whom we especially loved – the losers and the down and outers and because of how he loved them – unconditionally and compassionately.

Finally then, we are there because of what he's said to us, "Follow me."

It is as simple as that. (Adams 1981)

For Adams, as for many of the early volunteers in the homeless movement, the framing of homelessness and particularly the way they explained their motives for participation was described in religious, or more narrowly Christian, terms. In this motivational framing Adams provides her answer as to why shelter leaders and volunteers have become involved. Her explanation is within her religious tradition.

The gaping hole in this early framing was diagnostic – what and who is responsible.

John Abercrombie – Evangelical Reflections on Homelessness

The planning for the Central Presbyterian Night Shelter was predicated on the active recruitment of volunteers from Atlanta-area churches to run the night shelter. Bob Bevis, drawing on the resources of Ecumenical Community Ministries, particularly focused on recruiting among the five churches that participated in that network. As a result, the Central Night Shelter drew several hundred volunteers from both intown and suburban churches during the first year. The experience of providing shelter, which included greeting guests, serving basic food and staying awake during the night provided a powerful catalyzing event for some volunteers. John Abercrombie, a member of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church and of the group Evangelicals for Social Action, reflected on a night working at the Central Shelter. "The sounds from the darkened room surround me...the babbling of an alcoholic...the hacking cough of diseased lungs...the fitful tossing of tormented minds, and with smells, ...of humanity, sickness and death" (Abercrombie 1981:3).

The experience of volunteering in a shelter is tactile and sensory. Already Abercrombie is articulating the rudiments of a diagnostic frame. Homelessness is described as a series of social problems: alcoholism (babbling), the physically (hacking cough, diseased lungs) and the mentally ill (tormented minds).

From my vantage point in this aging church gymnasium there is a window. It frames the usually gold dome of the state capital. To my left there is another window that frames the sweeping grandeur of the Atlanta skyline...strings of jewels in the night.

The contrasts are almost overwhelming...the differences too glaring. The worlds that surround me are so intertwined and yet so far apart. The symbols of wealth, power and hope provide the backdrop for the helpless, hopeful humiliation of these shelterless people. (Abercrombie 1981:3)

Abercrombie's awareness of homelessness is heightened by the contrast between the State Capitol, the businesses of downtown, and the poverty in the room in which he is waiting.

Who are they? They are people who are destroying themselves...who are being destroyed by our world...who are jobless laborers waiting for day work...who are mentally ill. They are all of these things and more. (Abercrombie 1981:3)

Again diagnostic framing emerges in his ruminations. The homeless are a diverse group:

In some ways it is easy to serve these broken people. They have to be grateful. They are at the end of their resources and strength. Yet somehow the image of God is still apparent. They struggle for dignity. "I've never done this before...never had to ask for nothing." "You know I had a family once." "I'm a carpenter...damn good one, just ain't no work." (Abercrombie 1981:3)

Abercrombie is sensitive of his social and economic position; a privileged church volunteer serving the desperately poor, and the unequal power implied in the phrase "they have to be grateful." He acknowledges their efforts to balance the status hierarchy and to maintain dignity in their position of recipients.

And so it goes, men trying to be what God intended, people with purpose and hope. It is the unmistakable though hidden image of God crying out to be restored. A voice crying in the human wilderness.

These are but a few of the broken. They are the tip of the iceberg of human pain and disappointment.

In Isaiah 58 the Lord says "You claim to seek me, to fast, to humble yourself...but these are empty gestures. Here is the fast I have chosen. Share your food with the hungry...provide the poor wanderer with shelter...cloth the naked...loose the chains of injustice..."

We pray for the Son of God to break into human history and dispel the darkness of sin...to overwhelm the forces of evil with a triumphant shout. Instead He moves about quietly convincing his children...convincing us that when we act out his reconciling love "...then your light will break forth like the dawn, your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday." (Abercrombie 1981:3)

It appears that John Abercrombie was engaged in a religious meditation, not a discursive analysis of homelessness, but embedded in his column is the beginning of a framing of homelessness. Diagnostically, he recognizes that homelessness is due to a variety of factors – mental illness, sickness, addiction, but also lack of work. Prognostically, he turns to religious imagery to support the responsibility to provide food, shelter, clothing, and to loosen injustice. Abercrombie's charge is not to engage in or expect dramatic action, but rather to "convince us

when we act out his reconciling love.” By providing shelter, volunteers like Abercrombie carry forward a religious mission to demonstrate love. While Abercrombie is calling to action – motivational framing, he implicitly recognizes both the limits and the possibilities of providing night shelter.

Framing Homelessness

The early founders of the new movement to end homelessness had a vague sense of the problem and an even vaguer sense of what should be done. For the most part, the initial impulse and language deployed was largely religious and tied to themes of compassion. Ed Loring provides the most systemic critique of capitalism highlighting the psychic toll of injustice, while Bob Bevis focuses more narrowly on the lack of spaces for those who don’t fit into the system. For the most part these early leaders were united in a sense that it was the obligation of the religious community, or more narrowly, their religious community, to undertake the provision of emergency shelter. But even with this, there are differences in their views. Loring initiated the process by developing the model of a year round, small-scale shelter at Clifton and a deep sense of solidarity with the poor. He carried this same model when he and his associates established the Open Door Community. In contrast, the Central Night Shelter was framed as an emergency response to life-threatening conditions. The prognostic frame developed at Central turned not on a grand vision of social reform or ending homelessness, but on making the cold months survivable. The decision to close these shelters at the end of each shelter ‘season’ provides evidence that this was an essential part of the frame, if not of the leaders, then of the volunteers who made the shelter possible.

While Loring already articulates a diagnostic frame that links capitalism, the state and homelessness, Bevis diverges somewhat in both his diagnosis and prognosis for homelessness.

In Atlanta, Bevis was already involved with a variety of “community ministries” in housing projects among the poor in Atlanta. He brought an extensive familiarity with the vagaries of government programs and skepticism about their efficacy in meeting human needs. For Bevis, the diagnosis rests on awareness that for many in the city there was no place to go. Bevis articulated the need for a permanent space that evokes the words of Robert Frost

Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in.”
“I should have called it
Something you somehow haven’t to deserve.” (Frost 1946:165-66)

For Bevis, the responsibility for providing this, however, is not, the state – not a new poorhouse or asylum – but a religious institution, Mother Teresa, not Nurse Ratchet.

For Joanna Adams, homelessness or more precisely, the need for the church to respond to homelessness derives from a sense of crisis. The church must respond in the winter months because people will die on the streets.

These early leaders also portray the homeless subject differently. For Loring, the homeless are brothers and sisters – ambassadors of God and an opportunity for giving food, clothing, and shelter by “those who are able to give it” (Maurin 1977:123). For Bevis, the homeless street people are the ones who don’t fit the capitalist system. For Adams and Abercrombie, the vulnerable poor and homeless are homeless for complex, unknowable reasons beyond the scope of the religious community to solve. The role of the religious community in such a situation is to provide sanctuary from the freezing cold as a witness to faith. In the next chapter, I will examine how these early leaders merged these perspectives to create the Task Force for the Homeless.

CHAPTER 6: THE IDEA OF A TASK FORCE

In the previous chapter, I examined how early leaders of Atlanta's homeless movement gradually came to articulate their individual understanding of homelessness. In this chapter, I examine the process by which the early framers – Joanna Adams, Eduard Loring, Bob Bevis and Bill Bolling created a statement calling for a community-wide effort to end homelessness. In this process, this network of leaders collectively developed an early statement in which they contended that homelessness was taking on some new characteristics and they proposed forming a group to decide what should be done about Atlanta's problem of homelessness. These first attempts by the early leaders reveals the differing emphases among them in their diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames as they sought to suggest a broad institutional response to homelessness. Ultimately, their efforts to forge a collective response to homelessness in Atlanta led to the creation of the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless.

None of the early leaders had a well thought out theory of homelessness with which to guide their efforts. The first free night shelter of the new movement, Clifton Presbyterian Night Shelter, emerged out of a desire to respond concretely to poverty in the community. It drew inspiration from the Catholic Workers and Mitch Snyder. The experience of Clifton highlighted the pent up demand for free shelter and revealed the hidden population of the unhoused in Atlanta.

Of the early leaders, Ed Loring and his colleagues at the Open Door Community were best positioned to articulate a basic frame for homelessness. As I have shown, the formation of the Clifton Presbyterian Shelter was primarily attributable to the inspiration of the Catholic Worker Movement and the challenge by Mitch Snyder to respond to people on the streets. Ed Loring in particular maintained an ongoing relationship with Mitch Snyder and his Community

for Creative Nonviolence. Through this connection Loring already had a relationship with the national-level networks that were forming in response to growing homelessness.

Bill Bolling's view of homelessness was shaped by his experience at St. Luke's Episcopal food program on Peachtree Street, which later led to the establishment of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, which he has headed since 1979. The common diagnostic frame shared by the early providers was that homelessness was an emergency that demanded a response. The seasonal night shelter reflected and was the logical manifestation of that frame – shelter was provided to keep people from freezing to death, but discontinued as the season warmed.

By the end of the second shelter season (1982-1983), the loose collection of shelters that had emerged through the efforts of Loring, Bevis, and Bolling had begun to develop a more formal networking and support structure. The Open Door Community, founded by Loring, provided the physical location for an important series of meetings. Unlike the seasonal night shelter spaces located in churches, the Open Door was an institution that continuously served the homeless from their building on Ponce de Leon Avenue. As a result, each meeting held at the Open Door brought participants face-to-face with homelessness. An informal group of volunteer shelter directors and interested others began meeting on Tuesday mornings to share experiences. This became the Tuesday Morning Group.

The Tuesday morning meetings at the Open Door Community brought together the core group of new leaders who were engaged in the response to homelessness. Initially, it was a small and informal group – Ed Loring and Murphy Davis from the Open Door, Robert Bevis from First Presbyterian, Joanna Adams of Central Presbyterian, Bill Bolling of St. Luke's Episcopal and the Atlanta Community Food Bank, A. B. Short of Oakhurst Baptist, and others associated with shelters attended. Universally, all the participants were associated with religious,

almost exclusively Christian, organizations. Loring, Davis, Bevis and Adams were Presbyterian Ministers, Bolling was a lay worker at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and Short was the shelter coordinator at Oakhurst Baptist Church.

The impetus for the Tuesday Morning Group meetings was to provide support and solve problems through informal discussion and meals. The first conversations primarily focused on the logistics of providing shelter, pooling knowledge, providing updates and solving problems. Individual shelter directors undertook experiments and tested new innovations. As the basic mechanics of providing shelter became more routinized, and particularly after the close of the Central Presbyterian Shelter after its second season (spring of 1982), these leaders had the space to consider what else should be done to address homelessness. As they developed the collective understanding that their shelters were inadequate for the need, they explored how to encourage other churches to develop shelters of their own. Their collective experience was that the demand for emergency night shelter was continuing to grow in Atlanta.

The idea of a "task force" to address homelessness was first presented at the Tuesday Morning Meeting in March 16, 1982. At this session, Bolling circulated the first written draft in the form of an "Outline on Task Force for Homeless (And Hungry)." Over the next three months, the idea was further developed and negotiated through two subsequent drafts authored first by Bevis, then Bolling. The sequence of drafts reveals both alternative framing of homelessness by the early movement leaders and their attempt to broaden the institutional response to homelessness in the city. In addition, what I find in my analysis is that the presentation of homelessness and proposed solutions are rooted in a strategic decision to frame homelessness in particular ways so as to align the frame with other interests, particularly that of the Atlanta business community. In the following section I examine in depth the Bolling and

Bevis memos and how they reflected and shaped the emerging positions of those in the forefront of concern over homelessness in Atlanta.

BOLLING – TASK FORCE FOR THE HOMELESS (AND HUNGRY)

The March 16, 1982 draft introduced the idea of a task force, specifically a “Task Force for the Homeless (and Hungry).” The composition of the Task Force was to include religious community, city and county government, judges, public safety, medical institutions, business interests, the organized charitable community, and the homeless. As envisioned by Bolling, the Task Force would have three tasks: (1) research; (2) documentation; and (3) recommendations. The Task Force would investigate homelessness in Atlanta, particularly who the homeless are, where they congregate, and why they are homeless. In addition, the Task Force would examine how other cities were responding to homelessness. The legal and economic implications of homelessness also would be researched. In Bolling’s draft, most lines are topic headings with little fleshing out. It is the economic implications of homelessness that are the most fleshed out, as follows:

2. Economic Implications

- a. Cost of our present system of dealing with the homeless to city, county and churches.
- b. Cost of police, judicial system, jails, business community (perceptions of public) & homeless. (Bolling 1982:1)

Bolling’s diagnostic and motivational framing emphasizes the economic cost of homelessness. The most salient aspect of the problem, in Bolling’s view, is that it costs the city, state, county, and community a great deal of money for homelessness to persist. In turn, this emphasis on the economic dimension of the problem of homelessness (“cost to city, county, state and business community”) served as the key lever to motivate the involvement and participation

of these other actors. Bolling envisioned having a broader Task Force representing many aspects of the community, while continuing the religious community's existing networks.

In the strategic commentary attached to the memorandum, Bolling describes how his framing of homelessness directly tracks back to an earlier experience he had dealing with a broad social problem. Bolling describes his experience as a participant in the coordinating committee for the Atlanta Public Inebriant Program (PIP). The PIP program was established by local government agencies out of the realization that many agencies, units of government, and providers were seeking to address problems related to “the public inebriant – the street alcoholic.” While there was broad awareness of the overlapping missions of different groups serving street alcoholics, the coordinating committee was “reluctantly formed.” The PIP served as the only forum which brought together “medical, judiciary, public safety, business community (CAP), and the religious community (a late entry) to discuss the interrelationship of these groups and the problem of running” programs for public inebriants. Its participants viewed PIP as ineffective, as Bolling stated: “the perception of almost everyone was that PIP [*sic*] would not work and a coordinating committee has little function.” In Bolling's experience, the “committee has realized that it has no power or authority to make policy or call for changes.” Addressing the problem of public inebriants was “a very political issue on all levels – state, county and city” as it involved “funding for programs, jobs and legal issues.” Despite this, members of the PIP coordinating committee indicated to Bolling they would join the proposed task force on homelessness as individuals, not as representatives of their organizations.

Another aspect of Bolling's PIP experience shaped his prognostic framing of homelessness. Bolling anticipated that homelessness, like PIP, would be “political”; that is, leading to struggles over power between elements of the state, civil society, and the business

community. His solution to this “political” problem sought to engage diverse elements of the community in a broad based study of the problem. Research and documentation creates a shared body of information providing the basis for rational consideration of the problem. Bolling follows this line in arguing the approach for the proposed Task Force.

The logic here is that by getting to the facts of the situation, a common understanding, a collective action frame, would develop through the process of research would lead to recommendations to solve the problem. The outcome Bolling envisioned was a “cooperative model of city, county, community, business community working together” to address homelessness. In this early draft Bolling mentions a theme that occurs frequently in the evolving idea of a Task Force. What early leaders envisioned was the development of a cooperative approach to the problem, a consensus over the dimensions of the problem and the necessary action. Linked to this idea of a “cooperative model” is a de-emphasis on diagnostic framing, especially the issues of blame or culpability for homelessness. For example, in Bolling’s draft, the economic costs of homelessness are emphasized but the identification of responsibility is de-emphasized. Bolling, for instance, chose not to mention economic conditions in Atlanta, housing costs, downtown development, released mental patients, or any number of possible candidates to explain homelessness. Bolling’s proposal emphasizes that homelessness exists as a problem that costs the city, but there is little attribution of who or what is responsible for the condition. As in the earlier discussion of how Atlanta leaders constructed diagnostic frames, in this instance framing is done in a way that minimizes conflict and avoids critiquing existing social arrangements.

Bolling’s de-emphasis on diagnostic framing was in line with his strategy to “de-politicize” the issue, by proposing the creation of a group whose charge, in part, was to research

the problem as a way to understand it. By focusing on process rather than presenting a fully fleshed out analysis of the problem, Bolling appears to have been making a strategic choice to minimize the attribution of blame in order to elicit the support and participation of important sectors of the community. Building on the PIP experience, the key, in Bolling's view, was to attract people with the power to make decisions to a common forum to research and develop a solution to homelessness. The Task Force model was to be such a forum.

The Bolling proposal outlined three alternate approaches for moving forward with the creation of a task force:

- I. Put pressure on city and county commissioners to form group.
- II. Research & document, then apply pressure.
- III. The religious community could call for a task force, or the religious community along with key community people calls for the formation of a task force. (Bolling 1982:1)

From his experience with the PIP coordinating committee, Bolling concludes that "the key to getting everyone on board is to approach this primarily from a economic point of view (cost to city, county, state and business community)" while "at the same time having a separate religious task force" such as the Tuesday morning group or a downtown churches group.

Bolling's proposal primarily emphasizes the prognostic and motivational frames for the responding to homelessness in Atlanta. In the effort to enhance the salience of homelessness to the groups that have the power and capacity to address the problem, he relies upon his earlier experience with PIP to shape the issue in a way that will attract the interest of these groups. From the earlier experience, Bolling has learned that merely being concerned about homelessness and bringing well-intentioned persons to a meeting is insufficient in light of the "politics" of the situation. In Bolling's view, the key to captivating, motivating the interest of state and business actors is to highlight the economic costs of homelessness. Framing

homelessness as an economic problem, a problem that has a quantifiable cost to the city's resources is a strategic decision based on an assessment of the kinds of problems that will attract attention from city, county and state.

Bolling's reliance on the PIP model is ironic. He discusses at length the shortcomings of the PIP program, highlighting that while well intentioned and attended by knowledgeable people, it was ultimately frustrated from achieving its goals by the lack of power to coordinate the different levels of government. Framing the response to homelessness like the public inebriate program had the effect of shaping the perception of homelessness. In other words, if the response to homelessness is the same as the public inebriate program, then persons who are homeless must be like public inebriants. By using the model of the public inebriant, the street alcoholic, and arguing that a similar approach is needed, Bolling implies it is a similar problem. Bolling's heavy reliance on his PIP experience serves to place homelessness within an existing set of understandings. Ironically, Bolling takes this approach at a time when other advocates and social scientists were arguing that homelessness was no longer a problem of the street people, but a new kind of problem.

THE BEVIS DRAFT – STREET PEOPLE STRATEGY

A month after Bolling's outline, Robert Bevis circulated a second draft of the proposal for a broad based planning process to address homelessness. The subject and title of Bevis's memo is "Coalition for Street People Strategy" and it is structured in the form of a memo from the "Tuesday Morning ad hoc Group" addressed to Mayor Young (City of Atlanta), Commissioner Lomax (Fulton County), Dan Sweat (Central Atlanta Progress) and Don Newby (Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta). In Bevis's formulation the Task Force for the Homeless and Hungry is refocused as a call for a "Coalition for Street People Strategy."

Bevis opens the memo acknowledging “most people,” and implicitly the leaders to whom the memo is addressed, “wish they [street people] would go away – back home, to another city, another state, etc.” Bevis goes on to say: “Let us be up front with you. We are not sure what needs to be done and what will be the best strategy to follow. We are committed to seek a consensus strategy, if possible, that will be acceptable to all of us” (Bevis 1982).

In his opening statement Bevis acknowledges the lack of both diagnostic and prognostic framing. The Bevis memo diagnoses the problem population as those people living on the street – “the street people.” Bevis begins by reiterating the common view that street people are not part of the community. But Bevis makes a practical argument; the strategy of wishing the street people to depart has not been effective as they remain in the community. He calls for a new way of framing the problem.

Bevis has characterized the problem as one of “street people” rather than “homeless.” Street people was the predominant term employed in the 1960’s and 70’s to describe those who presumably lived on the streets, visible to the public eye and often presumed to be addicts of one kind or another. While “homelessness” was used occasionally in public discourse, most church workers, agency staff, and media were more likely to use “street people” in their descriptions. Like Bolling’s elicitation of the public inebriant, Bevis evokes a set of images in using the term “street people” rather than “homeless.” The problem becomes people on the street and how to respond to them, rather than people who are homeless – without homes. Framing unhoused persons as homeless implicitly suggests homes might be a solution, but framing the unhoused as street people perhaps evokes a disparate set of images, but most notably, that which Bolling elicits – the public inebriant.

Bevis's opening statement that the group is "not sure what needs to be done and what will be the best strategy to follow," admits to a lack of prognostic framing on the part of the early movement. While they had established a network of "literally hundreds of volunteers from congregations" and "7 shelters housed in churches," they lacked an idea about what steps needed to be taken to address street people.

While Bevis makes no strong assertions about what was to be done, he provides some suggestions on what should be done. First, in referring to those in the religious community who have engaged in volunteer sheltering, "[we] have a growing commitment to find a humane, tough-love way for our city to address the needs of our homeless sisters and brothers." The key words in this prognostic frame are "humane" and "tough-love." To an imagined audience of political and business leaders, Bevis positions the argument for services as different from handouts. Bevis also attempted to lay out a programmatic dimension to the response. Bevis evokes key values of mutual responsibility, structure and accountability in his humane and tough love approach. While Bevis positioned his argument to address business and government leaders, he also invoked the religious language used by Loring, Adams and Abercrombie when he referred to "our homeless sisters and brothers." Bevis argues for inclusion with accountability, homeless persons are members of the community. Community life involves both responsibility for the most needy and their responsibility to the community.

Speaking for the Tuesday Morning Group, Bevis says, "we have no choice" but to be involved. In part, this involvement comes from the Christian mandate to minister to "the least of these." After Bolling's initial emphasis on framing homelessness as an economic problem, Bevis' memo deemphasizes this and returns to the moral argument for involvement by the religious community and those involved in sheltering. According to Bevis, the state should be

responsible as it “has a responsibility for all citizens of our city and country – even the uncounted ones on the streets.” Bevis assumes the business community should be involved, but doesn’t say why – “certainly, downtown business community is concerned with street people.”

Bevis’s proposal recommends that three sectors have a stake in homelessness. He proposes that government officials, business leaders, and religious leaders appoint representatives to the Task Force for the purpose of developing a strategy. Since the Bolling draft, the group had articulated specific recommendations regarding the numbers of representatives to be sought from those addressed in the memo. The envisioned Task Force was to be comprised of six representatives from government three appointed from Atlanta City Government, three from Fulton County), six representatives from the business community (three from Central Atlanta Progress and three from the Chamber of Commerce) and six from the religious community appointed by the Christian Council.

In addition to the 18 representatives from government, business and religious communities, Bevis adds a new element to this balanced configuration. He suggests that three persons who live on the streets should participate in such a group. The addition of the three street people adds additional weight to his earlier vision of what is sought in a consensus plan “acceptable to all of us.” A plan undertaken by a group including homeless persons was a radical vision and foreshadowed tensions that have persisted since the early movement.

The Bevis document returns to the religious language of the early movement leaders and the Tuesday morning shelter group and relies less on a strategic or power analysis in presenting its argument. Nonetheless, the Bevis document picks up a number of elements from the Bolling draft to move the approach forward. Bevis’s use of the label “street people” evokes a certain kind of homelessness as the object of attention.

Bevis, like Bolling, sought a task force that developed a cooperative strategy and avoid conflict. In part, this may reflect the relative power positions of the religious shelter movement vis-à-vis the actors they were seeking to engage in the problem. But this language of consensus also expresses the religious orientation of the key movement leaders.

The Bevis and Bolling drafts reveal differences in the strategic emphasis and targets among the early movement leaders. The key element in Bolling's formulation is the strategic framing of persons on the streets designed to garner the interest and attention of those in power. To this end, he argued for framing homelessness in terms of its economic costs to the city. Bevis makes the argument that the various actors concerned with downtown (business, religious, political) have different motivations but a converging interest in addressing the problem of "street people." Bevis de-emphasizes the issue of cost and instead frames homelessness in terms of responsibility – government "has a responsibility" for the care of all its citizens and interests. The Bevis draft is more narrowly religious in scope and also more narrowly focused upon the "street person."

THE FINAL DRAFT, THE CIVIC RENEWAL MODEL

In May of 1982, Bolling produced the final draft of a proposal for the creation of a Task Force. It reflected several months of discussion among the early leaders. Bolling gathered elements from the first two drafts to create a broad statement and strategy for addressing homelessness.

Bolling started by laying out a prognostic frame arguing that "the homeless are growing dramatically." Bolling omits Bevis's "street people" language and its association with the public inebriant. Bolling began by painting a picture of contemporary Atlanta homelessness as qualitatively different from what was typically seen in media and public discourse.

It is not possible anymore to generalize about who is on the street. It is not just the public inebriant. In the combined experience of many ministers and street workers we can honestly say that most people do not choose to live there. But the number continues to grow. There are a greater number of women and children, young people, greater numbers of former mental patients, much greater numbers of working poor who have never experienced street life before. (Bolling 1982b:1)

In his opening statement, he frames homelessness as something different than what has occurred in the past. Bolling challenged the accepted logic that these individuals are homeless by choice, which implied a personal decision by persons who are, in some way, responsible for their fate. While Bolling acknowledges the public inebriant as one component of the growing homeless, he evokes other, more sympathetic populations: women, children, mental patients, and working poor. Explicitly, Bolling argues the case that a new kind of crisis existing, requiring a change from the status quo. As evidence for this change, Bolling sums up the cumulative experience of people with direct contact with homeless people (i.e., “many ministers and street workers”): “something is different.”

In the second paragraph, Bolling presents his argument for why the business and state should become involved: because homelessness “costs” the city.

The cost to our community is enormous. Whether one considers the cost to our city for police and the judicial system, the cost to our business community in business relocations convention trade, or more importantly to us, the cost in lives lost and potentials unmet, and the loss of the knowledge that each life is sacred no matter its station of life. It is unacceptable to continue with business as usual. (Bolling 1982:1)

In the first section of this paragraph, Bolling presented homelessness as a tangible financial cost borne by the city’s public institutions. In particular, he highlighted the costs to the police and judicial system, which enforce laws that sweep up homeless persons. Bolling was also alluding to, and linking homelessness with, the concern of business and government leaders over crime and the cost of policing the city.

Having highlighted the public safety costs, Bolling turns to the economic costs, direct and indirect, resulting from homelessness. The business community is impacted because homelessness creates an environment in which businesses choose to relocate to other areas and conventions choose not to come. Through these arguments, Bolling provides motivational framing to both the business community and state by highlighting the direct financial costs associated with homelessness in the city. Finally, he forefronts a moral cost of “lives lost and potentials unmet.” This moral cost, according to Bolling, represents the most important value for the religious community. Implicitly, Bolling recognized that appeals to moral cost insufficient to mobilize the energies of the business community. By framing homelessness in this way, Bolling seeks to engage business and state interests in common cause with the religious community. Bolling recognized that each group may have different motivations for engaging with homelessness, so by framing homelessness as a matter of cost, he provides an avenue for differing sectors of the community to work together.

Several aspects of this final construction of a proposal for a Task Force are notable. First, Bolling devotes considerable space to motivational framing, describing the issue in a way that will engage business interest and state authorities. The key element to the Bolling formulation was the economic impact of homelessness. Second, Bolling’s diagnostic framing notably avoids an attributional element. As discussed earlier, diagnostic framing has two tasks – to define the problem and to attribute who or what was responsible. Bolling’s diagnostic framing works toward an answer to the first task and largely omits the second. Similarly, prognostic framing is largely absent. The Task Force idea being presented was a process. The proposal was to convene a group to address problems and to obtain “a consensus strategy if appropriate.” The Task Force is a vehicle, but the movement leaders, presumably with a great deal of experience,

provide little direction as to what they believe should actually be done about homelessness. In this case, Bolling appears to believe that the religious community's framing of homelessness as involving fiscal and moral costs to the city will be sufficient to motivate the engagement of those who have the power to develop plans for change. Lots of passive verb constructions around here.

Providing further evidence for this tenuous diagnostic framing of homelessness is the place of the homeless themselves in the mix. Picking up on Bevis' earlier proposal, this final draft also envisioned that the task force should include "3 persons from the street." There apparently was a question about bringing this recommendation forward, as blue brackets appear to edit this recommendation out of the document, and later circulated versions do not contain it. The Task Force framers took the realistic approach proposed by Bolling to convene a body to make decisions about the life of the city.

Cooperation and Consensus

A theme running through these early activists' presentation of a proposal to address the unhoused in Atlanta was the idea of the development of a plan characterized by "cooperation" and "consensus." This idea of seeking a consensus appears to have dominated early discussions of a task force. In part, this reflected great optimism and confidence in the ability of political and economic leaders of the city to work together to solve problems. This was certainly in keeping with the reformist approach of "the Atlanta Spirit" of optimism. Given the history of the city and the tensions between the business and political sectors, it is striking how little mention of either race or poverty intruded into these early discussions. Atlanta in the late 1970's was suffering from white flight, as well as from conflicts between business and political leaders. The idea of

cooperation and the connection to the vitality of downtown linked these early framers to a long history of downtown reformers who linked economic growth with social improvement.

FORMING A TASK FORCE: AN UNDERWHELMING RESPONSE

The Tuesday Morning ad hoc group approved the Bolling plan in May of 1982. The next challenge was to disseminate and garner support for the plan. Over the late spring and summer of 1982, Bolling Loring, and Adams met with city, county, and business leaders to solicit their engagement with the issue of homelessness and to assess the leaders' willingness to assume responsibility for the issue.

As prognostically framed by these early advocates, the responsibility for crafting a solution for solving homelessness lay with the collaborative efforts from key sectors of the city – the business community, the county, the city, and the religious community. Their meetings with leaders focused on communicating a combination of urgency with the desire to create a cooperative plan to address the problem. However, while their religious standing provided entry and a respectful hearing of the concerns they aired, they encountered both a lack of interest in the issue and lack of willingness to provide leadership. For most business and government leaders, the perception was that to the extent that homelessness was a problem, the Union Mission and Salvation Army were addressing it. No one sector was willing to convene the group to address homelessness.

The Tuesday Morning homeless advocates asserted that there was something new about homelessness in the City of Atlanta calling for new initiatives to address the problem. Both government and business demonstrated little interest in joining in a new effort. Two factors seem to play in this. First, was the question of Mayoral priorities. The new Young

Administration²⁴ placed its highest priority on rebuilding alliances with the business community and promoting economic growth. From Young's perspective, the economic growth initiatives of his administration sought to reduce poverty through economic growth, not creating anti-poverty programs. Second, Young framed homelessness quite differently than did the homeless advocates. According to one of the advocates present at an early meeting in May of 1982, Young asserted, "the basic problem with homelessness in Atlanta, Georgia, is that the homeless won't go home." (Loring 1982:1). For Young, homelessness was primarily an issue of transience and not the new emergency advocates presented. Young confirms Bevis's observation that "most people wish they would go away – back home, to another city."

Like Mayor Young, both county government and business community resisted framing homelessness as a new kind of emergency. In part, they felt they were already addressing the issue. While homelessness per se had not been on the agenda of either Central Atlanta Progress or the City of Atlanta, the presence of transients and visibly poor men on the downtown streets had been identified as a persistent problem of urban disorder. CAP had already undertaken a number of initiatives in cooperation with city government to address the issue. The visible poor were held up as an example of the failure of social control and crime. In 1975, CAP had advocated to the Jackson Administration for the removal of day laborers from downtown streets. Using federal funds, Jackson had created the Downtown Day Labor Service Center (on Edgewood Avenue) that provided day shelter and employment assistance to men seeking work. When this failed to clear Central City Park and other downtown public areas of poor men, the City had undertaken to designate city parks as "neighborhood parks" permitting their closure at night. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, this action was undertaken because "business

²⁴ Mayor Andrew Young assumed power in January 1982.

leaders and community leaders have become increasingly upset over what they say is the growing volume of drunks and litter in Central City and other downtown parks” (Willis 1979). Jackson attributed the downtown crime problem to homeless men who committed thefts. In addition to crime, city officials asserted that “drunks and derelicts who had been sleeping in the park” had also “been smothering the grass” (Willis 1979).

At the same time that advocates were forming their plans for a Task Force on Homelessness, CAP was working on a strategy that would engage the churches in the delivery of social services in the downtown area. As Dan Sweat explained:

CAP’s human services task force recommended that Atlanta’s downtown churches form a coalition to address the human needs of our citizens. The Atlanta Action Alliance is the result of that effort. It is organized and structured like CAP, with senior ministers and key leaders from the downtown churches serving on its board and setting policy. Start up fund for the alliance came from the Metropolitan Foundation through one its donor-advised funds. (Sweat 1983:1)

From Sweat’s and CAP’s perspective, a number of initiatives had already been undertaken to address the issues of inner city poverty. Part of the responsibility for addressing these problems lay, properly, with the churches, and CAP had taken leadership in urging the formation of such an inner city group. CAP had not only had the vision to urge the development of the group, they had provided the funds to support that group in undertaking a project to assist the homeless.²⁵

In one sense the CAP initiatives were directly at odds with the efforts of homeless advocates to create more shelter spaces in downtown churches. Central Presbyterian and Trinity United Methodist were just south of downtown, while First Presbyterian was located in Midtown; each of these provided part of a support system for individuals who spent the days in downtown parks and congregated at the St. Luke’s soup kitchen. CAP’s strategy of working to

²⁵ Note: This was later to become Samaritan House, initially located at the First Baptist Church on 5th Street and Peachtree.

divert the unhoused away from downtown was confounded by the emerging shelter system located in downtown Atlanta.

At the heart of CAP's reluctance appears to have been the concern that assuming sponsorship of a task force on homelessness would heighten visibility of the problem and entail responsibility for the issue. For government or business leaders the "cost" of sponsoring such a group would be to accept some culpability for the issue and for the creating solutions. Unlike the early shelter providers, most other community leaders manifested little sense of urgency that homelessness was a problem that required anything other than a routine response.

In terms of the public sector response, part of this reluctance was due to the structure of governmental responsibility for delivery of services in the city. In Georgia, health and welfare services are supposed to be delivered by county government agencies, especially the Department of Health and the Department of Family and Children Services. Housing services are provided through a series of semi-independent Housing Authorities at both county and city levels. Police and judicial services are provided through multiple jurisdictions (both county and city agencies). The lack of clear diagnostic framing of the "problem" of homelessness combined with the complexity of local social and human service bureaucracies mitigated against any particular public sector unit being willing to assume responsibility for homelessness.

Adding to the difficulty of attracting public sector attention was the increasing difficulty urban governments were facing due to declining federal funds supporting urban programs. During the 1960's and early 1970's federal funds provided support to cities for numerous social programs. Under the New Federalism of the Reagan administration, a combination of budget cuts and the funneling of remaining federal funds through block-grant programs resulted in reduced capacity to respond to urban problems. Cities such as Atlanta faced declining resources

with which to address growing social problems. The flight of white Atlantans in the aftermath of the civil rights movement particularly exacerbated Atlanta's problem. Maybe combine this paragraph with where you mention white flight earlier. In a study of the 42 largest cities, Atlanta ranked second in percentage of population in poverty (Caraley 1992). The combination of low income and high poverty burdened the city at a time of declining revenues. Adding another issue – homelessness – to the portfolio of city services was unappealing to city officials.

From the beginning, there had been a difference of opinion among early leaders of the homeless movement as to the efficacy of a strategy that sought to solicit the business and government sector to assume primary responsibility for convening a group to address growing homelessness. The meetings over the summer of 1983 failed to secure an organizational sponsor from the business or political sectors. Despite this failure, they did secure the tepid support of individuals to participate in a task force, should it be convened.

The failure to secure the leadership or enthusiastic support of business or government leaders for the proposed task force challenged the early leaders of the homeless movement. For leaders like Bevis, it confirmed his own reluctance to seek assistance from government for what he regarded as a religious duty. Bolling's suggestion that the religious community take leadership on the issue became the practical solution to move the project forward. The early leaders drew on their personal and institutional resources to establish the Task Force.

Joanna Adams was an associate minister at Central Presbyterian and the gatekeeper for the formation of the Central Presbyterian Shelter. In the early movement, she had already become a visible and credible spokesperson on homelessness. In January of 1982, Adams became the first woman president of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta. The Christian Council was an umbrella group that brought together Christian churches across

metropolitan Atlanta to provide a coordinated response to religious and social matters. The Christian Council had gained national prominence on social issues in the city of Atlanta through its development in 1957 of a Minister's Manifesto that laid out a plan for ending segregation and increasing racial justice in the city. The Council leadership was made up of leaders of many of Atlanta's large churches.

Highlighting the important role that churches were taking in responding to the crisis of homelessness, Adams presented the Council Board with the proposal that the Christian Council call for, and sponsor, the formation of the Task Force for the Homeless. Her proposal was approved in the spring of 1983. It fell to the Christian Council to provide the organizational leadership to invite representatives of government, business, civic sector, and religious community to join the Task Force.

The formation of the Task Force was a substantial organizational step forward for the early movement. While the failure to secure the leadership of business or government was initially seen as a unfortunate, it resulted in increased legitimacy for the Task Force as the crisis deepened. As the business and government sectors had been offered the opportunity to provide leadership and declined to do so, they ceded that leadership on homelessness to the Christian Council and its Task Force. One of the immediate results of this deferral was the increased standing and visibility of the movement's early leaders, particularly Loring, Adams, and Bolling. Loring, as founder of the first shelter, had already been featured regularly in church publications and Atlanta's major newspapers press as a spokesperson on homelessness. Bolling and Adams used their new positions to become spokespersons for the city's response to homelessness. Adams and Bolling were well placed. Both already had considerable standing and sophistication in the public media.

Through the use of the offices of the Christian Council, the Task Force also was able to mobilize organizational resources to secure representatives from city, county, and state government. Both Atlanta's Mayor Andrew Young and Michael Lomax (Chairman of the Fulton County Commission) became members of the Task Force, as did key officials from their staff. Constance Curry coordinated the city's response to homelessness, while Debra Poole had a similar function for Fulton County. The participation of these individuals, albeit in limited capacities, provided credibility to the project. The Christian Council provided a neutral meeting place for groups often competing with one another. It permitted the participation of community groups and state actors without obligating them to take action. The first meeting of the Task Force for the Homeless was held 22 November 1982.

The process of advocating with business and political leaders served to provide the opportunity for Adams and others to further refine their arguments on homelessness. In doing so, they began to more clearly diagnose homelessness as something having to do with macro-economic and structural changes in American society. On the eve of the first meeting of the Task Force for the Homeless, Joanna Adams described homelessness quite differently than she had earlier – “many of the street people are like refugees from a war, their lives disrupted by a force beyond their control. Some are casualties of the recession” (“Street People” 1982:3B). She links homelessness to the national economic issue of the recession.

While some leaders were broadening their diagnostic analysis of the causes of homelessness, the failure of business and government leaders to assume responsibility for homelessness also helped to shape the diagnostic framing of some of the early advocates. While there had been conflicts earlier with proposals of the business community to reduce the visible poor in downtown, they had not become articulated into an analysis of the causal factors

explaining homelessness. While the causes of homelessness were unclear, there was ample evidence that it was a growing problem, and the failure of business and government to step forward began to create, for some advocates, evidence of a responsibility for homelessness. As the Task Force began to undertake its first initiative, differences in diagnostic framing came into greater focus leading to splits within the movement.

CHAPTER 7: THE 1983 TOILET CAMPAIGN: FRAME EXTENSION AND FRAME ELABORATION

In the previous chapter, I explored how early movement leaders developed their frame for collective action through a process of experience and reflection. From the Tuesday Morning group they came to view the response to homelessness and particularly the provision of emergency night shelter as a religious obligation. This in turn resulted in a growing demand for shelter that placed large burdens on the early movement. Their solution was to propose the formation of a Task Force to study the problem and to develop a consensus strategy that would be supported by Atlanta business and political leaders.

For those who had been most involved with serving the homeless, the first meetings of the Task Force heightened their view that Atlanta's official political leaders had little appreciation for the extent or reality of the crisis. Loring, for example, reported in December 1982, "I met with Mayor Young in May [1982]. He said two weeks ago in a Task Force meeting that we would be willing to buy a bus ticket for any homeless person in Atlanta so that they could get home.(Loring 1982). While civic leaders had simple explanations for homelessness, leaders of the early homeless movement were vague in their diagnostic framing of homelessness. While unified in the view that homelessness constituted an emergency and emergency night shelters provided an appropriate response, they made few expressions about either the causes of or culpability for homelessness. This may have been tactical. Following the Bolling strategy, minimizing culpability positioned the Task Force as a site of investigation and exploration as well as strategy setting.

In this chapter I examine the first campaign undertaken by the Task Force for the Homeless. It began modestly in early 1983 as a request for temporary public toilets, but grew into a yearlong process that highlighted many of the issues that would dominate the movement

over the next decade. The ensuing disagreement between those who advocated and those who opposed public toilets brought into focus sharp differences about the meaning of public space in the Five Points area of downtown Atlanta and in public access to it. By arguing for public toilets homeless advocates began to include the idea of the “rights” of homeless people to decent treatment. New advocates drawn to the struggle found the right frame more evocative than the “cost” frame.

The public toilet campaign of the Task Force activated important social movement framing dynamics. At first, advocates sought to extend the frame to broaden the coalition by including other constituencies. Extending the frame involved finding allies and constituencies who shared the need for toilets in the downtown area. Later, the new coalition contested and negotiated the frame with opponents of their proposals. Contesting and negotiating the frame involved the task of challenging the dominant perceptions of public toilets and their place in the landscape of the modern city. Out of this dynamic process, the interpretative frame was elaborated in ways that served to highlight differences within the movement. The toilet campaign provided an experience interpreted differently by key leaders. This led ultimately to different diagnostic and prognostic framing of the problem of homelessness in Atlanta.

FRAMING PUBLIC TOILETS

The first public policy initiative undertaken by the new Task Force for the Homeless was to ask the city of Atlanta to establish public toilets in downtown Atlanta near Five Points, particularly in the parks used by homeless persons. To homeless advocates, the request for public toilets appeared to be a relatively simple intervention to reduce arrests for public urination. While a need for public toilets had been identified by several of the shelter providers, it was heightened by the soup line experience of Loring’s Open Door Community. As the Task

Force idea crystallized in the summer of 1982, the Open Door Community expanded their services to include a feeding program for homeless men in the Butler Street Baptist Church near the Downtown Day Labor Center. They found that the repeated arrest of homeless men for minor infractions like public urination disrupted their ability to achieve some consistency in their lives.

While the winter night shelters provided restroom facilities in the evening for their guests, for the rest of the day and the remainder of the year, homeless persons, according to these advocates, had no other facilities available to them. One consequence of this was the regular arrest, or threat of arrest, of homeless persons for public urination, or indecency. In addition, the inevitable result of lack of toilet facilities was used to support arguments for greater police presence and the removal of “drunks and derelicts”(Willis 1979).

The issue of the visible poor in downtown had become a contentious issue during the Jackson Administration. Throughout the first administration of Mayor Maynard Jackson (1974-1982), downtown business leaders were deeply concerned about crime and the perception of crime in the downtown area, especially near Five Points. The transition from a white political leadership to a black one had disrupted long-standing cooperation between business and political leaders. Business leaders complained that Jackson’s emphasis on community policing resulted in a lack of police presence downtown and of lack of enforcement against urban disorder. The visible poor were taken as a tangible indicator of this social disorder. The focal point of these conflicts occurred in Plaza Park, Central City Park and Hurt Park, three downtown parks where the homeless gathered and were visible open urban spaces

The downtown parks were symbolically important to city leaders as they represented a key component in their vision of a revitalized Atlanta. The central business district, and

particularly the area around Five Points, was the economic center of Atlanta. From Five Points, streets radiated north along Peachtree Street to the northwest (toward Marietta), and east (toward Decatur and the first Atlanta suburbs). In close proximity were Rich's and Davison's Department Stores, major banks, convention hotels and restaurants. This clean and bustling center of Atlanta had declined with the suburbanization of Atlanta and many downtown stores and offices were being abandoned. Central Atlanta Progress and City Hall both shared an interest in reversing this trend and restoring downtown to a desirable and profitable center. One initiative had been the creation of the six-acre Central City Park adjacent to Five Points. Atlanta's last white mayor, Sam Massell, solicited a \$10 million donation from Robert W. Woodruff to clear a block of buildings. The resulting green space, opened in April of 1973, provided a formal center to the city. Vocal advocates for downtown business interests cited the smells and sights in the three downtown parks as one of the problems detracting from the downtown experience. These signs of disorder were framed as both a public health and a public safety issue.

The connection between crime and public toilets was heightened in 1982 when a rape occurred in a restroom in the Five Points MARTA station. This resulted in the closure of the last public toilets in the downtown area.

By raising the issue of public toilets, the nascent Task Force was engaging an already contentious issue of public space and the presence of the homeless in downtown. The advocacy for public toilets was in keeping with the Bolling strategy of cooperative engagement with all segments of the city. It is important to emphasize that the Task Force's strategy of building a cooperative consensus plan with Atlanta leaders was predicated on framing the issue in terms of the cost to the city. Consequently, they framed the issue of public indecency and public toilets in

terms of the moral and financial cost of arresting, trying, and jailing individuals when cheaper alternatives, namely public toilets, were possible.

Joanna Adams, the chairperson of the new Task Force for the Homeless was asked to initiate the campaign. On February 22, 1983, Joanna Adams wrote the newly elected Mayor Andrew Young:

Today, I write under the auspices of the other hat I wear – that of Chairperson of the Task Force for the Homeless. At our last meeting, on February 14th, I was instructed by that group to pursue with you this proposal:

- The public restrooms be placed in the Plaza Park area.
- The lack of such facilities in the immediate downtown area contributed significantly to an already overburdened homeless population.
- It isn't that restrooms aren't available in the area – there are many!

However, current facilities are not public in the truest sense of the word. The homeless, often because of appearance and poor personal hygiene, are frequently not allowed access to these restrooms. The situation escalates urinating in public and other public indecency problems in the area.

We are aware that the providing of public restrooms can create problems; however, this increased crime potential should be measured against basic human needs, and a fair balance achieved. Temporary toilet facilities, of the construction site variety, could be utilized (at least initially) in Plaza Park to impact the problem in a positive manner.

Long-range solutions to the problems of the homeless will inevitably be slow in coming. The Task Force has identified the providing of public restrooms as at least one immediate response to a currently pressing problem (Adams 1983a).

Adams and the early Task Force initially framed the problem of public toilets narrowly from the perspective of the homeless in downtown Atlanta's Plaza Park.²⁶ The prognostic solution proposed was modest – temporary toilets in Plaza Park. Here the Task Force examined a problem facing the homeless – lack of toilet facilities in the downtown area and proposed a straightforward solution. A problem posed by lack of facilities – crime – was weighed against “basic human needs” to resolve the problem. While the Task Force acknowledged that long-term solutions were needed, it recommended the public toilets as an immediate response.

²⁶ Plaza Park was located in front of the Five Points MARTA station and was demolished in the Spring of 1987 to create the current entrance to Underground Atlanta.

Adams, on behalf of the Task Force, addressed Mayor Andrew Young with the proposal to create public toilets, but it was Young's political rival and the Chairman of the Atlanta City Council, Marvin Arrington, who took the initiative to explore the feasibility of public toilets in the downtown area. Arrington asked Council Members Elaine Valentine and John Lewis to investigate the issue and explore what could be done. These members took particular interest in the issue and subsequently "introduced an ordinance requiring that public restrooms be constructed in the downtown area" (Valentine 1983).

The proposal to construct public restrooms represented a modification of the original request by advocates for temporary facilities. Originally, the Task Force advocates were primarily operating from an "emergency" perspective to quickly ameliorate the conditions that resulted in the frequent arrest of homeless individuals and heightened conflict with other downtown interests.

Consideration by the Atlanta City Council brought the issue of toilets into the realm of public policy. The resources of the city bureaucracy and planning department were engaged to explore the question. The council undertook a study of the issue by examining the question of the availability and accessibility to public restrooms in the downtown area (defined as the five block radius from Five Points).

Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) strongly opposed the proposal for public toilets early in the process. CAP argued that there were sufficient public facilities available in the Five Points area and undertook to demonstrate the adequate capacity of public toilets through a mailed survey of businesses in the downtown area.

In July of 1983 the City Utilities Committee conducted its own survey as to the availability of public restrooms in 161 businesses in the downtown area. Fifty businesses (31%)

reported they had public restrooms available, while 111 (69%) said they did not. In a follow-up study of those businesses with restrooms “most of them actually make their facilities available only to customers” (Valentine report). Following up on CAP’s contention that there were sufficient restrooms already available in downtown, city staff found no business support for posting signage advertising the availability of restrooms. Both city and business surveys revealed that while restrooms were available to consumer-shoppers in the downtown area during business hours, no such facilities existed outside these times. During business hours, homeless people were not welcome to use the toilets that were on the premises of these businesses.

While initially CAP had argued that sufficient facilities were available, the two surveys indicated this was not the case. This bolstered the advocates’ claim of the need for toilets, but these facts did little to change the policy position of CAP. Over the summer and fall of 1983, business community opposition to public toilets hardened.

Despite opposition from the business community and tepid support for the toilets by Mayor Young, by the fall of 1983 it appeared that City Council would, nevertheless, approve the proposal to create public toilets.

HOMELESSNESS AND LEGAL RIGHTS

Over the spring and summer of 1983, advocates refined their arguments for public toilets. Increasingly, the issue of personal dignity was raised as an argument for toilets. They argued that the lack of public restrooms were “an insult to human dignity of the poor and a denial of their privacy” (Schmidt 1983).

The City Council’s deliberations on public toilets had also drawn out those on the front lines of administering criminal justice in the city. The issue of crime and the cost to the criminal justice system had been specifically raised by Bolling as one of the tangible “costs” of

homelessness to the city. Advocates argued that the provision of public toilets reduced the burden on the criminal justice and legal system. Municipal Court Judge Barbara Harris was an early supporter of the public toilet campaign for the same reason. She reported that she and four other judges each averaged hearing 20 cases a month for public urination. While many of the offenders were homeless, 40% were not (Green 1983).

In September of 1983, the public toilet debate took a more decisive legal turn. The Georgia Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union decided to join the campaign for public toilets. ACLU leader Gene Guerro argued: “arresting people for urinating on public streets or sidewalks when there is no facility available to use violated a fairness that people have a right to expect from their government” (Green 1983:3D). ACLU’s review of the municipal court docket for the previous year indicated that three to four individuals were arrested daily for the offence. According to Guerro, “That indicates that there is a big problem. And it’s probably larger than the records indicate. In order to make arrests, you first have to catch people in the act. Many people don’t have an alternative unless they are dressed in a suit” (Green 1983:3D).

The early involvement of Municipal Court Judges, as well as police officers that patrolled downtown streets, emphasized the time and money “wasted” by prosecuting toilet-related charges. The ACLU involvement in the debate shifted the debate by adding the idea that such public services might be a legal right in Atlanta. For the first time, the frame expanded beyond the religious frame of dignity to include the broader responsibility of the city to provide for the basic needs of all its citizens.

The toilet campaign heightened awareness of the criminal penalties placed on the poor by lack of toilets. This campaign elaborated the frame by bringing into the coalition advocates working to improve Georgia’s jails and prisons. Murphy Davis was already a member of the

Open Door Community and operated the Southern Prison Ministries. For Davis, Georgia's criminal justice system incarcerated the poor. Another advocate was Colleen Brady from the Clearinghouse on Georgia Prisons and Jails. Brady quickly became a new voice in the movement. She pointed out arrests for public urination increased demands on the overburdened jail system. Public toilets reduced the burden on the jail system. In a letter to the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, Brady made this connection:

All right, setting moral and social justice concerns aside, each of these questions can be discounted after a look at what the city of Atlanta is spending to criminalize the offence of public urination. Costs for this crime are, conservatively, \$50,000 annually. This does not include the cost of arrest or the cost if persons are actually sentenced for the offence. As it is, the majority of persons are detained in jail pending trial because they cannot afford to post bond. There is no justification for further burdening the Municipal Court System, which is already in violation of constitutional standards due to a shortage of staff and funds. (Brady 1983)

Increasingly, some homeless advocates incorporated the criminalization of the poor into their diagnostic analysis of homelessness. The lack of provision of basic services to the poor resulted in the repeated incarceration and criminalization of the homeless.

FRAME EXTENSION

Legal advocates deepened the toilet campaign by highlighting the issue of cost and fairness and placing the question of toilets in a legal context. While the public toilet campaign began as an initiative to provide for the needs of homeless persons in downtown Atlanta the investigation into the need for and accessibility of public toilets revealed a range of new constituencies – including the poor, elderly, and tourists – who also found difficulty accessing public accommodation. Increasingly, the Task Force and others began to frame the issue of public toilets as a larger matter of accessibility and comfort in the downtown area. Safe and accessible toilets were highlighted as an essential urban amenity for livability in the modern city. A 72 year old retired engineer, Joseph Gross, became a self-appointed “toilet crusader” after

searching fruitlessly downtown for a toilet. He established the Committee for More and Better-marked Public Toilets in April of 1983 eventually drawing 135 members (Bauer 1983:20A).

Gross became an advocate for modern self-cleaning toilets he had seen in France. His committee presented the Atlanta City Council with a petition signed by 100 elderly people supporting better facilities downtown (Schmidt 1983).

Advocates also used the efforts of the Young administration to position Atlanta as an “international city” as an argument for public toilets. The tourists coming to the new city would need the toilet facilities they were accustomed to finding in other cosmopolitan urban areas. Council member Valentine echoed this: “I think we should go ahead and do this. We talk about being an international city. If we want to increase tourism and bring people downtown, well, then we have to provide for their needs” (Bauer 1983:20A).

By the late summer of 1983, homeless advocates were optimistic about their efforts to secure approval of their plan for public toilets. Their efforts had evolved from temporary restrooms to modern permanent facilities in the central city. A broad-based coalition of community-based and religious groups was supporting the need. Advocates felt they had both facts and momentum to support their efforts.

Business community and public toilets

The struggle to frame the call for public toilets as a broad-based need faced the stiff resistance of the organized business community. Spokespersons for the downtown businesses argued that the population in need of public toilets was limited to the most destitute of the street homeless, and they tried to craft solutions to address this limited set of people. Central to the business advocates’ argument was the important historic image of Five Points based on its past glory days (i.e., thriving, prestigious, orderly commercial center), the reality of its decline, and

new hopes for its revitalization. By associating public toilets with images of crime, disorder, lack of public safety, and numerous loitering inebriated homeless men, the business community's spokespersons framed public toilets as something that would further Five Points' decline rather than aid in its revitalization.

In a debate sponsored by the Task Force for the Homeless held in City Hall, on October 12, 1983, Joanna Adams invited both Dan Sweat (representing Central Atlanta Progress), Ed Loring (of the Open Door Community) and others to present their views of public toilets. In his presentation, Ed Loring described the conditions of homeless men, the cost to the city court system, and the role that public toilets could play to reduce cost and conflict. In addition, Rob Johnson of the Open Door asked the city to halt arrests for public urination until public restrooms were available. Dan Sweat was deeply troubled by the prospect of public toilets in Five Points and he concluded his remarks by predicting that public toilets would be established only "over my dead body." Sweat argued that the lack of toilets was not an issue of dignity, as the homeless didn't have any (Gathje 2006). The depth of business community resistance to the public toilet campaign took homeless advocates by surprise.

In October of 1983, Sweat led CAP's opposition to public toilets. Framing his central concern was the issue of the "image of Atlanta." He argued Atlanta would be the "laughingstock of the nation" if public restroom facilities were constructed. He depicted the proposal in extreme ways: "There must be a better way. I don't think you can put a Jiffy Johnny or public bathroom on every corner and keep them sanitized." In this statement Sweat activates images of disorder and sanitation. He also utilized hyperbole to exaggerate what was being proposed and to build opposition. Even the most expansive proposal did not envision Jiffy Johns on every corner. While Sweat acknowledged the immediate relief public toilets might provide, "It might help, but

we have a much bigger problem here than just public urination. We have to help them without creating a situation that will hurt the center” (Ester 1983:20A).

Sweat argued only the homeless needed public restrooms and other decent people could locate facilities. While Sweat acknowledged to interviewers that there were problems, he consistently narrowed the frame to focus on homelessness. In short, public toilets would “lure vagrants and lower the image of downtown Atlanta” (Journal 1983:1).

The thrust of the business community’s argument was that public toilets were only needed by groups whose presence was not desired in Five Points (since they felt homeless street people hurt the area’s image and harmed its prospects of commercial revitalization). According to Dan Sweat,

It would draw winos and derelicts and other undesirables to the very area we are trying to get businesses to move back into. In the long run, that will cripple our efforts to provide more jobs, to increase the city’s tax base and raise the kinds of public revenue so the city can do a better job of providing for the needy (Schmidt 1983:1).

For Sweat, the principal issue was access to public space and the effect a stigmatized group had on private business in or near that space. In Sweat’s view, public toilets harm the image of downtown and, as a result, imposed a burdensome negative cost on Five Points. Sweat envisioned Five Points again serving as the engine of growth for Atlanta. Services, like toilets, addressing the needs of the most destitute of the poor detracted from this goal. Clearly, CAP looked at the “costs” of having or not having public toilets downtown from a very different perspective than the Task Force. For CAP, the financial costs associated with arresting, trying, and jailing homeless people for public urination were inconsequential compared to the economic losses to businesses and property values that would occur if Five Points continued its downward spiral rather than moved towards economic revitalization.

Sweat argued that he was not against the provision of services to the homeless, but he vehemently opposed public restrooms on city streets in Five Points. By narrowing the frame of those needing toilets exclusively to the homeless, he argued that other facilities were more appropriate. In this regard, he contended that the city was addressing the restroom needs of homeless people by providing funding for Samaritan House and expansion of restrooms at the Downtown Day Labor Service Center (“The Great” 1983). The Labor Center had been created under the Jackson administration as a place a few blocks east of Five Points downtown street corners where day laborers could seek work. Samaritan House was a more recent project several blocks north of Five Points. Sweat argued, “if it’s a public responsibility to provide for the needs of street people, let’s put the effort into improving public shelters. Putting public outhouses all over downtown will lose us business and money” (Hirsley 1984:4). Sweat again sought to narrow the problem of public toilets to “street people,” ignoring the other groups that had come forward. Likewise, he mobilized the image of “outhouses,” evoking rural life and premodern arrangements (the antithesis of a modern American city). Sweat advocated for the establishment of restrooms in existing public, supervised spaces, such as churches, firehouses, social service agencies and downtown homeless day shelters.

PUBLIC DEBATE

Homeless advocates were successful in mobilizing supporters for the public restroom initiative. At an October 1983 hearing before the Atlanta City Council Public Utilities Committee, 70 supporters of public toilets were present to give testimony. They represented the broad-based coalition that had emerged, including citizens, several municipal court judges, the ACLU, religious leaders, and social service providers who all endorsed the need. The Director of the Samaritan House program, operated by downtown churches, also argued in favor of public

toilets. The problem of toilets was emphasized to be a concern for “visitors, residents who are shopping and homeless people.” In addition, the issue of cost to the city was raised. After reviewing the records of municipal court, Rob Johnson, of the Open Door Community, contended that over 100 people per month were charged for public urination (Hayes 1983). In contrast, at these hearings before the Public Utilities Committee, only one speaker, Larry Fonts of Central Atlanta Progress, argued against the proposal for public toilets, contending that the only group unable to find restrooms was “street people.”

In the public toilet debate, the frame of “cost” was put to the test. Bolling had argued that business and political leaders were more likely to be persuaded by the quantifiable cost of homelessness to the city. In framing the cost argument, advocates highlighted the tangible cost to the police, court and prison system necessitated by the lack of public toilets.

Perhaps as a result of this impasse with regard to the “cost” argument, in presenting their case for public toilets, the advocates for the homeless soon adopted the language of rights. In this expanded frame, restrooms became “a basic human right,” rather than a desirable or cost-effective service for them. The advocates for public restrooms argued for an inclusive public space allowing more than the customers and clients of downtown government agencies and businesses to have access to restroom facilities.

By the fall of 1983, Central Atlanta Progress had mobilized the business community had mobilized to oppose the proposal to install public toilets in the central area. The Chamber of Commerce voted to oppose the provision of public toilets. In an *Atlanta Constitution* Op-Ed article editor Tom Teeppen discussed the business, political, and religious groups supporting and opposing the public toilet proposal. Teeppen expressed concern over the growing polarization of the debate over public toilets. He expressed his hope that there was possibility for

accommodation “sides have not been firmly chosen, but to the degree they have formed tentatively, they reveal in one camp, humanitarians, and in the other more humanitarians” (Teepen 1983:A16). He pointed out that while CAP was fearful that “street-corner johns in the prime office and retail areas would not only serve but would further attract the derelict population putting off downtown workers, shoppers, conventioners and sightseers” the business community is not “heartless.” Teepen praised Dan Sweat’s “active and effective [involvement] in a variety of humanitarian projects that house and feed the city’s down-and-out drifter population. They are not uncaring.” Teepen acknowledged the validity of both the concerns for downtown development and the need for public restrooms. He challenged those holding either position to reach a “way to compromise” (Teepen 1983: A16).

Responding to Teepen’s call for a solution that would bring to two sides together, Joanna Adams, Chairwoman of the Task Force for the Homeless, in a letter to the AJC editor, said:

It seems to me that it would be to the advantage of everyone – the business community, the police department, public health officials, shoppers, tourists, and especially the homeless – not to have people “going to the bathroom” in the streets.

At present, we arrest people for the crime of being human!

I am encouraged by the recent efforts of some members of the Atlanta City Council and Central Atlanta Progress to come up with a solution everyone can live with (Adams 1983b).

By December, it appeared that the proposal to install and maintain a public restroom in Plaza Park would be successful.

On the first of December 1983, advocates for public toilets called a “24 hour prayer and fast vigil” to be held on the steps of Atlanta City Hall. The demonstration was intended to “call attention to the needs of Atlanta’s poor and was chosen “to coincide with several events – the proposal now pending before City Council for public toilets, the December 1st opening of several shelters for the homeless by Atlanta area churches; and the coming winter season. The vigil and

fast on the city steps was for “the homeless and hungry who have no public toilets” (Open Door Community 1983). Over a 24-hour period, speakers addressed dimensions of homelessness. Speakers included religious leaders from black and white congregations, several shelter directors, an attorney, criminal justice advocates and Joe Gross of the Committee for More & Better Marked Toilets. On the afternoon of the second day, they packed the City Council committee room to support the restroom proposal.

On December 2, the City Council’s Utilities Committee and Human Resources Committee held meetings to consider the proposal to develop a public restroom in downtown Atlanta’s Plaza Park for a three-month trial period. In her report to the committee, Elaine Valentine reviewed the history of the public toilet issue and summarized the research undertaken by both the city staff as well as Central Atlanta Progress. Contrary to earlier assertions by the business community, their research revealed that public restrooms were not available to the non-customer public in the downtown area and most businesses surveyed declined to post signage offering their facilities (Valentine 1983). Both committees approved the proposal.

The final committee to consider the proposal was the powerful Finance Committee. Meeting on December 6, Ira Jackson, the Committee Chairman, used his prerogative to place a hold on consideration of the proposal. Jackson blocked the proposal, accusing advocates of public toilets of racism. Jackson disparaged public toilets as a “junky outhouse for blacks to use” (Hayes 1983:11A). Given Jackson’s concern, the finance committee voted to hold the proposal. On December 15, the Finance Committee met again to consider a revised proposal. The proposal was to appropriate \$44,000 to either renovate an existing restroom in the park or “to install a portable one.” While the park had an existing restroom used by city employees, the parks commissioner argued that it was inadequate for public use. Instead she recommended the

city either purchase a \$30,000 self-cleaning portable toilet or rent a portable toilet for a trial period. The Finance Committee voted against the proposal to build a public restroom in Plaza Park, effectively killing the plan (Hayes 1983b).

For proponents of public toilets, Councilman Ira Jackson's articulation of the potent issue of race late in the deliberative process was unsettling and, to some, disingenuous. Ira Jackson, who is black, was elected to the City Council in 1969 and had experienced the transition from a white to black mayor. He was well connected with the white business community and had actively resisted many of the initiatives of Mayor Maynard Jackson's administration. But Ira Jackson's articulation of the issue of race was a potent way of contesting the advocates' framing of public toilets at that time in the city's history. The dynamics of race relations on the City Council were difficult and complex. Class divisions within the black community itself made the issue of public toilets particularly potent and divisive. On one level Ira Jackson effectively mobilized the language of race in a way to put white proponents on the defensive. But more telling in the view of some advocates was Jackson's use of the particular terminology. His use of language ("junky outhouse") was even more extreme than the language that Dan Sweat had been using in describing the proposal for public toilets. But he extended this framing by amending the potent connection to race and the politics of suspicion. Reframing public toilets in racial terms served to powerfully evoke memories of segregation and unequal accommodations. Ira Jackson's words implied that white business owners really didn't want black folks coming in to use the bathrooms in their stores, and that putting in public toilets on the street would give white businesses an excuse to effectively reinstate bathroom segregation by providing a convenient alternative to their private facilities.

Thus, in January of 1984, the permanent public toilet proposal was stalled in the Council and appeared dead. A compromise solution led to the installation of two portable toilets in Plaza Park under the supervision of city police officers. Under this compromise plan, the toilets were installed for a three-month trial after which an expansion would be considered. Councilwoman Valentine insisted, “this is a compromise between those who want to change things and those who don’t” (Hirsley 1984:4). At the end of the three-month trial period, the toilets were removed. As Murphy Davis remembers:

It was no victory since the compromise was clearly designed to fail. One toilet where thousands of people passed every day! Sure enough, the toilet had been removed within a few months. It has been used so heavily that the company that owned it could not clean it fast enough. (Davis 2000)

Councilman Ira Jackson’s resistance to the building of permanent public toilets in downtown Atlanta was a surprise and disappointment to advocates. However advocates interpreted the defeat differently. For advocates like Bolling and Adams, the failure of the toilet initiative, was an example of “city council politics.” This analysis reflected community complaints that Atlanta’s Council was dysfunctional, particularly around the politics of race, which had preoccupied the racially divided City Council. For advocates like Loring, Davis, Short, Johnson and those associated with the Open Door Community had a very different interpretation of the event, one that shaped and clarified their diagnostic framing of homelessness.

When [it was] first introduced we met at a round table in the old City Council. At the first meeting a couple of people were very supportive, by next meeting it was down to John [Lewis] and Elaine [Valentine], you could see that Dan Sweat had gotten to these other people. He was a very powerful, persuasive, arm twister. You could see what he didn’t want wasn’t going to happen. And you could just see what he didn’t want, there was no way it was going through that committee and going through council – so – it didn’t. (Davis Interview)

In this view, downtown business leaders effectively used their political and economic power to shape the amenities of the offered to city-dwellers. Their action confounded advocates and to the detriment of the homeless and the non-consuming public. In every public hearing, advocates for the public toilets had been well represented and presented their research. In contrast, the business community had lobbied behind the scenes to accomplish its goals.

INTERPRETING FAILURE

The toilet campaign was an important milestone for the early homeless movement. It represented the first public policy initiative of the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless and intended to reduce conflict between the homeless and downtown interests. The campaign raised homelessness as an issue of public policy requiring state intervention to assist the poor.

Through the campaign, the early movement expanded and deepened their understanding of homelessness. When first initiated, the toilet campaign appeared to advocates to be a straightforward problem-oriented approach that benefited both the homeless and the city. Toilets would provide a legal way for the destitute poor in downtown Atlanta to relieve themselves, which in turn this would reduce police efforts, lower the cost to the courts, and decrease the business community's complaints about the parks.

This was not to be. The early opposition to the public toilets by the business community served to heighten the awareness of some advocates for the homeless of the role of the business community in shaping the lives of the poor. In addition, the lack of action on the part of Mayor Andrew Young, who had campaigned on a platform of concern for Atlanta's poor, was a disappointment. The failure of the business community and the executive branch of city government to provide support for these simple solutions led Loring, Brady, Johnson and Davis to surmise that economic interests of business benefited from the criminalization of the poor.

The Task Force's proposal sought to forefront the cost issue as the lever to generate public support to this matter. To this end, advocates emphasized the costs associated with a lack of public restrooms – the cost to police, courts and jails to arrest, try and sentence poor people. In framing their arguments, they underestimated how the business community viewed the cost of making downtown comfortable for the homeless poor. Task Force underestimated the issue of how much the presence of homeless in the downtown area was calculated as a “cost.”

At this point, the homeless serving community underwent one of its early divisions. Advocates developed substantially different diagnostic frames and particularly differed on the attribution element of diagnostic framing. In the toilet campaign, the business community organized to exert its influence to derail the toilet proposal. Advocates differed fundamentally on who was responsible for homelessness. Was the business community a cause of homelessness or merely a group exerting its influence? For advocates like Bolling and Adams, this question appears to have been decided on a pragmatic level. They saw the business community as critical partner whose financial and political support was needed to address the problems of homelessness. For these advocates, establishing a continued partnership with the business community was critical to solving the problems of the homeless. This view was reflected in the civic renewal (Sirianni & Friedland 2001) approach that characterized the Task Force for the Homeless approach – engaging the whole community in solving a social problem. In their view, the public toilet campaign illustrated the difficulty of forging practical solutions to complex problems.

On the other hand, early leaders like Ed Loring, Murphy Davis and Colleen Brady saw the business community as actively pursuing its own interests and its policy prescriptions advancing those interests. These policies, rather than being benign, created homelessness and

contributed to its oppressiveness. In their view, the business community's goals, with complicity of political leaders sought to create a sanitized downtown attractive to white suburbanites. By seeking to create a particular kind of sanitized downtown area, the visible poor were excluded through a new form of de facto segregation.

Beyond these differing assessments of the toilet campaign and their implications for future political action, other differences became evident. The critical difference was the balance of providing services and sustaining advocacy. This came down to a difference between those whose involvement centered to the delivery of emergency shelter and those concerned with a larger social reform agenda. For many volunteers, emergency sheltering was a form of direct, personal ministry to individuals in distress. For most of those on the frontlines of the movement, especially the shelter operators and shelter volunteers, their primary engagement with homelessness was in the private spaces of the church sanctuary and the night shelter. The quasi-private spaces of church sanctuary and gymnasium were sacred spaces, removed from the conflicts of the street. For church volunteers, their interaction with the homeless in these sacred spaces was not "political," but "religious." Engagement that extended into the public sphere was qualitatively different, advocacy for the rights of the homeless engendered conflict and was avoided by most volunteers.

For leaders such as Ed Loring, Murphy Davis, and Bill Bolling, their engagement and activism extended into the public sphere. State and business had a stake in mitigating the suffering of the homeless poor. Bolling and Loring differed in how the relative priority they placed on the right of the homeless to public spaces versus emergency services.

This split turned on differences in diagnostic and prognostic framing. For advocates such as Loring honoring the dignity of the poor involved creating an inclusive community in which

they are welcomed into public space. Loring is resisting the privatization of public spaces. For those primarily framing homelessness as a disaster, the private spaces of emergency church shelters have primacy. That is, even as some advocates were able to articulate the systemic and policy issues involved with homelessness, meeting the survival needs of the homeless had greater primacy than asserting rights to space.

The focus on the provision of church –based services had the advantage of attracting needed financial resources. Business and civic groups supported the development of church based shelters. In a similar manner, special dedicated spaces were created to attract homeless individual requiring services. The Downtown Day Labor Center and Samaritan House were designated and approved spaces for the homeless, providing restrooms, showers and job referral. Both were operated by non-business entities, government in the first case and religious community in the second. But more critically, both were created at the behest of the business community and served the interests of the business community. Likewise, the nighttime spaces were available through the shelters.

It was the public spaces between the day shelters and the night shelters that were problematic and became sites of conflict. Through the late 1970's and early 1980's the goal of Central Atlanta Progress was to lure middle and upper income residents back into the downtown center (Boyer 1981). The cardinal need from CAP's standpoint was to create a space of safety and security. In an earlier period these spaces had been maintained and this need for homogeneity had been earlier maintained through rigid racial segregation and the laws, norms, and rituals that accompanied segregation (Doyle 1971[1937]).

Postscript

Conflicts over public toilets accommodations continued in Atlanta for another 25 years. In the immediate aftermath of the City Council decision, the Atlanta Advocates conducted a series of demonstrations and meetings demanding the renovation of the toilets Downtown Day Labor Center. In addition, the Open Door Community conducted an ongoing public campaign calling for city and business officials to let Atlantans “Pee for Free with Dignity.” Prior to the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta a proposal to install automatic public toilets received strong support until legal objections to advertising made the toilets financially infeasible. In early 2000, a clergy group – the Campaign of Necessity – worked with public health officials to framed public toilets as a public health issue. Again there was political support for the toilets, but a lack of advertising revenue and business community objections again defeated the project. In late 2005, the City Council authorized a \$20 million Bond initiative to establish a Homeless Opportunity Fund to fund programs approved by the Commission on Homelessness. At the initiative of one of the commissioners, Bill Bolling, \$1.5 million of this amount was dedicated to the installation and maintenance of five public toilets in the downtown and midtown area. Organized business interests continued to voice objections, and were instrumental in insuring the toilets were located in places subject to constant police supervision. The toilets were installed in the Spring of 2008.

CHAPTER 8: RISE AND FALL OF DISASTER FRAME

In this chapter I return to the ongoing development of the movement to end homelessness in Atlanta. First, I describe and explain the development of the movement, particularly its rapid expansion beyond the small number of downtown churches. By using bloc mobilization and coalitions of congregations to support shelters, the movement created a volunteer intensive and very cost-effective system. Next I turn to Atlanta's first policy study of homelessness and the organization of activities designed to pressure city officials and business leaders to assume greater responsibility for homelessness. The success of this pressure resulted in the creation of the first large public shelters and the search for an effective provider of this service.

BUILDING THE RELIGIOUS SHELTERING NETWORK

In the first three years of the modern movement (1979-1982), church based shelters were located exclusively in the facilities provided by a small number of mainline Protestant denominations. In part, this had to do with the genesis of the movement in the network of downtown churches. Even after the Christian Council promoted the sheltering response to homelessness, the movement drew primarily from representatives of mainline Protestant churches with Presbyterians and Episcopalians providing the primary location. In contrast, the centralized organizational structure of the Roman Catholic Church and their limited presence in the city, inhibited their capacity to develop shelters. Despite this, both Catholic clergy and lay members were active in the sheltering movement through their support of existing shelters and the development of auxiliary services. At the Central Presbyterian shelter, the local director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a Catholic charity, provided volunteer coordination. Similarly, the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (a Catholic church) adjacent to the Central Presbyterian Shelter began providing a Saturday soup kitchen that filled a gap in the emerging shelter system.

New congregations were brought into the network by being asked to provide “overflow” shelter. The idea of overflow shelter was that shelters would only open to provide shelter services when other shelters had reached capacity. Using this incremental approach, congregations such as Trinity United Methodist Church were introduced to sheltering in the winter of 1982 and began operating their own emergency night shelter in the fall of 1982.

The use of the “overflow” approach was instrumental in encouraging new religious groups to participate in sheltering. Two patterns emerged for incorporating new congregations into the shelter system. First, interested members of the congregation would volunteer at one of the established shelters, typically at Central Presbyterian Church. Following their exposure to homelessness and heightened awareness of the need, they would approach their own congregation to provide the limited shelter. With the establishment of the Task Force for the Homeless under the auspices of the Christian Council, a second, more proactive method of recruitment was undertaken. Homelessness was highlighted at monthly Christian Council meetings attended by lay and clergy from throughout the Metro Atlanta area. The Task Force began contacting these churches directly to recruit volunteers and encourage the development of shelters.

New religious actors

Central to this was the framing of the problem of homelessness as one of emergency crisis, demanding an emergency response. The Christian Council’s sponsorship of the Task Force under the leadership of Joanna Adams as President of the Council raised the visibility of homelessness in the religious community. The small core of churches that had developed winter sheltering combined with the publicity the Task Force received from both the religious and secular press to provide a tangible example of how churches could respond. The Task Force and

the Christian Council used this heightened visibility to actively develop and recruit new shelter locations. The shelter movement quickly expanded beyond the narrow Protestant core that had initiated the response in the first three years of the homelessness.

In January of 1983, St Anthony's Catholic Church in the West End opened an overflow shelter for Central Presbyterian.²⁷ St Anthony's was significant in two ways. It was the first shelter operating in a Roman Catholic Church, and was the first predominantly African-American congregation to provide shelter. Despite these distinctions, St. Anthony's followed the volunteer intensive model of sheltering first developed at Clifton Presbyterian, utilizing four volunteers a night to serve as overnight hosts. Families and small groups from the congregation were asked to volunteer to fix and serve the evening meals at the shelter (McInerney 1990).

In November of 1983, the first Jewish congregation opened a shelter in its facility. Shearith Israel's shelter began at the initiation of the congregation's religious leader, Rabbi Marc Wilson. Wilson had been influenced by two sources; first in January 1983 New York City's Mayor Koch had challenged that city's synagogues to develop shelter complaining that "not a single synagogue" provided shelter (Carroll 1983). Locally, Wilson had attended an interfaith event at which homelessness had been promoted as a religious concern. Wilson shared his conviction during religious services that something needed to be done about homelessness and invited interested members of the congregation to indicate their interest. In response over a hundred members of the congregation volunteered to participate. Volunteers from nearby churches also joined the effort resulting in a pool of 160 volunteers the first year.²⁸

²⁷ St Anthony's continued to provide winter emergency shelter until 1990 when it was closed by the Parish Priest who asserted "we've paid our dues." See McInerney (1990).

²⁸ Shearith Israel's shelter was low-key and highly regarded, for example see McAlister (1985).

Shearith Israel shelter volunteers followed a familiar path. After committing to create a shelter, several congregants volunteered at Central Presbyterian Church to learn how to organize a shelter.

It was clear, after the decision was made to open the shelter that it should be for women. There are more than 30 shelters in the city, but only three shelters serve women exclusively. We were told by others running shelters that the biggest problem was lack of space for women (Laurer 1984:2C).

The success of the Shearith Israel shelter also diffused within its religious network. In late January 1984, the Temple was the second Jewish shelter that developed. The Temple shelter also was designed to serve an underserved niche, homeless couples.

The framing of homelessness as disaster provided both the diagnostic and motivational framing of homelessness to support a wide variety of churches to develop sheltering programs. Most shelters adopted a set of simple rules to establish the expectation for shelter. As we will see, most shelter directors placed greatest priority on meeting basic human needs and had limited expectations of shelter guests. In some cases, congregations had unstated expectations. Calvary United Methodist Church in the West End had started a shelter for 11 families in the 1983-84 shelter season, but after one season of sheltering decided not to continue. At the time decision to reopen was attributed to the difficulty obtaining the funding and sufficient volunteer support to maintain the shelter. But volunteer sheltering is relatively cheap and with the infusion of federal FEMA funds and the low cost food bank these were relatively modest costs. More critical for the model of church based sheltering was volunteer motivation. One of the core complaints of church members was that shelter residents were residing in the shelter, but not attending services at the church (Bernstein 1985). The pastor summarized the feeling of the congregation “There was a feeling that their attitude about what you were trying to do was less than appreciative.” For the Calvary UMC volunteers, shelter guests were expected to be grateful to their hosts and attend

the services. The experience at Calvary highlighted the critical interaction between the “guests” and their “hosts.” While the hospitality modeled championed by the Task Force encouraged volunteers to provide service as a free gift, expectations of the volunteers carried assumptions about reciprocity and gratitude as benefits of the relationship.²⁹

The disaster frame mobilized collective action in the face of life-threatening conditions by emphasizing the prognostic frame over the diagnostic. Attention and energy focused upon organizing and providing shelter space during the winter months for a variety of needy populations. The clergy and lay leaders who provided the bulk of the movement’s labor, were motivated by the preservation of life rather than a systemic analysis. Their framing the problem was primarily prognostic – the provision of emergency night shelter. This prognostic framing of the problem was productive and efficient as it resulted in the continued expansion of the sheltering system. Much of the attention of the shelter leaders was focused on mobilizing the resources to continue shelter operations. In 1985, shelter directors were asked about their motivations for providing shelter. Of the 23 shelter directors who responded to the survey ten listed providing basic human needs as their highest priority, other responses included offering hospitality/shelter (4), rescue people from the street (4), instilling dignity and hope in homeless people (3) and sharing the gospel (3). Mentioned once among these short-term goals were to insure that volunteers were present and to see that the program continues next year.

Despite these common prognostic approaches, there were underlying differences among the sheltering system’s leaders. For instance, shelter and soup kitchen directors differed over the appropriate role of the state and homeless services. When Leland (1985) asked program directors about local government involvement in service delivery, 53% said service delivery

²⁹ The relationship between volunteers and “guests” is fraught with ambiguity and tension. See Holden (1997), Allahyari (2000) and Lyon-Callo (2004).

should be a joint or cooperative effort between the public and private sector, but almost a third (28%) said government should not be involved in service delivery at all (Leland 1985). Mary Jo Dellinger, the director of the women's shelter at First Presbyterian Church, argued that "churches – not government – can and should do the best job running such facilities [shelters] – that is where our responsibilities lie" (Graham 1985:B1).

While there were differences among shelter directors on the role of government providing shelters, there was greater agreement on the stance government should take toward the homeless. Sixty-eight percent of the shelter directors believed that the local government should change its policy toward the homeless to "a more positive view." The homeless should be seen as part of its constituency, and the government should act to provide for the safety and health of its citizenry (Leland 1985).

In their first annual report to members of their congregation, leaders of the Trinity United Methodist Church shelter reported on the 1983-1984 shelter season. During that time 29,000 meals were served and 2,000 volunteers participated in the homeless ministry. Trinity's annual report highlights the fact that while individual shelters were located in and named for particular congregations, they represented the collective effort of many groups. In the case of the Trinity United Methodist Church shelter "this past season 17 congregations and organizations joined with us on a monthly basis" (*Trinity Evangel* 1984:1).

The emerging system of shelters and the entry of new congregations mobilized by the issue provided opportunities for the Task Force to identify and fill niches in the system. The needs of women, children, and families, while proportionately quite small, were described as especially pressing due to the perceived vulnerability of these categories. In March of 1984, the Task Force started a day shelter for children at All Saints Episcopal Church. Families staying at

the three family shelters – Saint Bartholomew’s, St. Mark United Methodist Church and Calvary United Methodist Church were provided free day care during the day (Alexander 1984).

From the Task Force’s perspective, the children’s day shelter represented an early effort to mobilize the volunteer church system to address two gaps in the system of service. First, families with children needed day care assistance as they negotiated the employment and social service system while having to rely upon public transportation. Second, while day care centers for the poor were available, their residency rules and procedures prohibited homeless children from attending.

The needs of children continued to attract sympathetic public attention and drew in new actors. In 1985, the Junior League of Atlanta adopted the children’s shelter as a project. They renamed the shelter Children’s Place and located it in North Avenue Presbyterian Church for 30 children.³⁰ The Junior League also was able to use its network to mobilize resources. It made an initial contribution of \$100,000 and pledged \$100,000 more. In addition, the Junior League committed to raise an additional \$500,000 from the community (Graham 1985).

NEW RESOURCES, NEW ACTORS: FEDERAL FUNDS AND UNITED WAY (1983-1984)

Increasing national attention to homelessness brought changes to the actors involved locally with homelessness and reinforced the framing of homelessness as disaster. The deep recession of the early 1980’s led to the passage the Emergency Jobs Appropriation Act of 1983 (Public Law 98-9) in September. While primarily designed as a job stimulation bill, the act included provisions for responding to the emergency needs of the homeless.

The Emergency Act created the first national program of the modern era to provide financial assistance to agencies serving the homeless. It did so by channeling federal funds

³⁰ It was ultimately called the Atlanta Children’s Shelter, Inc. (ACS)

through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the federal agency charged with responding to domestic disasters. In Fiscal 1983, FEMA received \$100 million to provide food and shelter for the homeless through existing nonprofit groups. The act provided two routes for funding these services. First, \$50 million was routed directly to state governors for dissemination within their states. Second, an additional \$50 million was allocated to a National Board composed of six charitable organizations and chaired by a FEMA representative. The National Board was composed of the United Way of America, the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, the National Conference of Catholic Charities, and the Council of Jewish Federations. The National Board developed an allocation formula based on national unemployment and poverty rates. After the first year, Congress discontinued the funding to state governors, instead routing all of the funds through the National Board and to local agencies (Cooper 1987).

In the first three years, the actual funds distributed in Atlanta were relatively small, but grew dramatically. In fiscal year 1984, a total of \$5,100 was appropriated for the City of Atlanta and DeKalb and Fulton counties. Over half of this money was allocated to provide food for shelters and soup kitchens with additional funds providing temporary lodging in hotels. Available funds increased incrementally for the next several years but increased dramatically with the passage of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987. FY 1988 allocations were \$661,882.

While the FEMA funding was modest, the legislation, the funding and the engagement with local actors had an important consequence for the emerging movement. The use of the FEMA system allocation of funds through the FEMA National Board brought the entry of Atlanta's local United Way into the emerging homeless network. Homelessness moved from

being a marginal concern of intown religious congregations to a community concern. As the local United Way provided staff support and was fiscal agent for the dissemination of funding, the FEMA allocation had the consequence of engaging the metropolitan area's largest charitable organization, the United Way and its member agencies, in the issue of homelessness. While United Way Agencies such as Traveler's Aid, the Mental Health Association and the Salvation Army were already providing services and advocacy for the homeless, other United Way agencies were encouraged to link their program to the emerging issue.

This involvement of United Way and the availability of new funds to support the delivery of services came at a critical time. In general federal funds for services to the poor were declining precipitously during the early 1980s, and the agencies serving indigent populations were eagerly seeking new funding opportunities. The promotion of homelessness as a new social problem and its associated funding drew new agencies searching for funds into the network.

While the new funds drew new actors to the network, the funding also legitimated the movement's framing of the problem. Not only was an acknowledgement from the Federal government that homelessness was a nation-wide crisis. But the allocation of funds through FEMA legitimated and supported the disaster or emergency framing of homelessness. This provided additional support for the framing of homelessness as both different and in the nature of emergency. Federal funds also legitimated those who made the case that the new homeless were qualitatively different from the homeless of the past.

The FEMA funds available for distribution in the early 1980's were minuscule given the scope of the problem. Despite the relatively paltry amount of funds, they provided an important supplement to the meager funds shelters had available. The new income was particularly

important to extend the funds to purchase foodstuffs, often a shelter's largest expense. Shelters primarily relied upon donated food or purchased food from the Atlanta Community Food Bank.³¹

The FEMA funding and United Way's participation in its administration, also heightened the awareness of homelessness among nonprofits and related organizations. Under several Republican administrations funds available for social service organizations had been declining. Agencies seeking to serve the poor or vulnerable populations were eagerly seeking new funding opportunities. The heightened federal awareness of homelessness as a serious social problem for which federal money was available attracted the attention of organizations seeking funds.

As a result, local Atlanta organizations seeking funding to support their programs began to increasingly reframe their work as serving the homeless. Groups providing rent and utility assistance to poor households were the first to frame their work in this way. Describing their work as "preventing homelessness," long-standing emergency assistance agencies redefined their work by emphasizing how their assistance permitted individuals and families to remain in housing. On a practical level this meant assisting with rent, utility and food expenses. Given the problem of housing affordability in Atlanta, the amounts requested always exceeded the funds available. A second category of service to arise was the provision of an alternate sheltering system. Traveler's Aid and other organizations had routinely provided overnight hotel accommodations for stranded travelers. These stranded travelers now were redefined as homeless.

³¹ The Atlanta Community Food Bank was founded by Bill Bolling in 1979 during the time he coordinated the St. Luke's Community Kitchen. The Atlanta Community Food Bank became a separate organization providing low cost food to Atlanta's nonprofit service providers and Bolling its executive director.

1984 RESEARCH ATLANTA – IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON ATLANTA

In the fall of 1983, Research Atlanta, a public policy research foundation in Atlanta, received funds from the Metropolitan Community Foundation to conduct the first assessment of homelessness in Atlanta. Over a four-month period, the researchers interviewed current providers, social service agencies, and government officials to develop policy recommendations. In January of 1984 Research Atlanta issued its report, *The Impact of Homelessness on Atlanta* (Research Atlanta 1984). The *Impact* report provided the first systematic look at homelessness in Atlanta. Based on these interviews, the authors estimated the city had 3,000 persons homeless who consumed \$20 million in dollars of service annually.

The Research Atlanta study confirmed what advocates and shelter providers had been describing. Atlanta's homeless population was changing from the older white alcoholics. Research Atlanta estimated that 40 to 60 percent of Atlanta's street population were "mentally disabled," about half were alcoholics or drug addicts and nearly a third were ex-convicts. Beth Schapiro, Research Atlanta's research director characterized the homeless.

They are now a diverse group, including the mentally disabled, substance abusers, ex-convicts, victims of personal adversity such as illness or divorce and individuals unemployed due to short-term economic conditions or lack of job skills appropriate to modern society. (Schapiro 1984:15A)

The *Impact* study recommended the city expand its two day shelters – the Downtown Day Labor Center and Samaritan House – to include job counselors and social workers to identify those able to work and refer those in need of specialized assistance (Galloway 1984). Acknowledging the difficulty with funding that both facilities had faced, the report's authors recommended that Atlanta should determine how to support the shelters with dependable sources of funding. While the religious system provided cost-effective shelter at night, it was, in the report's view, the visibility of the homeless during the working hours that had the most potential for conflict. This

visibility had two components. First, the lack of secure daytime shelter exacerbated the suffering of the vulnerable homeless. During the day the homeless: “drift from one building to another or simply walk the street. Such exposure leaves them vulnerable to street crime and exacerbates their already considerable health problems (Town & Marchetti 1984:58). But this population of the visible poor also has an impact on the quality of life of the city. The report echoes the concerns of the business community and Central Atlanta Progress. “For the community as a whole, the presence of homeless people on the streets and in buildings downtown is at best disquieting, harming the city’s image among local residents and conventioners and hindering downtown revitalization” (Town & Marchetti 1984:58). While the *Impact* report highlighted these intangible costs of image and health, the finding that drew the greatest attention, and greatest controversy, were the estimates of funds being used to respond to Atlanta’s homeless. *Impact* conceptualized the cost to the city in terms of financial outlays. To estimate the financial impact of homelessness, Research Atlanta estimated the total cost of services utilized by the homeless. According to Research Atlanta, the estimated annual costs for the homeless broke down as follows:

Table 2: Estimated Cost of Services to Homeless

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Mental Health Outpatient treatment and hospitalization | \$11,000,000 |
| Alcohol detoxification, day programs, short-term hospitalization | \$800,000 |
| Job counseling and referral | \$700,000 |
| Day shelter | \$80,000 |
| Emergency Night Shelter | \$1,600,000 |
| Food kitchens | \$400,000 |
| Outpatient treatment and hospitalization | \$6,000,000 |
| City and County Criminal Justice | \$2,478,250 |

(Town & Marchetti 1984:ii,52)

The final estimate that financial impact of the homeless in Atlanta exceeded \$20 million made front-page headlines in Atlanta.

The Research Atlanta Report drew quick criticism from shelter directors and homeless advocates. The assertion that the city was already spending \$20 million a year to meet the needs of the homeless was met with incredulity. The report had calculated the cost of indigent medical care to the mentally and physically ill at the city's public hospital as the bulk of these funds.

In an op-ed in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Beth Schapiro, Director of Research Atlanta defended the study by arguing "to address the problem effectively we must first identify who is on the streets and why" (Schapiro 1984:15A).

While Research Atlanta highlighted the cost of homelessness to the public health and judicial system, they pointed out that many of the direct services to the homeless were delivered at "pennies a day." Atlanta's religious and charitable organizations have invested much personnel and money in providing for certain survival needs, particularly night shelter, food and clothing. A central finding of Research Atlanta's analysis was the extremely cost-effective

delivery of services by the city's religious community. From the viewpoint of Research Atlanta, the religious community provided the most efficient way to deliver night shelter services.

Implicit in Schapiro's argument is the continued dependence on the religious based sheltering system to provide for the nighttime needs of the homeless. From Schapiro's point of view, the most pressing need was for shelter during the daylight hours when the night shelters were inaccessible. "The most immediate need ...is for day shelter...Two day shelters can be established now based on existing facilities and at a cost tiny in comparison with the millions already being spent yearly to help the homeless (Schapiro 1984:15A). Furthermore, Schapiro argued, we must be realistic: "We can never eradicate homelessness in Atlanta. Some live on the streets by choice and will continue to do so. Others will migrate to the city. Nevertheless, we can reduce the homeless population significantly by providing [for] immediate survival needs and services to integrate these people into the community" (Schapiro 1984:15A).

In a January 16 letter to the editor, Ed Loring of the Open Door Community took issue with Schapiro's statement. "Over the past 4 ½ years I have been directly involved with Atlanta's homeless. I live with 25 of the 4,000 to 5,000 men, women and children who have nowhere to go. With thousands others, I eat, talk, worship, stand in line and sit hour after hour in labor pools. Several I have buried (Loring 1984:14A). With this, Loring establishes his credentials as an authority on homelessness in Atlanta. He goes on:

Never have I encountered a single instance where someone chooses to be filthy, cold, hungry, despised, sick and homeless.

Human beings do not choose a life of desperation and poverty; they are pushed into it by oppressive forces that are part of our social structure. These structures are daily widening the gap between the poor and the economically well-to-do. ...We must break apart the equally dehumanizing myth that some among the homeless want to be homeless. (Loring 1984:14A)

Research Atlanta's report accomplished what the original framers of the Task Force for the Homeless had proposed – making the case that homelessness “cost” the city in a tangible way. However, while there was attention paid to the estimate of cost, there is little evidence that the research study led to implementation of the policy recommendations. The central recommendation of the study – support for day shelters – failed to materialize. Both day shelters struggled to secure the resources to support their operations.

ARTICULATING THE INJUSTICE FRAME

Loring's reaction to the *Impact* report highlights the emergence of a new and more articulated diagnostic and prognostic framing of the problem of homelessness. While elements of this frame had been present in the early development of the Clifton Presbyterian Shelter and the establishment of the Open Door Community, the toilet campaign of 1983 had starkly highlighted the willingness of business and political leaders to foster conditions that increased the suffering of the homeless poor.

The toilet campaign heightened the salience of a frame for homelessness that was already being articulated. As early as the fall of 1982, the Open Door Community had named “economic injustice” as the primary cause of homelessness. In *Safety Network*, the national newsletter of the Coalition for the Homeless, Loring commented:

In relationship to jobs, our experience continues to contradict the myth that streets folks are ‘bums’ who don’t want to work. Some of the older folks are broken in body – physically wrecked by years of hard, literally bone-breaking unskilled labor. They are no longer strong and are now considered “undesirable” as workers in the only job they ever had. (NCH 1982:1)

Loring and the Open Door Community had already begun a series of protests. The first public demonstration to raise awareness of homelessness was held in Central City Park on November

11, 1982.³² The protest began in the park and processed as a mock funeral procession for “John and Jane Doe” to City Hall where the Open Door Community and members of the Tuesday Morning Fellowship urged more shelters be opened (Special 1982).

In December of 1982, the Open Door began providing breakfast one day a week at the Downtown Day Labor Center, the city’s day shelter. City officials quickly terminated this arrangement, asserting that serving food interfered with the Labor Center’s purpose to get jobs. The breakfast was moved to the nearby Butler Street CME Church in January 1983 where a daily weekday breakfast was served for the next fifteen years.³³

Mobilizing the Injustice Frame: Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless –

On January 11, 1984 Ed Loring issued a call to religious leaders, shelters providers and advocates inviting them to a conference to be held at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church, February 3-4. This was the first conference on homelessness – “Homelessness in Atlanta: A Call to Action.” He articulated, “the time is at hand for us to join those who feel led to greater levels of activism and action on behalf of the homeless poor.” He identified two goals for the conference.

First to develop a political agenda that addresses the needs and injustice of the lives of God’s homeless friends. For instance, labor pools, arrests and jails as social control, allocation of monies by government, [lack of] emergency shelters, death and disease on the streets, and single residency occupancy hotels are areas of concern for many of us.

Secondly, we want to form a working group of committed advocates who will share the burdens and gifts of implementing a political agenda (Loring 1984:1).

³² Renamed Robert W. Woodruff Memorial Park in April 1985. Woodruff donated \$13 million anonymously to purchase land and construct a park in the center of the city when solicited by Mayor Sam Massell from Robert Woodruff of Coca-Cola in 1973. At the time, Woodruff’s donation was anonymous. The park was renamed Robert W. Woodruff Memorial Park by the Atlanta City Council in April 1985 after Woodruff’s death (March 7, 1985).

³³ The Open Door Community served breakfast at the Butler Street CME Church five a week from January 1983 until the end of September 1998, when the church’s new pastor terminated the arrangement in order to move the congregation in a new direction. (see Saunders and Campbell 2000:22)

Loring's framing of the conference represents a sharp break from the consensus-orientation characterizing the approach promoted by the founders of the Task Force for the Homeless. In the view of Bolling and Adams, the Task Force was working to develop a consensus strategy to meet the needs of the homeless. For Loring, the toilet campaign had highlighted the impotence of the Task Force to ameliorate the conditions of the poor. In contrast, Loring's views reflect a power analysis of the process of city policy making. The experience of the yearlong toilet campaign and the freezing of homeless persons on the streets were cited as reasons for the new call to action. While deaths on the street had mobilized the religious community to provide shelter, city and business interests were slow to respond. Greater levels of activism were needed.

Loring proposed a broad front and agenda for social change and made a connection to other struggles for justice. He particularly sought to make a linkage with the civil rights movement. The mantle of the civil rights movement in Atlanta was much contested. On the one hand, Atlanta leaders promoted the city's connection to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The family of Martin Luther King, Jr. had established a Center for Social Change. Black political leaders highlighted their connections with the movement. Mayor Andrew Young had parlayed his association with King and international movements for social justice during his mayoral campaign. While the symbolic linkage to King was emphasized, his more radical call for economic justice was de-emphasized in the neo-conservative development politics of Andrew Young and in the institution building of the King family. It was King's call for economic justice to which Loring sought a connection. As one way of making this linkage, Loring invited civil rights movement veteran and Atlanta City Council Member John Lewis to provide the keynote address, and he agreed to do it. Nine issues were identified for working groups at the conference – 1) year round shelter, 2) emergency

shelter, 3) feeding programs, 4) health care, 5) day and 24 hour drop-in centers, 6) public toilets, 7) municipal courts, 8) single-room occupancy hotels and 9) labor pools.

On the first evening of the conference, Loring delivered a “Call to Action.” Loring’s speech provides an important overview and assessment of the state of the homeless movement from the injustice perspective. Reflecting on his work since the opening of the Clifton Shelter in 1979, he noted the expansion of the services for the homeless – “15 soup kitchens, 30 shelters, health care volunteers, a day shelter for adults and a day care center for homeless children, and a public toilet.” He highlighted the network that had developed, “the community of faith,” that had been established among the churches and synagogues who joined together to provide emergency night shelter.

He then turned to defeats: “20 folks freeze to death, Ira Jackson’s [equating] racism with toilets, and national leaders denying problems of homelessness and hunger.” Loring attributed the increase in homelessness to Reagan administration cuts in housing and social services funding, but also placed blame on local officials, particularly Mayor Andrew Young, asserting, “He won’t speak out.” Specifically, Loring saw the close alliance between business and government exacerbating problems of “development and displacement” whose linkage “questions the very heart, the fundamentals of our values as a people.” One indicator of the problem was the lack of affordable housing. Loring reported the Atlanta Housing Authority had “29,000 applications and no vacancies in 1983 and only 100 in 1984”.

Loring shared his experience that “homelessness is growing” despite the religious community’s response. While he highlighted structural issues, he acknowledged that homeless individuals faced “personal issues” including “alcohol, mental issues personal pain and hopelessness.” Then Loring stated the most immediate needs: year round shelters available 24

hours a day to all who need it, public toilets, reforming the labor pools, insuring access to health services, and removing the homeless from the city jail. Loring appealed to the audience to listen to the “cry of the poor” equating this with “the cry of God” (Loring 1984).

For Loring and the conference planners, the problem of homelessness was a continuation of the Civil Rights movement’s call for social and economic justice. Making this linkage and heritage more strongly, John Lewis, an Atlanta City Council member who had led the effort to secure public toilets, gave the keynote speech on the conference’s second day. Lewis was a potent choice. As a founding member and Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Lewis had played a prominent role in the 1963 March on Washington. John Lewis’ speech was titled “Homelessness and the Vision of the Beloved Community.” Picking up themes articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis tied the homeless movement to the Civil Rights movement’s call for social justice.

In this city, we must reach out to those who have been left behind... We can’t just be a city of tall buildings, new hotels, a sports arena, a new transportation system and the world’s largest airport. All these things are good, but we can have all of these and as a city lose our soul (Alexander 1984:4C).

Lewis called homelessness “the top issue facing the city and nation.” He challenged homeless advocates to pressure city, state and national issues to make the homeless the top issue for the government.

In speaking with media outlets, Loring highlighted the explicitly political focus of the conference “We’re here to set a political agenda. We want to let people know what we are going to do, and we are here for the long haul” (Alexander 1984:4C).

On February 6, 1984, at the Open Door Community, a new activist group – Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless was formed. Their primary target was what they viewed as the nexus of the local, state (city government) and business communities who they held responsible

for homelessness. Following the formation of the Advocates, a series of public demonstrations were held aimed at raising the visibility of homelessness. Their first demonstration, on April 1, the end of the winter shelter season, was an all-night vigil in Central City Park to “draw attention to the need for year-round shelters.” Later they picketed the Downtown Day Labor Center urging the construction of showers and toilet facilities that had been in the planning stage for some time. On June 8, “after months of negotiations with people at the Labor Center and City Hall” advocates held a public demonstration at City Hall (Atlanta Advocates, n.d.).

Of all the early leaders in Atlanta, Loring and the Open Door Community developed the strongest connections with national movements. While starting the Clifton shelter, Ed Loring had forged a working relationship with Mitch Snyder of the Community for Creative Nonviolence. Snyder had been instrumental in motivating the church to develop the first modern shelter. Building on this relationship, Loring regularly provided estimates of homelessness and background material to national publications on Atlanta’s response to homelessness.³⁴ The National Coalition for the Homeless also relied on Loring as a source of information in making the case that homelessness was a national phenomenon.

The formation of the Advocates and the increasing pursuit of a political agenda provided the opportunity for Loring to draw on these national networks. In October of 1984, Loring invited Mitch Snyder to Atlanta for a meeting with Mayor Andrew Young. At their meeting, Loring and Snyder highlighted the need for a public shelter to serve as an “overflow” when the church based shelters were full. Proposing this idea represented the extension of the shelter program by having the city act as the provider of last resort. Implicit in their meeting was the prospect of a campaign of direct action in Atlanta led by Mitch Snyder. At the conclusion of the

³⁴ See for instance pp. 75-79 in Homb and Snyder (1982). Loring is the key informant on Atlanta for this first nationwide account of the homeless advocacy and sheltering movement.

meeting, Young agreed the city would provide emergency night shelter for those unable to secure housing in the religious community's shelter system.

SUBCONTRACTING THE CITY'S RESPONSE: THE EOA DEBACLE

In the fall of 1984, the city of Atlanta negotiated a contract with the Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA) to operate an "overflow" emergency night shelter in the old Pryor Street School during the 1984-1985 shelter season. The city allocated \$100,000 for this purpose. While the city government had previously participated in the Task Force for the Homeless and provided funds to hire a part-time staff person, the EOA contract marked the first entry of the city into directly supporting emergency shelter. The city had been under increasing pressure from media, religious leaders and homeless advocates to respond to growing homelessness. Even as the mayor and city officials called on the religious community to open additional night shelters, the city drew on its resources to establish its first public shelter.

From the standpoint of city officials, EOA seemed a logical and attractive candidate to undertake a shelter. The Impact report released in the summer of 1984 had highlighted that the majority of homeless persons in Atlanta were single poor black men, who lived by contingent employment. EOA was the city's leading anti-poverty agency and operated a range of employment and treatment programs. EOA already had an established financial relationship with the city to operate a range of services, was the lead recipient of federal Community Services Block Grant Funds, and was already receiving city and county funds for the amelioration of poverty.

There were also political reasons to channel funds to the EOA. The combination of Nixon era block grant programs, Reagan era cuts and the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction act all combined to shrink the agency's budget. In particular, incremental reductions in

the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) during the Reagan administration had gradually constricted the EOA's ability to deliver programs.

Finally, there were practical reasons to select EOA as the operator of the city's shelter. EOA also had already secured access to a location and asserted its capacity to provide shelter as part of an earlier effort to extend its resources and services. In response to the Haitian refugee crisis of the early 1980's, EOA had received permission from the Atlanta City Schools and secured a multi-year lease of the closed Pryor Street School for a Haitian refugee relief program. As few Haitian refugees sought shelter in Atlanta, the program failed to materialize, but EOA retained their lease on the facility (Painton 1985). Given that EOA had proposed the idea of sheltering refugees, it was assumed that EOA had the capacity and program to meet the needs of the providing an overflow shelter for the city.

The Pryor Street Shelter was initially planned for a maximum of 250 residents. City officials and EOA assumed that the cost-effective model of sheltering pioneered by the religious community could be replicated by EOA. However, the church based model was highly dependent on the recruitment of volunteer labor and the mobilization of volunteer resources to supplement the facility. Unfortunately EOA failed to secure labor or resources from volunteers. There is no evidence that EOA sought the advice of the emergent shelter system or other established groups with experience in sheltering. EOA had neither the legitimacy nor resources to recruit the volunteers to provide night shelter. Nor was the capacity of the Pryor Street School sufficient to meet the need. EOA underestimated both the capacity of the building, and failed to design the structure and procedures that would have allowed it to control the facility. Over 450 men sought shelter on the coldest nights and EOA staff was overwhelmed.

By February 1984, the overcrowding at the Pryor Street School had become a media story. The city belatedly made the decision to limit the size of the shelter. Rather than opening another night shelter, Mayor Young, Chairman Michael Lomax and the Director of the state's Division of Human Resources, joined by Bill Bolling of the Task Force for the Homeless, issued a joint statement appealing to churches and nonprofits to expand their shelters. EOA asked the emergency night shelters to take "10 percent more people than they normally serve." The Mayor's Director of Human Services translated this to mean, "we're asking churches to take 10 more people into their kindergartens or parishes" (Turner 1985: A9).

Even those advocates pressing the city to provide more public shelter approved the decision to limit the size of the Pryor Street shelter. At the same time, they challenged the city's call for churches. "The decision not to open an additional shelter to take the overflow, and instead call upon the existing and already filled church shelters to take in those turned away, constitutes an abdication of the city's responsibility to provide for the welfare of all its citizens" (Brady 1985:A22). The Pryor Street Shelter was meant to provide a backstop for church shelter system when it reached capacity. The urgent calls from government officials for the religious shelter system to do even more appeared a betrayal of the city's commitment and revealed the first cracks in the volunteer run system. The Rev. Don Newby of the Christian Council made the link between the reduction in federal support for social services and the burden being placed on churches. "Churches are doing more than ever before, and the ones that are active are doing the best they can. But local efforts can't match the scope of federal cuts. The government, be it local, state or federal should not be allowed to abdicate its responsibility for the poor" (Dolman 1985: A1). The central problem was framing. While vocal church leaders made the connection between federal cuts and the rise in homelessness, most shelter volunteers did not. According to

Newby, shelter volunteers participated out a sense of loyalty and ministry through their church. While many shelter volunteers had sympathy for the emergency needs of the poor, they were “responding to the needs they see. But they don’t make the connection that some of this might be the result of the president’s [President Ronald Reagan] policies. That’s the phenomena with this present. He’s so popular; it doesn’t change what people think of him” (Dolman 1985: A1). Newby’s point reveals a critical disjuncture in the framing of homelessness. For many of the volunteers serving in the city’s religiously based emergency night shelter, their participation was a response to a disaster. The disaster frame provided a clear prognostic frame – provide emergency shelter, but lacked the diagnostic framing to assess culpability. Reagan’s exhortation for groups and individuals to take personal responsibility was articulated through the church-based service of thousands of volunteers, but few volunteers made the linkage between federal cuts and homelessness.

The failure of the EOA to effectively provide assistance to the city’s homeless revealed both the limits of the city’s framing of homelessness and the incapacity of the city’s selected vendor. While EOA had positioned itself as a provider of services to refugees, it lacked the capacity to provide for the city’s poor. In part, this reflected poor planning by EOA and a limited budget, but it also revealed their inability to mobilize the resources and formulate the program that would have organized the poor who sought their services. Instead, it revealed itself as a poverty agency unable to assist the poor.

In the aftermath of the 1983-84 debacle, EOA declined to renew its contract for sheltering the following year. The city turned to the religious community to assume responsibility for managing the city’s emergency night shelters. The organized religious community, unlike EOA, did have extensive experience organizing shelters. The Christian

Council had established a reputation for fostering the development of shelter programs and presumably had access to a network of volunteer and other resources that could support the initiative. In the fall of 1985, the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta assumed responsibility for operating the city's public shelter system.

The Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta operated shelters funded primarily by federal funds provided through both the City of Atlanta and Fulton County. The city loaned a staff person to the Council to assist in operating shelters. Within a year, the Council was managing a men's night shelter at West Hunter Baptist Church³⁵ and a year round Women's shelter at United Baptist Church³⁶.

The EOA experience represents one of the roads not taken in the nascent homeless movement. EOA failed to capitalize on its assets and build on its experience with community organizing to work with the poor. Instead, it ran the shelter as a conventional social service enterprise.

CRITIQUE OF LARGE SHELTERS

The overflow shelter approach and the provision of large-scale public emergency shelter revealed a conflict within the movement and highlighted a contradiction in the framing of the movement. The disaster frame emphasized the urgency of the emergency need for shelter and also served to legitimate the development of large shelters. On the one hand, advocates associated with the Open Door and Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless argued that homelessness was a life-threatening disaster requiring sanctuary from the street. Shelters were

³⁵ Located at 1040 Gordon Street, SW and designed for an average of 225 men, with maximum capacity of 325.

³⁶ The United Baptist Church shelter at 1332 Stewart Avenue, SW was housed in the church's gymnasium and could house 75 women and children with a maximum of 100. The Christian Council later purchased the entire building for the ACHOR Center, a shelter and transitional program for homeless women.

needed to prevent death. But on the other hand, many of the same advocates were very critical of the large shelter system.

The development of large shelters met with considerable opposition from within the movement. Joanna Adams of Central Presbyterian commented, “The mammoth shelter becomes just like the jail – a dumping ground where you get people out of sight and out of mind” (Bernstein 1985:D1). The large public shelters also failed to mobilize volunteers. Jon Abercrombie, co-chair of the Task Force for the Homeless, highlighted the limits of the volunteer system. “It’s tough to get people to work in city shelters. People are more inclined to work in their own church’s shelter – out of a sense of ownership and responsibility – and large overflow shelters have many more people in them and are more difficult to deal with” (Dolman and Baum 1985:A1). The creation of large public funded shelters such as those operated by the Christian Council provided emergency shelter, but failed to provide opportunities for interaction and change that had been envisioned by the early leaders of the homeless movement.

While there was increasing attention to issues of policy and advocacy with city government, some leaders were skeptical. Bob Bevis writing to Ed Loring expressed continued “reservations about government’s direct involvement with the homeless.” Homelessness, he believed, “is an indictment of the whole of society and all should share in addressing it.” Bevis saw the solution in the creation of more small church based shelters. He reports on the experience at First Presbyterian Church:

At First [Presbyterian] Church last year 165 members and friends of the church spent at least one night as a host/hostess and another 75 brought food or assisted in some other way. No other single ministry comes close to involving that many volunteers at the church. This is having a significant impact on First Church... as I believe it does on any congregation accepting the opportunity for such ministry.

As strategies are developed, please add this word of advocacy for more congregations – 200 still seems a worthy goal. (Bevis 1984)³⁷

Bevis frames homelessness as a societal problem, not just a political one. Homelessness provides the opportunity for transforming contact between the privileged and the poor. Bevis mobilizes and revives the hospitality frame that had been central to the early movement.

The volunteer run shelter system required a substantial mobilization of volunteer resources to sustain their operation. The emerging church shelter network relied upon networks of churches to sustain a single shelter. To the early leaders like Bolling and Bevis, the failure of individual churches to open their facilities to the homeless poor was a critique of the city's religious institutions. Bevis presents this analysis in an op-ed:

To the homeless poor; rejoice. Thousands of congregations have warm, safe comfortable buildings; and caring loving members to meet your needs...to enable, maintain, comfort, challenge, support and love each of you in dealing with your own unique situation. Providing 10 or 12 of you per congregation would more than meet your collective needs. Good news for the homeless.

Alas, there is also bad news. All of the above is true, but the will to be faithful and obedient is missing in the religious community. Cold weather is upon us once again. Across the nation in city after city the homeless are lining up seeking a warm and safe place. And congregation after congregation will keep its doors locked, heat turned down and its members continuing to seek authentic expressions of witness...and will keep writing the government to do something about the homeless in our midst.

We in the religious community remain captive to our baser needs, blind to the truth, and oppressed by our own affluence and good living. We have rejected the good news. And the homeless continue homeless. (Bevis 1985:A26)

For Bevis, the proper prognostic framing of homelessness lay with the hospitality frame. Putting pressure on the state to revise policies, failed in an essential way to meet the real problem.

³⁷ Central to Bevis' advocacy for small church run shelters was his contention they provided the greatest opportunity for interaction between homeless men and women and church members. He argued this interaction was transformative and changed both the volunteer and the homeless. Subsequent research has supported Bevis' view. Small shelters in which middle class volunteers are encouraged to spend time in conversation with homeless persons have an impact on how volunteers frame homelessness. See Hocking and Lawrence (2000).

By the fall of 1985, divisions were evident in the movement's prognostic framing of homelessness. The Christian Council's decision to operate the city's large shelters resulted in their emergence as the city's de facto public shelters agency with a consequent reduction in their advocacy role. Loring and Atlanta Advocates were pressing the city, and by implication the Christian Council, for a guarantee to year round day and night shelter. Finally, Bevis and the Task Force were continuing to encourage local congregations to develop new small-scale emergency shelters.

Framing Housing – the Critique of Shelter by Cleghorn, Fall 1985

Steve Cleghorn, a doctoral student in sociology at Emory University had become an active shelter volunteer, argued for a radical rethinking of the framing of homelessness. As a volunteer for the Task Force for the Homeless, Cleghorn had become the chair of the Single Room Occupancy Team of the Task Force with the charge of bringing together groups to create SRO living options. He pointed out that advocates and the Task Force were saying that affordable housing was the solution to homelessness, but were allocating their resources to the provision of shelter. "The focus on shelter spaces is to put it bluntly, misguided. And whenever a problem is incorrectly identified the attempted solutions are likely to be inadequate" (Cleghorn 1985:B8). The key problem is not lack of shelter spaces but the lack of affordable and safe housing. People without shelter are but the symptoms of the real disease – a society that has neither the will nor the imagination to provide dignified means for its poorest to secure housing.

Sadly, both city officials and shelter operators must share the blame for failing to understand the logical end of their work could be the permanent institutionalization of shelters, which is a poor substitute for providing good, affordable housing.

Granted, immediate needs must be met. But the danger, and it is a real one, is that immediate needs have a way of becoming permanent needs and permanent needs require organizations and institutions. (Cleghorn 1985: B8)

Cleghorn warns, the disaster frame's unintended consequence was establishing emergency shelter as the appropriate response to homelessness. Cleghorn frames the problem of homelessness differently. The problem is not one of disaster, but lack of affordable housing. To this end Cleghorn shifted focus away from creating more shelter to advocating for the creation of more low-income SRO housing in the Atlanta.

While city officials frequently adopted the language of affordable housing, under the Young administration there was little movement to actually create housing. Young's advocacy for market-oriented solutions vested the creation of affordable housing on hopes of increasing the economic prosperity of Atlanta's center. Young aggressively advocated for the city to underwrite the reopening of Underground Atlanta as a downtown tourist destination. Arguing that the new Underground would be an engine for new job creation, Young diverted Community Development Block Grant funds to support the project.

John Lewis, Debbie McCarty and Bill Campbell introduced a Downtown Low-Income Housing Planning Ordinance in March of 1986. The proposed ordinance required the city to develop a plan for low-income housing "with adequate funding for force of law" for preserving and creating low income housing downtown. As a reaction to the Underground Atlanta proposal and ongoing demolition of downtown SRO housing, the ordinance would have prohibited the city from giving money or any kind of assistance to development that reduced the city's stock of low-income housing. Finally, the ordinance authorized the creation of board composed of citizens and city officials to formulate a housing plan (McCall 1986).

Community Activist E.W. Matthews and Steve Cleghorn, representing the Committee of Homeless and Hungry People, urged Atlantans to support the ordinance in a letters to the *Atlanta Constitution's* editor:

Now is the time to think how to house our homeless not just to shelter them. We can no longer put up with development policies that ignore the housing needs of the poor. We won't settle for Mayor Young telling us that we must wait for trickle-down development. He can't tell us that homelessness and poor housing are federal problems. Neither can we stand for officials like those at the Bureau of Buildings telling us that they're not interested in talking about low-income housing. We don't need stonewalling. We need officials who are accountable to the people for trickle-down. (Matthews & Cleghorn 1986: A14)³⁸

The proposed ordinance and Matthews and Cleghorn's comments highlighted the fundamental contradiction between the development interests transforming downtown, (which Andrew Young strongly supported), and the city's lack of affordable housing. Development created displacement, for Cleghorn and the SRO Task Force, the creation of new SRO housing remained an enduring challenge. While some elements of city government supported the development of emergency shelter, other elements were supporting the practices that reduced the stock of low-income housing downtown.³⁹

³⁸ Cleghorn was the first to document the impact of the destruction of SRO housing in the downtown area, primarily through the demolition of cheap hotels. Despite occasional concerns over homelessness, downtown business interests and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* supported the demolition as a sign of progress. As one example, in 1983, following the demolition of the Avon, Hampton and Capitol hotels which cumulatively had provided 217 rooms, the *AJC* editorialized

The transition of the Avon-Hampton-Capitol block, to be sure will not happen without some pain. The metamorphosis from cheap rooms to fancy business means displacement for some Atlantans, most of whom are already poor and dispossessed. Business and government must be mindful of that and take pains to ensure that adequate accommodations are found elsewhere.

And not all the block is ready for investment yet. Parking lots must suffice on parts of it until better uses are found ("Filling in" 1983:2B).

In the *AJC*'s opinion, the creation of parking lots was a better use of downtown space than the preservation of housing.

³⁹ John Lewis was a vocal advocate for low-income housing and the homeless while he served on the Atlanta City Council (1981-1986). Lewis' decision to run for the U.S. House of Representatives resulted in his proposed legislation failing to move forward.

Developing the Task Force: Staffing and Organization

As I traced in Chapter 6, the Task Force for the Homeless had initially been formed as an ad hoc response to the emergency of homelessness. The Task Force received office space from the Christian Council, with staffing provided by volunteers and loaned Council employees. The Task Force worked on two levels.

On one level, the Task Force was a policy body that sought to bring together the community to provide services and a place for planning. Drawing on the CAP model, the Task Force formed a series of teams composed of persons involved with or knowledgeable about different dimensions of homelessness. A shelter team brought together shelter providers and encouraged the development of more shelters. A health team brought together health professionals to study and address the health needs of the homeless. Teams were given great freedom to carry out two charges, first to develop recommendations for action to address homelessness and second, to encourage projects and responses to address the problems. While the Task Force had been created to develop policy solutions for homelessness in the city of Atlanta, the sense of urgency imbued by the disaster framing of homelessness placed emphasis on the provision of emergency shelter and emergency services.

Therefore, on a second level, Task Force staff was actively involved in the process of creating and establishing shelters. The Task Force served as a continuation of the Tuesday Morning Fellowship, providing a vehicle for communication and pooling of experience. Under the sponsorship of the Christian Council, the potential network of new church based shelters expanded.

Beginning in 1984, the City of Atlanta, at the request of Bill Bolling began funding the Task Force to coordinate and expand the shelter system.⁴⁰ The dedicated funding permitted the Task Force to hire its first staff person, Elizabeth Eves and for the Task Force to begin establishing an independent identity from that of the Christian Council. When Elizabeth Eves left the Task Force in the fall of 1985, additional funding made it possible to hire two co-directors, the couple Jim and Anita Beaty.

The Beatys brought a compelling narrative to their new position. Jim and Anita Beaty were originally from South Carolina and had moved to Atlanta. In 1984, Anita Beaty began volunteering on weekends with the food kitchen at the Open Door Community. On her first volunteer experience, a homeless woman and child came for the free meal. Beaty was asked to hold the child while the mother ate. Beaty began inquiring about the child on her return visits. In March 1985 child welfare officials asked the Beatys to provide foster care assistance to the child. After two years of providing foster care, the Beatys' adopted the homeless child.

Involvement with the Open Door Community combined with her personal connection with the homeless child was transformative to Anita Beaty. At the Open Door Community, she was inculcated with the Injustice Frame that had been articulated over five years. The personal connection to the child provided a potent emotional connection. In order to assume her new role as coordinator of the Task Force, Anita Beaty closed down a successful business. The experience with the homeless child had provided power motivational framing for engagement with homelessness. As she describes:

By then, my life had changed because of Donnie. Every time I looked at him I was reminded of his pain, and I knew there were men and women out there with no place to sit or prop up their feet. I believe now that everybody is entitled to a place to live. And I've formulated that whole philosophy after meeting Donnie. (Wallburn 1986:E2)

⁴⁰ The city allocated \$15,000 in 1984.

James Beaty began working as coordinator of the Task Force in October 1985 and Anita joined him in January 1986. For the Beatys' the framing of homelessness was the framing of family. This heightened the salience of motivational framing and the urgency of responding to homelessness. The Beatys personal connection with homelessness became a potent tool for organizing and motivating congregations to develop shelter. The Beatys personal narrative also had a motivational impact on the congregations they approached. The telling of their personal tale and personal connection with homelessness resonated with middle class religious congregants and provided a boost to the efforts to expand shelter. Combining personal narrative and organizational skill they emphasized the development of an effective system of shelters.⁴¹

The Beatys quickly embarked on a two-prong campaign. First, encouraging the development of more emergency shelters; second, energizing the policy analysis of the Task Force's teams.

In May 1986, the Task Force sponsored its first conference, with the theme "Beyond Shelter." A coalition of business, religious and nonprofit organizations brought together a range of individuals who were seeking to develop housing. This new emphasis reflected a new framing of homelessness. According to Anita Beaty: "This is not an emergency response to a crisis any more. It's now a permanent problem. We now have the new poor, and they're called the homeless" (Graham 1986:B1).

Following the May conference, Bolling and the Beatys crafted priorities to guide the work of the Task Force:

⁴¹ Movement scholars have increasingly turned to story as a potent organizing tool. See Polletta (2006).

1. Better educate the public by sending speakers to churches and community groups. Develop more and better volunteers – people who can really become advocates for the homeless – perhaps through a central intake and training program to serve all shelters.
2. Link up the shelters to the existing mental health and physical health and welfare system and persuade those services to be more responsive to the homeless
3. Foster the development of more shelters, particularly those for homeless families.
4. Improve the task force's ability to influence legislation and raise funds
5. Encourage construction of low-income housing and acquaint builders and developers with alternatives that have worked in other cities. (Graham 1986:B1)

The new organizational focus of the Task Force sought to move “beyond shelter,” that is, to create a community plan to end homelessness. In July of 1986, the Task Force moved from the Christian Council offices and relocated to Bolling's organization, The Atlanta Community Food Bank. As a further step towards formalizing its existence, the Task Force incorporated as Beyond Shelter, Inc, a nonprofit corporation, in November 1986. The new mission statement and legal name of the Task Force reflect a new depth of diagnostic and prognostic framing. Using this formulation, the Task Force maintained its established identity as the Task Force, but also asserted its expectation that the movement needed to move beyond sheltering to address the underlying problems that created and would solve homelessness. The mission statement reflects the injustice framing of homelessness:

The mission of the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless shall be advocating for and representing the dignity and rights of the homeless in our society towards the goal of preventing homelessness and seeking appropriate and affordable housing for all. (Metro Atlanta Task Force 1986)

The mission statement is even more revealing of the new framing than the name. The Task Force is no longer using the disaster frame, but instead is highlighting the “dignity and rights” of homeless persons. Implicitly, the rights and dignity of the homeless poor are not being respected, thus the need for organizations to advocate on their behalf. Their new mission and organizational independence represents a shift from their earlier position as a neutral body bringing together business, religious and government to plan to end homelessness.

The further erosion of disaster framing

Atlanta's modern movement to end homelessness began in the hospitality framing of Clifton Presbyterian Church. But the situation that successfully energized and mobilized Atlanta's religious community was the life-threatening conditions that led to deaths on the streets. In these conditions, homelessness was framed as a disaster and the religious community mobilized to create a network of shelters that depended upon the labor of volunteers. Volunteers recruited largely through their religious communities responded by joining networks of churches which supported the provision of shelter.

The disaster frame had the advantage of mobilizing a large body of volunteers for the provision of food and shelter for the homeless. Such a frame, however, did not prepare volunteers for a long-term commitment. The lack of a diagnostic frame that reflected the ongoing condition resulted in volunteer "burnout." As Bill Bolling explained

Many of the volunteers who began working three or four years ago with the homeless really thought they were responding to an emergency, like a tornado coming through. I think we've all realized this is a permanent condition for thousands of people. They volunteers are continuing to come to us, but at the same time, they're getting tired. (Staff 1986:A21)

Framing homelessness as a disaster had the advantage providing powerful motivational force succeeding in energizing a large volunteer labor force and obtaining access to church facilities, it was also a perishable. The urgency of crisis provided heightened volunteer motivation for a period of time, but crises are expected to pass. A disaster of a half-decade duration exhausted the capacity of volunteer groups and challenged the credibility of the frame. For a system dependent on volunteer motivation, this erosion of the disaster frame posed a challenge.

For the Open Door Community and the Task Force for the Homeless, the injustice frame provided the diagnostic and motivational support for continued work. These groups balanced an

ongoing program of direct services to the homeless through the provision of shelter, feeding programs and other services, with an emphasis on advocacy for the resolution of systemic injustices.

Beth Schapiro in her 1985 plan prepared for the Alliance for Human Services provided her assessment:

Believing at first that homelessness was a temporary problem exacerbated by the economy, the community responded by developing shelters and soup kitchens to help people get back on their feet. What is now apparent, however, is that homelessness is associated with some long-term problems that cannot be quickly or easily addressed. In addition, enactment of many of the proposed federal social service and housing budget changes could result in an increased number of homeless persons. The food and shelter system that was devised in response to a perceived emergency is not adequate for addressing the magnitude of this problem. (Schapiro & Associates 1985:1)

While the religious community had united around what had been perceived as a short-term disaster, they now realized that homelessness was a chronic condition. However, the injustice frame that the Open Door Community and the Task Force embraced failed to provide the diagnostic and motivational framing that resonated with many other groups and people interested in homelessness or sheltering. In the next chapter, I will turn to how segments of the movement negotiated the demise of the disaster frame and turned to other frames to explain and address homelessness.

CHAPTER 9: BATTLE FOR PUBLIC SPACE AND POLICY

The disaster frame of homelessness gradually eroded as the church-based sheltering system entered its sixth year of sheltering. Churches had enthusiastically embraced the provision of sheltering as an energizing ministry to Atlanta's displaced and vulnerable, but the popular conception of disaster is time-limited. Both neighborhoods and downtown business had economic and neighborhood development agendas they wished to pursue. Almost universally, the visible homeless poor were not seen as part of the vision of the new Atlanta.

In this chapter I examine the struggle over public space and the presence of the homeless and the institutions that served them in Atlanta's business district and its neighborhoods. First, I examine the framing and political struggles faced by shelters as they sought to enter (in one case) or remain in Atlanta's changing neighborhoods. I then turn to the efforts of downtown business to remove the visible poor from downtown and the unintended consequence of mobilizing Atlanta's religious and advocacy community to oppose its efforts to sanitize the downtown.

DISLOCATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD RESISTANCE: MARCH 1985

Throughout the early period of the movement, the visible poor on the streets had been the recipients of negative social sanctions. The provision of shelters by the religious community had largely received favorable press coverage and the praise of both political and business leaders. In the Reagan era of small government, the community-based initiatives of volunteers serving the homeless poor had the advantage of creating a social safety net while not drawing on public funds.

The church-based shelters were insulated by the fact they were open only in the evenings. Shelters located outside the city center had developed transportation systems that picked up guests in the evening downtown, returning them in the early morning. In addition, the seasonal

nature of sheltering meant the homeless poor and shelter activities were most visible when the weather was cold and few neighborhood residents were out to view, and react to, the visible poor.

As the homeless movement developed among local churches, the Union Mission and the Salvation Army were largely removed from the shelter system and the emerging advocacy movement. While the Mission and Salvation Army provided an important source of shelter for single men and single women, they drew on their own fundraising and organizational capacity. The Mission had resources, funding and a basic model of services that served them well. When the Union Mission first purchased its property in downtown Atlanta, it had been screened by a dense urban matrix of multi-story buildings. In the period of rapid downtown redevelopment, many of the adjacent buildings had been demolished for new construction projects or parking lots. Located one block off Peachtree Street, close to the city center, the Mission's facility, and its residents, became increasingly visible and isolated from the surrounding spaces.

As early as the late 1970's, the Mission's board reported it was accumulating the assets to build a new facility near Grant Park. In March of 1985, the Union Mission announced that it had sold its downtown location to developers. While the Mission was centrally located in terms of the transportation, health and mental health, welfare and labor services that were used by their residents, the move was framed as good citizenship. According to Rev. James Sosebee, the Mission's Executive Director: "The business community would like to see us away from this particular spot, because of the enhancement of the area that is going on. There were no letters, no demands that we move away, just a general feeling that we would do the city a great service if we relocate" (Taylor 1985:A25). The Mission's decision to move also reflected its organizational culture and relationships with the business community. In its fifty-year history,

the Union Mission had secured a position as a dependable and non-confrontational provider of services. It was governed by a board of religious and business leaders and relied upon them for the financial support. The Mission had an extensive direct mail campaign for solicitations. While its stability was often in question, it had retained a strong following. The Mission already owned property in Southeast Atlanta and assumed that given their reputation and the funds they received for the building, they would quickly relocate.

The Mission subsequently faced great neighborhood opposition as it sought to relocate. Unlike the temporary church shelters, the Mission proposed building an enduring institution. While downtown business didn't want the homeless in their district, neighborhoods also opposed the development of new facilities for the homeless. Regardless of race or class, organized neighborhoods opposed the building of the Mission in their area. Their proposal to build on property they owned on Hill Street near the Grant Park neighborhood was strongly opposed by neighbors. The Hill Street location was sandwiched between a low-income black neighborhood to the west and the early "urban pioneers" who were gentrifying the Grant Park neighborhood to the east. The Union Mission leaders were conflict averse and ultimately withdrew its zoning request after residents complained of its proximity to an elementary school.

Having lost access to their Grant Park property, the Mission secured a second property on Alexander Street northwest of downtown Atlanta in a warehouse district. However, the well-organized and politically connected public housing residents of the nearby Techwood-Clark Howell Homes opposed this site. While the site had a zoning classification that permitted the proposed usage, neighborhood groups were sufficiently strong that they succeeded in having the

city's Zoning Review Board deny a parking variance for the facility.⁴² Unlike their acquiescence in the Grant Park conflict, the Mission challenged this decision in court. Fulton County's Superior Court supported the Mission and building proceeded on a new facility on Alexander Street. While their new facility was being built, the Mission moved temporarily to the Pryor Street School. Several hundred men lived in the same space that EOA had so poorly managed the year before (Painton 1985:C1, Tucker 1985).

Like the Union Mission, the Open Door Community also faced opposition to the operation of their facility, or more precisely, those using the services they provided. The Open Door Community had evolved from a small night shelter into a facility that provided clothing, showers, restrooms, and medical attention. Men gathered in the front yard of the building to wait for services. Like the Union Mission, increasing in-town development had transformed the neighborhood around the Open Door Community. While Ponce de Leon Avenue had been an "outcast ghetto" (Marcuse 1996) in the late 1970's where boarding houses provided cheap lodging for poor whites, discharged mental patients and varied others, intown gentrification increasingly displaced these residents. As the boarding homes and low-rent hotels were converted into apartments and offices, the urban pioneers associated with these initiatives complained that the homeless were impediments to community development. A group of gentrifying attorneys who had purchased the building next door to the Open Door objected to the homeless men gathering on the front lawn. In a series of increasingly difficult exchanges, the lawyers asked and later demanded that the men gather in the rear of the building so as to not detract from their efforts to improve the neighborhood. As a matter of principle, the Open Door resisted efforts to "hide" the homeless. The controversy was finally resolved when the Open

⁴² City code required a minimum number of parking spaces for the projected residents. As the homeless residents did not have cars, the Mission requested a variance.

Door agreed to build a fence and create landscaping to screen the attorneys from the congregating men.

Neighborhood Resistance to the Homeless “Other.”

The neighborhood resistance confronting the Union Mission and the Open Door Community highlighted a broader problem facing the homeless movement. The movement was caught between two dynamics. On the one hand, downtown business interests wanted the homeless and the attendant services located away from the downtown business district in order to realize their development goals and counter the perception of disorder. Opposing this movement outwards were the increasingly vocal neighborhood groups resisting the establishment of these services in their communities.

The empowerment of neighborhood groups was a legacy of the Jackson Administration. Mayor Maynard Jackson established a system of neighborhood based planning groups to provide local groups greater influence over their community’s development. These Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) considered zoning and planning issues and made recommendations to the Zoning Review Board. In practice, the primary power of the NPU’s was exercised by opposing initiatives. In the case of stigmatized populations neither downtown business nor community groups willingly acceded to the creation of new programs in their community.

The experience of the Atlanta Union Mission and the Open Door Community revealed a conflict between the efforts of advocates for the visible poor to provide services and the dreams of neighborhood groups to create safe communities. In the view of neighborhoods, the establishment of shelters or transitional housing imposed a burden on neighborhood redevelopment. Communities began to complain of being “oversaturated” with services. A business leader associated with a successful effort to defeat the zoning application for a new

homeless shelter, argued that his community was already saturated with shelters and “while being sensitive to the basic needs of the homeless, ...we do not want to import a large additional population of homeless because of the vagrants that will also be drawn and the associated problems with that portion of the population” (Burson 1988: E1).

This highlighted an additional obstacle advocates faced framing the conditions and needs of the homeless. While homeless advocates had sought to make a connection between homelessness and the civil rights movement, the dynamics of local neighborhood politics made this difficult. Despite frequently drawing on the language and imagery of the civil rights movement as a rhetorical frame for the response to homelessness, this framing had little traction with neighborhood groups, even those in African-American communities. Repeated efforts by non-profit groups and private initiatives to create shelters, group homes for the mentally ill, personal care homes for the disabled and other creative living facilities faced opposition from neighborhoods mobilized to protect their rights. In the local political environment, even civil rights leaders actively worked to prevent the establishment of new programs for the homeless. Civil right leader and city councilman Hosea Williams opposed the development of a new shelter in his neighborhood complaining there were already too many.

This pervasive neighborhood opposition posed a substantial obstacle to the movement as it sought to develop housing alternatives for the homeless poor. Neighborhood opposition effectively prevented many projects from moving outside the church walls. Churches were the only non-legislated spaces available.

Homeless: Members of the Community or Outsiders

Neighborhoods opposed to the development of programs for the homeless and downtown business interests shared the view that the homeless were out of place. The use of the terms

“vagrants” and “transients,” served to communicate the impression that homeless persons did not belong in the community, implying they belong elsewhere. As Susser observes, a process is underway of the “separation of the poor” from other segments of society. This separation is a broad social process, but homelessness is a distinctive artifact. “Homeless people in the United States are significant not for their numbers but because they represent incursions of increasing impoverishment into public spaces, particularly public spaces occupied or desired by middle-income or even wealthy people” (1996:417). Susser is overly optimistic in the acceptance of homeless into any spaces in the city. Even working class and poor communities viewed the organized provision of services for the homeless as drawing in an undesirable element and potentially disrupting their neighborhood aspirations.

In the summer of 1986, Atlanta City Councilman, Thomas F. Cuffie introduced a city ordinance proposing that churches and religious facilities planning on opening new shelters in residential areas be required to secure a special use permit through the city’s Zoning Review Board. Cuffie claimed that he was responding to “many calls” from concerned constituents who had received no warning “that 50 – 100 destitute men and women would be located in the community” (Horton 1986:E4). In a series of public hearings, representatives of Atlanta’s religious community testified in opposition to the proposed ordinance. Bolling testified:

Historically, going back for thousands of years, churches and synagogues as part of their ministry have fed the poor and housed the poor and had sanctuary in their buildings. I think we have done a good job in this city, using the private sector and using churches and synagogues to respond to a very severe problem. (Horton 1986:E4)

In October, at the beginning of the new shelter season, the Zoning Review Board, on the recommendation of the city’s planning staff, rejected the ordinance in a 12-1 vote. The proposal continued working its way through the City Council’s Zoning Committee, requiring continued vigilance by advocates during the same period shelters were crowded with new homeless.

Subsequently, the proposed ordinance was tabled by the Atlanta City Council on November 30 and effectively died.

The Cuffie ordinance provided an additional attack on the disaster frame. City and County officials had appealed to churches to open their facilities to the homeless as a religious responsibility to preserve life – a disaster appeal. Cuffie sought to require that churches submit their emergency ministry to the oversight and permission of neighborhood planning groups who had their parochial neighborhood interests foremost. Given the extended period required to secure a special use permit, and the likelihood of rejection, the proposed zoning ordinance was a rejection of disaster as a credible framing of homelessness. In addition, the Cuffie ordinance promoted the framing of homeless as aliens intruding into the settled neighborhood life.

While advocates had been aggressively working to portray the homeless in a sympathetic manner, the presence of the homeless in public spaces remained an irritant and portraying them as deviant outsiders supported the claims of business and city leaders. In the summer of 1985, the Atlanta-Fulton County Library proposed a bond initiative that included \$500,000 for redesigning the front the downtown library to discourage the gathering of homeless individuals. Librarians complained that homeless persons were using the library as a resting place during the day.

In October of 1985 four unidentified men died from a fire that engulfed a vacant building on Edgewood Avenue, a few blocks from the city center. *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* referred to the men as “vagrants” and “transients” before the bodies had been identified (Montgomery 1985). Bill Bolling, chair of the Task Force for the Homeless responded in a letter “Street people are not ‘transients’; they live here;”

the overwhelming majority of the 5,000 men, women and children on the streets of Atlanta live here – they are not passing through.

I think it is important to note that our collective affluence allows us to so isolate ourselves from each other that we are able to use such labels and descriptions as ‘vagrant’ and ‘transient’ to describe people we don’t even know.

While over 3,000 men, women and children have no home, we plan on building even more facades to separate ourselves from human suffering: \$500,000 to build a new front on the downtown library for the express purpose of keeping the homeless out of sight, millions to rebuild Underground Atlanta to enhance economic development...

While I am in support of strong inner-city and economic development, it seems our priorities are mixed up.” (Bolling 1985:A18)

In a series of follow-up stories, it was revealed that three of the four men were Atlanta residents with family in the city, and the fourth man remained unidentified.

SAFEGUARD ZONE: THE QUEST FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMINATION

Beginning in 1984, downtown business leaders in cooperation with the City of Atlanta and Fulton County, initiated the Central Area Study II (CAS-II). The CAS-II planning process envisioned the “future of downtown Atlanta.” Central Area Study II (CAS –II) was conceived as a three year planning process with the goal of creating proposals “enhancing the quality of life offered by our city.” The study linked to, and built upon, an earlier planning process, the 1971 Central Area Study I (CAS-I). CAS-I primarily addressed transportation and infrastructure issues. Touting the success of the CAS-I process, CAP characterized the CAS II process as improving earlier designs and emphasizing the human resource needs for a prosperous downtown. CAS-II envisioned creating “a consensus vision for planning and policy,” unifying and establishing a common agenda for business and government. CAS-II’s policy board was chaired by Frank Carter of Carter & Associates a large commercial real estate firm and co-chaired by Mayor Andrew Young. In addition, fifty named representatives from the City of Atlanta, Fulton County and Atlanta’s business community supported by “more than 400volunteers” drawn primarily from Atlanta’s business and CAP staff. Joanna Adams of the Christian Council represented the religious community in the CAS-II process.

The practical work of the CAS-II process was carried out through a series of committees and task forces addressing the Arts, Conventions, Housing, Parks, Urban Design and Public Safety. Homelessness played an important role in the CAS-II process, and it reveals the framing of downtown leaders that it was included on the agenda of the Public Safety Committee, and not that of housing.⁴³ Frank Skinner, Chairman of Southern Bell Chaired the Public Safety Committee and Joanna Adams.

The dominant concern for the public safety task force related to Mayor Young's initiative to renovate and reopen Underground Atlanta as a downtown tourist attraction. As planned by the Rouse development consultants⁴⁴, the new Underground Atlanta would have a broad public entrance immediately across from the Five Points rapid rail station. This had the advantage of opening the street to pedestrian traffic and linking the levels of the Underground complex with the street. The new plans however necessitated the demolition of Plaza Park to create the new entrance. Plaza Park provided a gathering point for many of Atlanta's single homeless men. The

⁴³ As we will see, advocates for the homeless mobilized to protest the public safety initiatives of CAS-II, but they largely failed to address the issue of housing. CAS-II continued the long-standing position of CAP that downtown needed up-scale housing. "If Central Atlanta is to be alive 24-hours each day, people must live here. The new residents must be upper-income families who will shop in stores and enjoy the art and entertainment facilities that make Atlanta special" (CAS-II:4).

⁴⁴ In the mid-1970's the Rouse Company pioneered the development of "festival marketplaces," including Boston's Faneuil Hall, Philadelphia's Market East, New Orleans Marketplace, and Baltimore's Harborplace. Rouse's marketplaces were "a romantic notion of a vibrant traditional city. In reality this was a place that had never been...it was a scene untroubled by all the competing and troubling realities of the industrial past or the post-industrial present. Here was a carefully managed enclave from which all of the many problems of urban decay, crime, social and racial tension had been banished" (Ward 2006:277). Downtown entrepreneurs and city planners enthusiastically embraced the Festival marketplaces concept as a panacea for urban revitalization (Hannigan 1998). Atlanta's Underground pushed the historic preservation dimension to its limits. Unlike its own development efforts, Rouse saw Underground as a risky venture and largely restricted its commitment to planning, leaving the financial risk to be largely borne by the taxpayers of the City of Atlanta. As a result "more than 80% of the \$144 million investment came from a variety of public sources" (Newman 2002:312). This was prescient on Rouse's part.

destruction of Plaza Park raised the prospect of homeless men establishing a new gathering point. Task Force members feared the displaced homeless would gather in Woodruff Park “where they would be more visible” (Lancaster 1986:A1).

In response to this threat, the Public Safety Task Force proposed the creation of “Safeguard Zone,” an area of the downtown business district receiving a heightened, visible police presence and their aggressive enforcement of city ordinances on loitering. The proposed zone extended 3 ½ miles along Peachtree Street, the city’s central north-south corridor, from the Garnett Street rapid rail station to Pershing Point. The zone included the downtown city parks (Plaza and Central City), the hotel and convention district and the midtown business district.

In addition to the proposed designation of a Safeguard Zone, the Task Force developed a series of ordinances targeting the homeless. By January of 1986, the Task Force had submitted draft ordinances on panhandling and public drunkenness to the Atlanta City Council’s Public Safety Committee. The proposed Panhandling ordinance made it illegal for anyone to ask for money by “the spoken, written or printed word;” while the drunkenness ordinance permitted police to arrest anyone who is “in pedestrian traffic and refused to remove himself when ordered to do so...while under the influence of alcohol” (Lancaster 1986:A1).

The CAS-II committees broadly shared the view that the success of the central area hinged on the removal of the homeless from downtown. The Urban Design committee considered creating park benches with seat dividers to prevent sleeping in the park. Other committees considered issuing identification cards, creating detoxification wagons, and exiling the unemployed homeless to the city prison farm on Key Road. Many of the proposals entertained failed to meet the constitutional test.

For Joanna Adams, membership on the Public Safety Task Force permitted participation in the deliberations, but her voice was clearly muted by the dominance of downtown business interests on the Committee. In addition, Adams' commitments to a consensus approach and lack of histrionics provided little impediment to the plans for downtown development.

I surely would hope that the city that got through the decade of racial tension with understanding and compassion would not become mean-spirited in the '80's. To enforce ordinances against sleeping seems to be a very mean-spirited approach; we're going to arrest people for the crime of being tired. (Lancaster 1986:A1)

Despite Adams' misgivings, the Public Safety Committee's proposals continued to be refined through the summer of 1986. Bill Bolling attempted to have a homeless person included in the deliberations of the Public Safety Task Force but was rebuffed. Advocates shared concerns about the work of the committee, but the relative secrecy of the committee's deliberations prevented active advocacy intervention. Homeless advocates and shelter providers devoted the bulk of their efforts towards creating new shelters and planning for the Task Force work of education and analysis.

In October of 1986, the Public Safety Committee approved their preliminary report recommending the creation of the Safeguard Zone and urging the City Council to pass the new ordinances. The draft report provides an important window into the framing of homelessness in the minds of city leaders.

The presence of large numbers of homeless and street people in the Central Area has caused considerable concern that has permeated the entire study effort. This is not a problem unique to Atlanta, however, it has been most pointedly demonstrated that there is a lack of central direction and involvement by a responsible governmental agency at either the City or County level, and that most of the support effort toward alleviating the plight of the homeless has been directed by an informal task force of concerned religious and private groups. A considerable effort has gone into developing alternative measures to reduce the number of homeless on the streets, and address their needs. What has become apparent is that many alternative solutions are met with resistance by those directly and currently involved in services for the homeless, and many compromises will

have to be achieved. The process will involve narrowing the gap between what is wanted and needed and what can realistically be achieved. (Public Safety 1986:1)

From the business community's perspective, the problem of the homeless was the presence of the homeless on the streets. Efforts by the business community since the early 1970's had focused on a variety of push and pull approaches to decrease their visibility. The fundamental issue is the visibility of the homeless, the business community supports efforts to remove them from the street, but the problem persists of their presence.

One of the major stumbling blocks encountered in the investigatory phase of the planning process is that many solutions seem to require curing social ills far beyond the study scope, which permeate the entire public safety study area. Unemployment, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, decriminalization of public inebriation, lack of adequate low rent housing, and the absence of adequate social services are among the excuses being offered to explain the "Human Urban Blight" on the streets. These situations cannot be allowed to stand in the way of finding effective solutions to clean up the streets. Thus, the planning process is always on the fringe of major social problems, while attempting to devise immediate and effective methods to make streets attractive, inviting and safe. (Public Safety 1986:2)

In this sweeping statement, the public safety task force dismisses the arguments of advocates for the injustice frame and structural explanations of homelessness. The structural explanations are "excuses" for "Human Blight." Members of the Public Safety task force are fundamentally practical and focused in their approach – to secure downtown. Within the resources they have at their disposal, the goal is to remove the homeless from the streets, not to solve larger social problems. Seeking "effective solutions to clean up the streets" entails the use of social control mechanisms, primarily the police power of the state to remove the homeless. As CAS-I had removed the physical blight in the infrastructure phase of the Central Area, the CAS-II human resources approach would remove the visible poor and their housing.

In December of 1986, the Public Safety Committee approved their report. The safeguard zone was a central feature of their recommendation and "in this zone laws prohibiting loitering,

panhandling, and public drunkenness would be strictly enforced” (Galloway 1986:A1). Joanna Adams cast the lone dissenting vote against the recommendations.

RESISTING THE SAFEGUARD ZONE AND EXCLUSION

The release of the CAS-II Safeguard recommendations, the consideration of the Cuffie ordinance, and the rejection of another neighborhood shelter coincided with the beginning of the fall 1986 shelter season. In October Mitch Snyder and Ed Loring met with Mayor Andrew Young and Commissioner Lomax to plead for more shelters (Lancaster 1986). Jim Beaty projected a total of 43 shelters would be open during the winter season. Together the shelter provided a nighttime capacity 1800 beds for an estimated 6,000 homeless persons needing shelter, twice as many as the previous year (Plott 1986).

The religious community continued to bear the burden of delivering emergency night shelter. The forty-three shelters opening in the metro Atlanta area in the fall 1986 season included 26 totally paid for and run by religious congregations. In addition, ten more used church facilities and received their contributions from religious communities (Christensen & Lancaster 1986).

The proposed safeguard zone revealed the depth of difference between the business community and the religious community in their framing of homelessness. While business interests wanted the homeless, and more generally, those who threatened white suburbanites, off the streets downtown, they were content to allow the religious community to bear the burden of providing shelter.

The cumulative effect of the threats to the homeless movement resulted in a variety of strategies to resist the proposed social control and exclusionary measures. Advocates used the Christmas season as a potent religious metaphor to contrast the business community’s plans with

the spirit of the Season. In the days before Christmas, the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, an organization comprised of parents of mentally ill persons protested efforts to criminalize the mentally ill (Galloway 1986b). Mitch Snyder of the CCNV threatened to mount demonstrations and bring national media attention to the city, reportedly telling Andrew Young, “if business attempts to hurt people we are about, we will hurt business (Thompson 1986:A1). A group of Atlanta attorneys began meeting to consider filing a lawsuit demanding shelter for the city’s homeless population.

On Christmas Day, the Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless demonstrated, held a news conference and distributed food in Woodruff Park. Gathered around a crucifix featuring a black Christ figure, they used religious language and imagery to frame their resistance to the Safeguard zone proposal.

How can people celebrate the birth of Christ in a city that is continuing to crucify the poor, to nail out the homeless from streets and begin to build fences topped with barbed wire to keep the homeless out of Underground Atlanta. This city would force people to become more animal-like than Christ-like. (Lewis 1986:C5)

Murphy Davis of the Open Door Community emphasized the criminalization of poverty that was implicit in the Safeguard Zone and the proposed ordinances accompanying it. “It is increasingly a crime to be poor. We’re talking about arresting people for simply being on Peachtree Street if they don’t look white middle class” (Lewis 1986:C5). For advocates, the predominantly white business community’s proposals represented a reestablishment of racial segregation. The black man on the crucifix conveyed Loring’s assessment that “much of the safeguard zone has racist overtones” (Lewis 1986:C5).

As an alternative to the Public Safety Task Force, Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless proposed a three part agenda in response to homelessness. First, a fund for housing the homeless should be created. Advocates proposed setting aside \$10 for housing the homeless from every

\$100 spent on development like Underground Atlanta. Second, that when homeless persons are forced to leave Plaza Park, another park should be created in which homeless persons “should not be disturbed as long as they are not unruly” and that restrooms and water fountains be provided. Finally, when the city closes its shelter, no one should be arrested for sleeping in parks. “This alternative to shelter is not a particularly happy one, but when the city shelter closes, there is nowhere for the homeless to go without facing threat of harassment and arrest” (Flyer 1986).

For the Atlanta Advocates, the Safeguard Zone proposal provided additional evidence supporting their diagnostic and prognostic framing of homelessness. City officials and business leaders professed concern for the homeless but undertook actions to criminalize their lives.

While the Atlanta Advocates’ framing of homelessness was expected, the larger religious community had traditionally shared Adams’ framing of seeking a cooperative approach to addressing homelessness within the semi-public spaces of their religious institutions.

The Religious Community Responds, December 1986.

On December 21, 100 members of Atlanta’s Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy purchased a full page advertisement in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* challenging the city to response to homelessness.⁴⁵ The clergy ad provides the first broad-based statement from Atlanta’s clergy on homelessness. “The problem of homelessness is suddenly too big for Atlanta’s churches and synagogues to handle alone. The city, business interests and the entire people of Atlanta must come together – with dignity, respect and commitment to finding

⁴⁵ The use of a paid advertisement as a means to communicate on a matter of civic concern was a potent return and reminder of Atlanta’s religious community’s presence in city affairs. On Sunday, November 3, 1957, 80 Atlanta clergy members believing that “the time had arrived when we had to say something” signed a “Manifesto on Racial Belief” setting forward six principles for Atlantans and their leaders to follow in order to ensure the “right of first class citizenship.” The advertisement received nation-wide publicity (“Religion” 1957).

practical long-term solutions that work. And the time to act is now” (Clergy Ad 1986).

The clergy ad resurrects the motivational framing of disaster by emphasizing the crisis facing the religious community and the urgency of action. And like the early innovators at Central Presbyterian, they come to homelessness with a practical view. “How they [the homeless] got there and why they are here is interesting, but, in the end irrelevant. These people are here. They are fellow human beings. And they need more help than we’ve been able to provide” (Clergy Ad 1986).

The clergy members dismiss the business community’s safeguard zone. “Bizarre ideas, such as sweeping the homeless off the streets to encourage some kind of ‘safeguard zone,’ is not the answer.” While the clergy ad writers begin writing out of the crisis frame as a way to mobilize interest, they move beyond it to provide a prognostic approach. Depending on the churches to provide emergency shelter in the cold season is no longer working.

We must go beyond handout.

We have opened up our basements of church buildings to the homeless. We have run day shelters for women and children. We have created employment programs for those who can and want to work.

It’s not enough. We want to do more, but we simply don’t have the resources to address the complex problems of the homeless with real effectiveness. (Clergy Ad 1986)

The clergy ad injects a new injustice frame into the debate, but the agents of the injustice are neither identified nor diagnostically targeted, rather homelessness is presented as a problem requiring the whole community’s effort to remedy. Religious leaders of 1986, like their forbearers in 1957, were using their prophetic voice to set the agenda for the city, not to assess particular culpability. The problems of the homeless were “extraordinarily difficult *structural* problems” but the Clergy express confidence that “together, we can find practical long-term solutions.” Failing this, the clergy stated they were willing to initiate class action lawsuits to secure the resources and services needed by the homeless.

Having provided the motivational framing of the crisis of homelessness and their analysis of the current situation, the clergy members lay out their prognostic plan of action. They identify five “priorities for planning” including: 1) the development of single room occupancy housing; 2) low income housing; 3) community based service for the mentally ill; 4) alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs based on long-term needs; 5) day shelters for women and children; 6) job training and; 7) “emergency food and shelters must be provided in facilities that serve people better and more efficiently than church kitchens or basements (Clergy Ad 1986). In order to accomplish these goals, the signers supported new taxes on development, city residents and downtown business. Rather than relying on the generosity of churches, the “Clergy’s Agenda” proposed “permanent funding must be created and dedicated to solve the problem of homelessness in Atlanta – not just handout, surplus or emergency funds, but permanent, long-term funding. This has never been done in Atlanta’s history” (Clergy Ad 1986).

The use of public media proved an effective method for mobilizing attention to homelessness. The immediate effect of the ad was discussion in the media, editorial support, and nationwide publicity. The most measurable impact was the retreat of the business community from the social control posture of the Public Safety Report.

In January of 1987, three weeks after the publication of the Clergy ad, the Atlanta Junior League hosted a policy forum on the topic “The Homeless and Hungry in Atlanta.” A variety of speakers were invited. Dan Sweat of Central Atlanta Progress used the occasion to express his frustration over homelessness. First he complained that City, County, State and Federal government had no policy towards homelessness. Then he commented on the religious community: “The religious community took out a full page ad on December 21 and screamed HELP! Let’s dump the problem on the city and county government and the business

community.” Sweat complained, “We have developed a shelter mentality and we have developed a shelter bureaucracy. Or as one person deeply involved in the whole affair recently stated: ‘we have institutionalized band aids.’”

Sweat took particular exception to the clergy’s characterization of the Safeguard Zone:

The only proposed safeguard zone I am aware of, that of the CAS-II, would only sweep criminals off the streets. We are saying enforce the laws on the books and provide whatever support the police and courts need to do it. If a criminal happens to be homeless that is just tough. The law should be applied equally and fairly to everyone and if we stray from that basic tenet of society we are surely doomed. (Sweat 1987:1)⁴⁶

Sweat sought to frame the Safeguard Zone as a question of crime and criminality. The goal in this presentation was to make the case that the Safeguard Zone was a reasonable idea for a safe city. But Sweat was being disingenuous in his presentation. The recommendations of the Public Safety Committee were to criminalize a variety of behaviors so as to remove the homeless from the downtown area.

In May of 1987, the Central Area Study II released its revised Public Safety Task Force report. In its revised report, the Safeguard Zone remained as a recommendation, but the homeless are characterized quite differently.

The presence of homeless people on the streets of Atlanta affects people’s perceptions of their environment. ...However, homeless people are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of crime. They are a neglected and desperately needy group who warrant public attention and assistance. (CAS-II Public Safety 1987:1)

Despite the softened language, the CAS-II recommendations remain essentially the same. Strict enforcement of quality of life laws, criminalization of panhandling and increased policing of the downtown area.

⁴⁶ Sweat’s comments are a reminder of those of Anatole France “The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges [of Paris], to beg in the streets, and to steal bread” (France 1894).

Atlanta Journal Constitution columnist and political commentator Frederick Allen

described the document as “a masterpiece of evasion.”

We are not, as the report suggests, talking about crime.

The real issue is of turf – the psychological dominance of the streets in downtown Atlanta, notably the area around Five Points, Central City Park and the big coming attraction, Underground Atlanta. The study’s recommendations, to put it bluntly, are intended to discourage a certain class of black people from dominating downtown.

But it remains that even if the troublemakers are eliminated, most white people are still going to be uncomfortable among unemployed and working-class blacks – with any blacks who are “buppies” with briefcases and horn-rimmed glasses.”

Thus the need for diplomacy and euphemism.

In earlier drafts the task force floated the idea of a “safeguard zone.” Advocates of the homeless took the phrase to be a thinly veiled suggestion, which it was, that the streets be swept and cleared of derelicts. The task force still hopes to see the streets swept and cleared of derelicts – but only so long as no one’s feelings are hurt. (Allen 1987:C1)

The CAS-II report and Allen’s translation of its euphemistic language highlights the continuing struggle over public space in downtown Atlanta. The December 1986 report spoke baldly of the desire of the business community to sanitize the downtown area. The reaction of Advocates and the religious community, required that this language be muted, but the essential recommendations were the same. Given the racial and class politics of Atlanta, the struggle over public space was not resolved by the CAS-II process.

Homeless advocate Brenda Griffin summarized her interpretation of the CAS-II process:

Business believes that it is better for its interests that the streets be emptied of anyone who is unkempt or unsightly. To that end, the Central Area Study II committee supports selective enforcement of the law by stepping up nuisance arrests of the unsightly homeless-types on charges such as drunk and disorderly within the widened Safeguard Zone. (Griffin 1987:A15)

Griffin contrasts the treatment that drunken conventioners and tourists receive with that of the homeless men and women with whom she works. The differential treatment violates the principle of equal protection.

The CAS II committee has the opportunity to return to the treatment of alcoholism rather than to increase the number of police who commit nuisance arrests. Using the detoxification center is not only humane, it is cost-effective. Police services and incarceration are expensive alternatives both financially and in term of law enforcement resources.” It would be fitting during the CAS II ‘people phase’ of downtown development that hospitality be extended to all people, safeguarding every human being from harassment regardless of personal appearance or worth. (Griffin 1987:A15)

Griffin’s comments highlight that other alternatives exist to the social control measures proposed by CAS-II. This is a practical response to a stated problem. But if the problem is the one stated in the December 1985 report and translated by Allen, then the problem is the removal of the visible poor from the streets. It was sanitizing public space by creating a “vagrant-free” zone⁴⁷, which was the goal of the CAS-II process. While Griffin was correct, the treatment alternative was more cost-effective, she failed to address how CAS-II framed the problem.

In July of 1987, Mayor Andrew Young and Atlanta City Council President jointly announced a \$50 million bond initiative to fund a crime package implementing the recommendations of the CAS-II process. City officials effectively created the Safeguard Zone by creating a new police zone along the Peachtree Street corridor.⁴⁸ In addition, Young “ordered

⁴⁷ *Atlanta Journal* writer Jeff Galloway coined this term to describe the obfuscation of the Public Safety Task Force’s “safeguard zone.” Vagrant-free was quickly picked up by advocates and national media in their accounts of Atlanta’s efforts to push the homeless off the streets. Dan Sweat was livid with Galloway for this coinage.

⁴⁸ CAS-II had recommended that the Peachtree corridor be designated a special enforcement zone. Realizing that City Council was unlikely to approve the proposal, Andrew Young administratively created a new Zone 5 Police District effectively covering the same area, but without the restrictive ordinances. The next Mayor also attempted to create the zone. Maynard Jackson’s transition team headed by Dan Sweat proposed the creation of a “Hospitality Zone” in 1989. The proposal was quickly withdrawn after protests. In the summer of 2003 Mayor Franklin requested the city’s law department draft an ordinance limiting “commercial solicitation” (panhandling) and related behaviors in a “Tourist Triangle” covering most of the downtown (essentially the CAS-II Safeguard Zone). The proposed ordinance was presented to Atlanta Council in June of 2005. Business leaders, convention and tourism representatives and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* strongly endorsed the proposal. Homeless advocates and ACLU representatives strongly opposed it. The Gateway Homeless Service Center dedicated in July provided the key to securing council approval as it promised to provide shelter and services

“aggressive, non-violent enforcement” of city laws against panhandling, drunkenness” and street preaching in the downtown area (Galloway 1987:A1). To quell the concerns of homeless advocates, Young, like Sweat earlier, sought to distinguish between criminals and the peaceful street people, giving assurance the later would not be disturbed.

Conclusion

By the end of 1987, the disaster frame no longer resonated. Homelessness was continuing to grow in Atlanta despite the efforts of the religious community to provide the social safety net. The efforts of the business community to remove the homeless from downtown ignited the religious community’s frustration. For the most vocal advocates and the leaders of the religious community, the problems of the homeless were deep and structural. They required long-term commitments of funding, housing and services. The leaders of the business community were also frustrated by the continued presence of the homeless in downtown. Their early efforts focused on removing the homeless from the streets. The unintended consequence of their proposals was the religious community’s call for an alternate framing that demanded community responsibility. Efforts by the business community to reframe their initiatives as protective of the vulnerable homeless failed to resonate. Nonetheless, the city’s political leaders mobilized consider political capital to support the business community’s proposal.

to needy homeless. The Council reduced the size of the proposed Tourist Triangle, defining it as an area extending from Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive north to Ralph McGill Boulevard and from Marietta Street east to Piedmont Avenue. This reduced tourist triangle still included the city’s downtown tourist attractions including Centennial Olympic Park, Central City Park, Underground Atlanta, Phillips Arena, Georgia Aquarium, Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center and the downtown hotels and convention facilities. Atlanta City Council also included a ban on commercial solicitation in the Martin Luther King Historic Site. City Council passed the ordinance on a 12-3 vote on August 16 and Mayor Franklin signed it into law on August 25, 2005. Complaints over panhandling continue (Sherman 1989; Tygami 2005a; Tharpe & Tagami 2005; Tygami 2005b; Tygami 2005c; Tygami 2005d; Elberly 2008).

CHAPTER 10: HOW FRAMES CHANGE: “WE CAN DO BETTER”

By the mid-1980's, leaders of the homeless movement in Atlanta had successfully made homelessness an issue of public concern. Newspaper coverage by both the secular and religious press was generally positive and sympathetic. Stories focused on dedicated individuals (Jarvis 1984), voluntary organizations (Graham 1985), and the homeless themselves (Turner 1985a). Churches mobilized annually for the shelter season and other auxiliary services were beginning to emerge. This increase in resources and public attention set the stage for the engagement of new actors in the movement.

In this chapter, I examine how the desire to move beyond night sheltering by developing a more comprehensive service system, in turn changed how homelessness was framed. I argue that increasing complexity, and, importantly, increasing reliance on the outside resources (state and philanthropy) required to sustain this new system, contributed to new ways of thinking about homelessness.

In exploring this, I return to one of Benford's (1997) questions for framing theory – what explains how frames change? To answer this, I examine the processes by which the diagnostic and prognostic frames that energized early movement formation began to change by the mid-1980s. While it is true there were a variety of frames within the homeless movement from the beginning, the shelter model promoted by Clifton Presbyterian and Central Presbyterian dominated the early prognostic framing of the movement. This model –free shelter delivered by volunteers in churches with minimal constraints – served as the template for the second wave of sheltering. The great advantage of this basic sheltering model was that it permitted differing diagnostic frames of homelessness, while creating unity through a common prognostic frame. By the mid-to-late 1980s the center of balance of the movement was shifting. Shelters and other

programs began to reduce capacity or close as they developed new ideas about the best way they should respond to homelessness. These changes highlight the process by which frames were reconfigured. This was an incremental process, and rather than thinking of this as a shift between different static frames, it is more accurate to conceptualize it as a gradual process of frame transition through which the weight of the movement shifts to a new way of framing the problem, developing new responses and providing new motivations.

For city officials, and some religious leaders, Atlanta's many religious congregations were a massive untapped resource to provide assistance to the homeless poor. Atlanta city officials in the administration of Andrew Young, including the Mayor, viewed the charitable resources of the religious community as a vital source for moral and spiritual rehabilitation. The early response of the religious community, combined with the city's relative lack of resources, encouraged city officials to expect churches to provide emergency shelter. Moreover, Research Atlanta's 1984 analysis of the services provided to homeless population had highlighted the cost effective nature of the church-based sheltering system (Town & Marchetti 1984). Furthermore, the failure of the city's contract with EOA to provide emergency shelter only highlighted the city's dependence on the church based system. In the winter of 1985, after the EOA shelter was flooded with more homeless people than it could assist, city officials pleaded for shelters to accept "10 percent" more and for new shelters to open. Three years later, city officials were again calling on churches to "do more." When the religious community did not mobilize for the new disaster, city council members and city officials were critical of churches for failing to respond to the need for emergency shelter (Newton 1988). By 1988, the church based shelter system appeared to have reached maximum capacity. The number of church based shelters available for the homeless had stabilized at around 60 shelters.

The Task Force for the Homeless had encouraged the process of developing programs to serve distinct segments of the homeless population. Shelters and day programs were developed to serve particular subpopulations, especially for the most vulnerable, so shelters were created for single women, battered women, women with addictions, and women with children. These increasingly segmented populations, in turn, posed a dilemma for the larger movement. At the front end, the emergency system tried to find shelter for everyone. Since there was insufficient shelter space available to meet the need, the Task Force convinced, and cajoled shelters to take in people who did not meet the program requirements.

TASK FORCE FOR THE HOMELESS: THE PRIMACY OF HOUSING AND SHELTER

From its inception in 1982, the most important activity of the Task Force staff was to encourage the development of sufficient shelter capacity to provide housing for those seeking shelter. As Anita Beaty reflected:

Between 1985 and 87, all we tried to do in our community was open church basements for the homeless to take shelter in, and we were trying to get folk to understand that it wasn't a problem of the aging white alcoholic, the vagrant image you have. This was about a younger population of African Americans, people who couldn't get work because the jobs had moved to the suburbs, people being displaced from housing. (Jennings 2000:2)

In addition, the early decision to create a winter based shelter system required a re-thinking of the strategy. The Task Force for the Homeless had to mobilize and maintain relationships with shelters each year in order to sustain the effort. Adding to this complexity, the annual hiatus (spring through fall) also provided opportunities for new actors to plan to open new shelters and introduce their own framing into the system. The challenge for the sheltering community and the Task Force staff was to align the frames of these new actors to the central prognostic frame of developing and sustaining emergency night shelter. Each year's start-up

created a new decision point at which churches and their network had to determine if they would provide shelter for another year and what, if any, innovations they would introduce.

The leaders of the Task Force for the Homeless, Bill Bolling, Anita Beaty and Jim Beaty and their colleagues at the Task Force for the Homeless actively sought to expand sheltering for the homeless in Atlanta. By the mid 1980's they were framing homelessness as an issue of housing affordability. In their view, the central cause of homelessness was the mismatch between the resources available to the very poor and the cost of housing in the private market. Exacerbating this problem was the Atlanta labor market that provided low-wage work and the erosion of the social safety net. As Bill Bolling pointed out: "Forty percent of the people in shelters are the working poor. These people have low paying jobs and can't afford a weekly room" (Roach 1988: A8). In their view, this problem of housing mismatch was leading to the creation of a permanent underclass. As Anita Beaty argued in 1986: "This is not an emergency response to a crisis any more. It's now a permanent problem. We now have the new poor, and they're called the homeless" (Graham 1986:B1).

The Task Force for the Homeless argued that the first need of the homeless was emergency night shelter throughout the year. The framing of homelessness as the need for shelter and the changing nature of the homeless population in Atlanta were promoted by the Task Force in its presentations and speaking to public media outlets. The increased attention to homelessness resulted in the mobilization of philanthropic resources.

Anita Beaty and the Task Force asserted that the first and principal goal of sheltering should the provision be safe, secure housing for all homeless people. In Beaty's view, emergency shelter should be the beginning of the process of assisting people and as such should be regarded as a basic human right. While basic rules of safety (no violence, drugs or weapons

permitted in the shelter) should be observed, these were both the necessary and sufficient condition for emergency sheltering. It is from secure shelter that homeless individuals can begin to find pathways back into society. But the onus of providing for this transition is not to be borne by the individual's "willingness to change" but upon the services and agencies responsible for providing service.

Advocates for the homeless in Atlanta did not pursue a legal strategy to establish a "right to shelter," as had been successfully pursued in other cities. This was both a tactical and strategic decision. Indeed the experience of cities such as New York and Washington, D.C., were cautionary tales for Atlanta's civic leaders. The Task Force sought to make a right to shelter a de facto accomplishment even if a de jure decision was unlikely. But the emphasis of the Task Force was on creating a network of shelters that could provide the basic support for homelessness individuals.

For the Task Force, guaranteeing the provision of shelter for all was the essential first step in any meaningful effort to address homelessness for all the heterogeneous groups that formed Atlanta's homeless population. "Three categories emerge whenever we focus on street people. They are the economically displaced, the mentally ill and the chronically addicted. We cannot help them, or hope to help them, until we have housed them" (Beaty 1988).

But from the Task Force perspective, emergency shelter is necessary but not sufficient to address the many reasons people are homeless. As Jim Beaty editorialized:

The causes of [homelessness] run so deep that no surface solution will suffice. Tireless shelter directors and volunteers carry more than their share of the burden imposed by homelessness. But sheltering will never finish the task at hand. No shelter has the resources, the expertise, and the personnel to address the deep-down causes of homelessness. (Beaty 1988:A15)

The Task Force argued that while shelters can provide a respite from the street, the volunteer run shelters should not be expected to provide the specialized treatment or rehabilitation services. Shelters were part of a larger system, “yet we cannot solve the problems that spawn homelessness without providing decent shelter for those who roam our streets” (Beatty 1988:A15).

This was the conundrum that frustrated many of the church run shelters. The need of those seeking shelter was so great, far exceeding the capacity of the volunteer run shelters to solve, but “merely” providing shelter by itself did not feel successful. Shelter directors and volunteers wanted to do “something more” to change the situation facing their homeless guests. The impulse towards innovation was frustrated by the inability to meet the complex needs of homeless persons.

Despite the efforts of the leaders of the Task Force for the Homeless to frame homelessness as centrally a problem whose proximate solution was emergency night shelter to meet the needs of a growing homeless population, the growth in the number of church based shelters peaked in 1986 and declined through the late 1980’s. Greater burden was placed on the large congregate shelters such as those operated by the Christian Council for the city of Atlanta, the Union Mission and a few other large providers of shelter. Ironically, at the same time there was an increase in federal funds through the Stewart McKinney Act to support services to the homeless, the professionalization of local groups meant these funds increasingly were absorbed as operational costs of new formal organizations. Fewer people received more intensive, professionalized and personalized services.

But how did the transition to a new diagnostic and prognostic frame actually take place? In the following sections, I show how several individuals and organizations moved away from

the disaster frame and embraced a new disability/rehabilitation frame. This new framing had two components. Diagnostically, those embracing this new frame viewed homelessness as the primary result of a disabling condition of some kind (viz, drugs or mental illness). This new diagnostic framing leads to a new prognostic frame – rehabilitation. In this new schema, services are tied to involvement in rehabilitation. Homeless persons are offered food, shelter, and enriched programs if they agree to participate in programs aimed at helping them change. Those unwilling or unable to make those changes are left uncared for. This shift in framing and programs for the homeless began as projects of the religious community. I begin with the case of Transition House, which represents the clearest example of frame transition. Next, I discuss the changes that occurred at shelters operated by All Saints' Episcopal and Trinity United Methodist churches. In addition I explain the programs of Café 458, Samaritan House, and the Union Mission. Cumulatively, the changes these organizations went through highlight Atlanta's transition from one frame to another with regard to homelessness.

HARWOOD BARTLETT AND TRANSITION HOUSE: "WE CAN DO BETTER."

In 1982, Rev. Harwood (Woody) Bartlett left St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church to become the Canon for Community Ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. Bartlett was responsible for starting a denominational philanthropy, the Episcopal Charities Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation was to find ways to make a difference on pressing social problems. In the effort to be strategic, the Foundation decided to pick one issue on which the church needed to be responding. Joanna Adams, Eduard Loring and Bill Bolling were advocating for local churches to develop emergency night shelters. Bartlett had just come from St. Bartholomew's where members of the congregation were forming the Nicholas House family shelter. To leverage resources to bear on the issue, Bartlett mobilized the existing network of religious

philanthropies to coordinate their response to the “emerging” issue of homelessness. In taking this step, the religious community moved beyond the individual church response represented by the congregation based shelters. Furthermore, the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches actually pooled their collective resources to bear on the problem. In conjunction with Bartlett’s counterpart with the Presbyterian Presbytery, Ed Grider, they convened a group of people knowledgeable about homelessness. As Bartlett described it: “[We were] doing the homeless thing, calling together everyone doing something about homelessness, Joanna Adams, Betti Knott, Bill Bolling, - a dozen people, [and we] asked where [they] needed help” (Bartlett interview).

It is noteworthy that the group was convened at the invitation and initiation of the church funding sources. Such a meeting would have been attractive. These funding sources had resources to create and support new projects. It is also noteworthy, that the group was convened without any reference to the Task Force for the Homeless. While Adams and Bolling were deeply involved in the leadership of the Task Force at this time, they had separate identities as religious leaders for Central Presbyterian Church and the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Betti Knott was affiliated with St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic charity, while also serving as a key coordinator for the Central Presbyterian Night Shelter. The Task Force did not yet have an identity as a discrete and legitimated organization.

[“We’ve] got guys using their hard hats for a pillow and they’re working; they can’t finally [get] establish[ed] without having an address and phone number – “could you do something about transitioning these people?” ... We had a small board and got ourselves incorporated as Transition House Inc. We were the first; we grabbed the generic title. (Bartlett interview)⁴⁹

⁴⁹ While the name “Transition House” was new, the idea of transitional housing, halfway houses and other interim housing options had been in broad usage for a variety of populations, including prisoners and the mentally ill. In these cases, individuals were “transitioning” from more

Bartlett already had experience with establishing organizations that provided housing for the mentally ill and he brought this expertise to the work. This led to incorporating Transition House as a new non-profit in 1985. Transition House represented an innovation in the sheltering system. Previously, homeless individuals had to seek housing in either the church based shelters, the Union Mission, or Salvation Army. In most cases, a person was not guaranteed a bed in the same shelter from one night to the next, and consequently people had little residential stability. Transition House represented the first effort to guarantee residential security (a shelter they could come back to night after night) for homeless men and to permit their accumulation of assets to secure permanent house. It represented the beginning of a continuum of housing options. The fundamental assumption was that by providing stable housing to men with regular jobs they would be able to transition into stable housing and employment.

Compared to a church's volunteer-run night shelter, Transition House's new model was more expensive and resource intensive. Unlike church-run shelters, which operated in a very cost-effective manner by using existing church property and resources for housing, transportation, and food preparation, the Board of Transition House established it as a free standing institution. Setting up Transition House required creating new institutional capacity to purchase and hold property, supervise staff, and raise funds. To make the big change to the Transition House model required a mobilization of resources.

While Bartlett and his colleagues originated in the religious system, Transition House represents the beginning of a transition away from the church based sheltering system. The church based system typically depended upon a single church's volunteers and self-funding to provide for the shelter. By pooling the resources available by the organized philanthropies of the

restrictive residential settings (prisons, hospitals), but in the case of homeless transition the move is from less stable to more stable housing options.

Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches, the founders of Transition House were able to assemble start-up funds from their own institutional sources. In addition, Bartlett's participation in a network of resources gave him access to other resources:

I happened to be at some kind of evening meeting and Connie Curry who ran the city's social services, she said "what you' doing?" [I described] what we wanted to do and she asked, "How would you like \$25,000?" and so we then set out looking for a house and found this old house on Ashby Street. It was in fairly sad shape. (Bartlett interview)

Bartlett's active involvement in a network of social service agencies with resources was a valuable aid in funding a new program. His earlier work developing housing for the mentally ill gave Bartlett credibility and contacts essential for obtaining resources needed to create Transition House. At the same time, the City of Atlanta also had modest federal funds drawing from various sources including the Community Development and Community Services Block Grants it wanted to distribute. Having acquired the house on Ashby St., Bartlett and his colleagues then set up Atlanta's first transitional housing for the homeless.

Like the Task Force, the early Transition House model reflected a framing of the problem of homeless men as principally one of housing. Based on their consultations with leaders of the homeless movement and shelter directors they shared the assumptions of other church based shelter that had emerged several years before, Bartlett and the other religious leaders who formed Transition House began with the simple idea that emergency shelters were needed to provide life-saving protection from the elements. The creation of Transition House was simply another step in a continuum. Transition House was designed to take the employed homeless and to provide them with basic shelter and stable living arrangement permitting them to accumulate the assets they needed to return to residential stability. Adding to the cost of the program, Transition House, rather than using volunteers, hired staff to supervise the program.

So we bought the house, we were going to get the working homeless; we were going to get the cream. We hired this guy Ron, he wanted to live in the back of the house and have eight beds out front. We burned him out. He worked two years. He was in the middle of authority issues. We were so dumb, how to run one of these things. We were getting the cream, guys who seemed to be working (Bartlett interview).

The issues facing Transition House in this early period were ones of organization and program. As Bevis, Adams, and other leaders had found during the first several years of sheltering and other shelter providers were finding, providing direct services was an exhausting enterprise. The challenge was to design programs that were sustainable. Despite these problems in this early period, the house was successful in finding men in shelters who were working full time, the very “best” of the shelter residents, and assisting them.

However, we also noticed that they were making some stupid decisions, shooting themselves in the foot on too many occasions. Maybe fifty percent were sort of graduating and doing ok. We said, we can do better than fifty percent, so we said, let’s get a counselor and I wrote a grant to the Community Foundation and got \$5,000 to hire and do group work, and we got Harold Braithwaite who was a clinical psychologist and done some group work in homelessness. (Bartlett interview)

The Transition House approach was to call in experts to assist in identifying the “problem” facing homeless men. In turn the expert provided specialist knowledge about the men residing at Transition House.

And after the second week or maybe the third, he [Braithwaite] asked “you ever done any urine tests on these [guys]?”

“Urine tests, what is that?”

“To check on drugs.”

“Oh Harold, we are prescreening. These guys they are all [working].”

...He said, “Just humor me.”

So we did the tests. Across two weeks we did fifteen tests, twelve were positive for crack cocaine. We were running a crack house. In our defense, this was just the mid-80’s, the crack thing just had come. We were probably the first homeless provider that had discovered this, had run into it. (Bartlett interview)⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Bartlett’s discovery of crack cocaine use among the homeless came around the same moment as two national trends came together. The first was the “moral panic” over crack use. As Reinerman and Levine describe it “in the spring of 1986, American politicians and news media began an extraordinary antidrug frenzy that run until about 1992. During this period,

The drug test results challenged the fundamental assumptions that underlay the Transition House model. The drug testing provided evidence of drug-taking behavior by the residents and Bartlett moved quickly from one frame – homelessness as housing, to a new frame – homelessness as drug addiction. Drugs become the “explanation” for the failure of half the men to “succeed.”

So we called in more help from Atlanta University, a guy who had designed a program and asked how do you design a program and we designed a program that is essentially what it is now. ...It's a twelve-step recovery program, a twelve-step house for people who have been clean for thirty days, it doesn't always happen. ...So all these guys are in the program they can spot someone who is not serious and can spot them coming down. ...We still probably have a 75% recovery rate, which is not bad. (Bartlett interview)

The discovery that Transition House was a “crack house” required the reorganization of the program, but more fundamentally, a reframing of the purpose of the program and the problem that was being addressed. The results of the drug test raised questions about the frame Bartlett had naively received from the shelter experts and suggested a new one – homelessness explained as a disability (i.e., drug addiction). Reframing the problem as drug addiction required new experts, since he and the staff had been unable to recognize the problem.

newspapers, magazines and network television regularly carried lurid stories about a new ‘epidemic’ or ‘plague’ of drug use especially crack cocaine (1995:154). Media coverage of crack cocaine raised the awareness of lay providers of the presence of crack. In addition, federally funded research on homelessness concentrated on the pathology of homelessness, viz, drugs and mental illness. The second trend was the increasing medicalization of homelessness (Lyon-Callo 2000). By the late 1980’s national media outlets characterized the prevalence of addiction among the homeless as “the nasty little secret of the homeless” (Kolata 1989:A1). *The New York Times* described homelessness and addiction as “twins of the streets” and the emerging view was “drugs and alcohol abuse have emerged as a major reason for the homelessness of men, women and families, complicating the search for solutions” (Kolata 1989:A1). Some newspaper accounts asserted that homeless advocates in their efforts to make the homeless sympathetic had muted concerns about addiction. Both popular and academic research in the mid-to-late 1980’s highlighted the addiction and mental health problems of homeless men and women, affirming the experience of local advocates. The literature is voluminous, see for instance (McCarty, Argeriou, Huerner & Lubran 1991; Fischer & Breakey 1991; Levine & Huebner 1991).

The use of experts and the new framing of the problem of homelessness as one of drug addiction had important consequences. First, the creation of a program of drug rehabilitation services leads into the world of substance abuse experts. The volunteer-run church programs provided for the survival needs of the homeless, but they lacked expertise with addiction. If homelessness is redefined and resources are mobilized, and homelessness becomes a problem of substance abuse, then volunteers have reduced relevance to the new framing. In addition, the new addiction explanation opens the question of individual culpability. While those suffering from a disaster are not culpable for their plight, addicts are active participants. Homelessness becomes “explained” diagnostically as a question of addiction.

If Bartlett’s change in frame were limited to the Transition House experience, it would provide limited explanation for how the movement changed its diagnostic and prognostic framing. But Bartlett, as we’ve already seen, was a key player in the philanthropic and non-profit network, linking religious, government, and United Way networks. The combination of his practical program experience and his role as the administrator of the Episcopal Foundation provided both a network of ideas, a constituency, and the resources to mobilize these views.

The movement of Transition House from a residential program for the most capable of the shelter population to a drug rehabilitation program changed the way homelessness was perceived. While the immediate program affected only eight men at a time, Bartlett’s central location in a network of resources and philanthropy served to disseminate this experience within the provider community. Bartlett’s office was located in midtown Atlanta on the campus of All Saints’ Episcopal church. All Saints’ went through a similar transition.

ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH: NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW DIRECTION AND THE FORMATION OF COVENANT COMMUNITY

All Saints' Episcopal Church was another emergency night shelter that began moving away from open sheltering to provide a more structured relationship with fewer men. All Saints' Episcopal Church was located in the midtown area of Atlanta close to both Georgia Tech and a large public housing project. Like many of the other churches involved in the early sheltering network, All Saints' provided space and support as one of the night shelters that opened during the second wave of sheltering. As had been the pattern with other churches and synagogues, volunteers from All Saints' initially assisted Central Presbyterian Church with their night shelter in the winter of 1981. Drawing on this experience and the advocacy for sheltering in the church network, they used facilities in the parish hall to open a shelter in the 1981-1982 shelter season and adopted the basic model of free night shelter in the winter months for up to 50 men.

All Saints' also mobilized the resources of the church to provide facilities for the first day care center for homeless children, in March of 1984. The shelter served children whose families spent nights at St. Bartholomew's, St. Mark's United Methodist Church and Calvary United Methodist Church (Alexander 1984).⁵¹

All Saints' allocated substantial church resources to the night shelter and its related program. In addition to providing heated sleeping space, simple meals and kitchen facilities, responsibility for coordinating the shelter was assigned to the associate rector, an ordained professional member of the staff. Like other church based shelters, All Saints' Shelter used space in the church parish hall for sleeping quarters and the adjoining kitchen to serve fifty homeless men. In the summer before the fifth year of sheltering (1985), members of the church

⁵¹ While the Task Force for the Homeless generally advocated for inclusion in existing programs, homeless children lacked residential stability (i.e., a permanent address). As a result homeless families did not meet federal requirements to participate in federal day care programs.

renovated an unused building on the church property for a special purpose shelter. This became a dedicated shelter that included kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities in one location rather than scattered around the building (Newby 1985). The establishment of the new shelter represented the mobilization of the sizable resources of the church and highlights the importance that sheltering was given by church members.

In 1988, the Rev. Martha Stern assumed responsibility for coordinating the shelter, replacing the associate rector, Rev. William E. Swift. This change in personnel changes to the way the shelter was structured. Stern recalled being “very disturbed” by the shelter from the first. She entered the system after the urgency of disaster response emergency night shelter, and found well-established procedures and volunteers. From Stern’s perspective, simply providing shelter was inadequate; the men who came to All Saints’ required a sense of community and connection to the congregation. The night shelter, while supported by church volunteers, was too separate from the church’s community life.

Under Stern’s leadership, All Saints’ Shelter entered a period of transition. The annual closing of the emergency night shelter in the spring of 1989 provided the opportunity for her to establish a new program. In the summer of 1989, All Saints’ established a “covenant community” named the “Rise & Shine” Community as a means to continue their relationship with some of the men who had to find other living arrangements after the seasonal closure of the night shelter. Stern used theological language, language that resonated with her church congregants, to describe the relationship she hoped to establish between the church and the homeless participants in the new program. Central to this “covenant” were expectations of the shelter guests including abstinence from drugs and alcohol, regular attendance at community meetings, and commitment to building interpersonal relationships with members of the

congregation. Thus, the church leaders mobilized their resources to provide programs for a certain kind of homeless person – the ones who sought a connection and would meet expectations. In exchange, program participants received showers, meals, group activities and relationships with church members.

In a letter to Central Atlanta Progress in the fall of 1989, members of the Rise & Shine community described themselves as:

We are a community in process, a process that began last summer with a number of guest, staff and volunteer workers in a program called “Rise & Shine” sponsored by All Saints’ Episcopal Church. This program served homeless men by providing a facility where they could begin their day with showers, breakfast and clean clothes. (Rise N’ Shine 1989)

The Rise N’ Shine community were homeless men, many of whom were housed in the winter shelter, but the Rise & Shine program provided participants with the amenities of shelter during the summer without the opportunity for lodging.

By the fall of 1990, Stern had convinced the All Saints’ congregation to close the emergency night shelter it had operated for nine years and replace it with a new program. Stern characterized the transition from the winter night shelter to “a smaller but more intense year round ministry for recovering addicts who actually live in the church.” Stern described the motivation underlying this new approach with these words: “We wanted to participate with people in changing all our lives and in building a more inclusive Christian community, instead of a revolving door where none of us gets to know and love each other”(White 1992:C1).

The reshaping of emergency night shelters into recovery programs resulted in closure or transformation of several church-run shelters during this period. Trinity United Methodist Church also went through a change in program. Like All Saints’, Trinity was a downtown white congregation that opened a night shelter in the winter of 1981. Also like All Saints’, Trinity had

mobilized resources and improved facilities to enable homeless men to sleep more comfortably. The church had operated a winter emergency night shelter for eight years. In 1989, after nine years of operation, they changed a 30-bed emergency night shelter into a nine-month transitional program with 10 beds. Beverly Blumgren, a Trinity congregant serving as the shelter's coordinator for almost eight years, shared her view of the situation: "Emergency shelters provide nothing but an endless stream of people. We don't want people to develop the skills of living in a shelter. That's not productive for living anywhere else" (Jenkins 1990:D1). In Blumgren's view, the provision of shelter itself had become the problem. But her statement reflected the frustration felt by many volunteer shelter providers. Central to this frustration was the failure of homelessness to abate despite the best efforts of Trinity Church to provide assistance. To many volunteers, there appeared to be an "endless stream" of people seeking assistance. The seasonal provision of night shelter and the resulting lack of residential stability led to the shuffling of homeless men between service providers. Blumgren also revealed the vision that motivated her, she sought to provide a program that "develops the skills" that would be "productive" for living. While acknowledging that the closure of shelters meant a net loss of beds for the homeless, she asserted:

Housing is not the responsibility of the churches, but we've really been dumped on. We've been doing it for a decade, and you get very, very angry and sad that you get the same people over and over again, and you don't see them get well or get on with their lives. We have to learn another way. (Jenkins 1990:D1)

Blumgren's comments reflect a change in the diagnostic and prognostic framing of homelessness and the response to it. This frame shift had a number of consequences. The earlier model of sheltering had originated in the idea of hospitality to the stranger. The first wave of new shelters combined the idea of hospitality, a prognostic framing, with the urgency of emergency. Framing homelessness as a survival emergency addressed through the provision of shelter for the night

evoked images of natural disasters. This shelter provision for survival undergirded how many shelter volunteers understood their role. Much of the focus of the early work had been to emphasize this sense of emergency and urgency to protect individuals from perishing in the cold. Implicit in this view was that the provision of housing was sufficient to protect lives of people needing the services. In this frame, the resources of the church and the volunteer labor of committed individuals were sufficient to provide what was needed.

Both All Saints' Episcopal and Trinity United Methodist used the theological language of relationship and merged it with the language of addiction treatment. In this new frame, homelessness was viewed as primarily caused by addiction. Continuing to provide shelter without confronting this addiction and providing the conditions of change was “enabling” addiction (i.e. helping the addict to remain in their addiction). No longer was it adequate to “merely” provide shelter, as did the church sheltering movement in the early 1980's. Instead, the Rise and Shine approach was promoted as a way to have a deeper relationship with the homeless. Building on the experience of Transition House and the Rise & Shine program, there was a growing analysis of homelessness, or at least visible homelessness, as an issue of drugs or mental illness. The new frame focused on homelessness as a disability. The prognostic response to this was to create small specialized treatment programs.

CAFÉ 458: PERSONAL SERVICES FOR THE THOSE INTERESTED IN CHANGE.⁵²

Café 458 (named after its address on Edgewood Avenue) was created in 1988 as an alternative to soup kitchens (Wilder 1998). The creation of the Café was based on a critique of the congregate living and service, which had grown very large and impersonal. In contrast, Café 458 did not frame itself as primarily around emergency food. “It is not a feeding program. It is

⁵² In 1990 the Café started Oakhurst Recovery Program, a residential alcohol and drug program for homeless men. Samaritan House of Atlanta assumed management of CAFÉ 458 in 1999.

about empowerment. Soup kitchens feed too many people. Our advantage is in the small size” (Riordin 1994:1).

The Café was a project of the Community of Hospitality, an organization founded by A. B. Short and his partner Ann Connors, growing out their experience at the Oakhurst Baptist Church Shelter in Decatur. Short had been active in the early toilet campaign and the formation of the Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless.

Like the volunteer run shelters, the Café mobilized the volunteers associated with the Community of Hospitality to provide much of the labor to create the Café. Taking an abandoned restaurant on Edgewood Avenue near downtown Atlanta and using funds granted from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, local foundations and individual contributions, a restaurant for the homeless was created.

The Café represented a departure from the soup kitchens and communal feeding programs (soup kitchen) of St Luke’s Episcopal, Big Bethel Baptist, Trinity Methodist or St. Francis’ Table. The café was designed for 28 guests at a time based on referrals from social service agencies and a small network of shelters associated with the cafe. Potential guests are required to meet entry criteria that included no current drug use, no recent history of violence and, most importantly, the stated desire to change their lives. Once admitted to the Café, guests receive a reservation that is reviewed regularly by the Café’s staff in consultation with the referring agency. Successful participation in the referring agency’s program permits the extension of the reservation. A guest can eat for six months before he or she finds housing or employment.

The Café designers promoted the central value of dignity and employed rhetoric of empowerment. Individuals who have “reservations” at the Café were referred to as guests.

When the café opened, guests were seated at tables and served by volunteer staff members, who took the guest's meal selections off the menu of the day. Guests receive a choice of options.

Servers bring food to the table on real plates and a restaurant ambiance of artwork and flowers.

The Café 458 model emphasized small scale and human interaction as important aspects of the new frame. The discourse was one of dignity and respect. As A.B. Short described it, "We're serving more than food, we're serving friendship, hospitality and brotherhood" (Graham 1989:E1).

The use of a reservation system was not a wholly new innovation. The Clifton Shelter, in 1979, gave homeless individuals who had stayed previously first preference for stays the next night. All that was expected was for the person to be at the pickup spot at the time the shelter transportation was provided. At Café 458 a reservation system is also adopted, but with a twist. Now the reservation for a dignified and respectful meal is contingent on the evaluation of other experts who "refer" the homeless individual. Rather than individual agency, access to dignified meals is contingent on complicity with a program, that is, conforming to the demands of other supervisory agencies. Having a place involved more than following the basic shelter rules; it now involved attending and actively participating in drug treatment programs, submitting to drug testing, undertaking job searches, and being compliant with psychiatric medication (i.e., meeting goals that were set by groups invested in the individual's compliance with a treatment regime).

Café 458 represents a model that is both a critique of the social service system and of the system of shelters. The Café essentially creates a parallel service system of small programs that collectively provide food, employment, and housing. Like the models from All Saints' Episcopal and Trinity United Methodist programs (with which the Café was affiliated), the

central values were small scale and the expectation of individual change. Indeed, homeless persons who did not demonstrate change were no longer eligible for the services.

The Community of Hospitality and Café 458 represent a new framing of homelessness. Short, the Oakhurst Shelter, and the Community of Hospitality were initially part of the network that drew inspiration from the Catholic Worker tradition of Dorothy Day. Loring and the Open Door Community had fused the Worker tradition with liberation theology to challenge the principalities and powers and demand justice for the poor. For the Open Door Community charity and justice were linked. For Short and the Café, Catholic Worker principles of small scale and relationship gained primacy, so, despite its limited capacity, the Community of Hospitality provided a high quality, dignified approach to serving the homeless poor. Others could emulate their example, but it was not the responsibility of the COH to serve beyond its capacity. This was well within the Worker's traditional anarchist framing of the appropriate response to social problems. Short, however, took this one step further. The Café was not a place for all comers, but a place with those who desired to change. Failure to change, or unwillingness to change, meant termination from the program. The program, then, was also an exercise in power.

The Café also represents a new phase in the movement. The impulse for innovation was particularly attractive to leaders with entrepreneurial vision. The new programs established outside the oversight of church setting provided the opportunity for these leaders pursue their visions and seek the resources to secure their expansion.

SAMARITAN HOUSE: FROM DAY SHELTER FOR THE MANY TO JOBS FOR THE FEW

Earlier I described how the religious community, at the encouragement of Central Atlanta Progress's Human Resources Task Force, established Samaritan House. The purpose of the

Samaritan House was supposed to pull homeless men away from the downtown area by providing day shelter. However, its original location was closed due to financial difficulty and conflicts with the First Baptist Church, which housed the shelter. Samaritan House reopened in 1985 on the property of St. Luke's Episcopal. Regularly facing budget problems, Samaritan House was run inexpensively and provided day shelter, restrooms, laundry facilities and clothing for homeless men and women. Between 200 and 400 individuals used the shelter daily.

The concentration of programs at St. Luke's Episcopal Church serving the homeless began to become problematic in the late 1980's. The large concentration of homeless adults during the day posed an increasingly difficult problem of control. During the late 1980's two murders at Samaritan House further heightened concerns over the direction of the program.⁵³

On April 14, 1988, the Board of Samaritan House announced the shelter would be temporarily closed for a period of reorganization. Staff members were fired and the facility shut down. In 1989, Samaritan House re-emerged in a different location with a new mission and new director. The new facility was a vacant storefront at 255 Peters Street, SW, several miles from the St Luke property. Its new mission was to provide short-term assistance to homeless individuals seeking permanent employment (i.e., helping about twenty men at a time find permanent employment by providing assistance with resumes, clothing for work and interviews, and locating job leads). Like the Café, homeless men received a two-week reservation, and, based on their progress, an extension was possible (Samaritan House 1989).

Samaritan House was part of an emerging, alternative network of shelters and programs providing intensive assistance to a few men on a short-term basis. Homeless individuals served

⁵³ In October of 1986, Al Smith, a homeless man who assisted with the Samaritan House program and served as a night caretaker was found beaten to death. His murderer was never found (Walston 1986). In June of the following year, a homeless man walked into the shelter with a gun, beat a sleeping man and then shot him ("Man fatally shot" 1987).

by Samaritan House were primarily referred from within the network that included Samaritan House, Café 458, Trinity United Methodist Church Shelter, and the Oakhurst Baptist Church Shelter. Implicitly, the new Samaritan House program was built on the assumption there were well-paying jobs available for motivated homeless men to secure stable employment and housing.

Like Transition House, Samaritan House also “discovered” that many homeless men used drugs. To meet this new need, Samaritan House staff instituted drug rehabilitation programs and treatment groups as part of their program. In addition, Samaritan House received referrals from (and referred to) the network of small shelters that specialized in drug treatment.

The closure of the Samaritan House day shelter meant that between 200 to 400 men no longer received assistance during the working hours. The ending of the day shelter ultimately contributed to conflicts over the mission of the St. Luke’s Community Kitchen program in mid 1990’s.⁵⁴

ATLANTA UNION MISSION: DISCIPLESHIP RECOVERY

The move for religious groups to develop “recovery” programs for drug addiction continued to suffuse through the homeless service system. In October of 1990, the Atlanta Union Mission adopted a similar approach of combining housing with a greater focus on drug

⁵⁴ Samaritan House had provided restrooms and other support services for those waiting for the St Luke’s lunch. The closure of Samaritan House and lack of restroom facilities resulted in sanitary problems on the St. Luke’s campus. In 1994 a “revisioning” committee of St. Luke’s Episcopal recommended the Soup Kitchen be reduced in size in order to serve a few individuals more intensively. After protests from within the congregation and without, this plan was abandoned. By 1997, the kitchen was moved out of the St Luke’s church building to Courtland Street building. This resulted in the creation of a dedicated facility for homeless outreach, but also segregated the homeless from the church proper. The kitchen is now a nonprofit organization, Crossroad Community Ministries that provides a range of services to homeless men and women. See (Whiteford 1994; Hansen 1994; Roncoli 1994; Puckett 1994; Puckett 1995; White 1997).

addiction. The Union Mission's Discipleship Program designated 50 of its 160 beds for homeless adult men to alcohol and drug recovery. Central to the Mission's new approach was a change in motivational framing consistent with those described in preceding sections – the impulse to do better (i.e., to make discernable changes in homeless people's lives). While the Union Mission had provided housing to a heterogeneous population of adult men, it had provided a stable environment for mentally ill. The new frame of explaining homelessness as a drug problem provided a diagnosis of the problem that permitted “doing better.” The unmet need for drug treatment combined with the lack of success in changing the mentally ill provided a new opportunity. As the Union Mission's director said at the time: “With the mentally ill all you can do is try to keep them on medication – the ones that will take it – and there's not much progress they can make. Chemical addiction is something we can play a part in” (Gelb 1990: D10).

Central to the new frame of recovery was the perceived self-efficacy of the providers. Shelter and program providers prognostically framed their work as a response to social and spiritual problems. Their work was inspired by a desire to effectively make change. While the mentally ill need hospitality and housing, “they can't make much progress.” However, unlike the mentally ill, providers were confident that with recovery programs addicted individuals could make progress (i.e., overcome addiction and return to normal life).

The Atlanta Union Mission's transition to an addiction recovery model of framing their relationships with the homeless men who sought their services was sufficiently successful that the women's mission made a similar transition. In 1994 the Atlanta Union Mission women's

division changed its name to Dorcas House.⁵⁵ As part of the transition, they reallocated the beds to emergency shelter for 25 women and substance abuse program for 48 women (“Women’s” 1994).

CRITIQUE OF DRUG APPROACH

The process of reframing of homelessness from frames of hospitality and disaster relief to the new diagnostic frame of disability (addiction) was not uncontested. In a letter to the editor of *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* in 1989, Ty Brown of the Open Door Community critiqued the drug frame.

Yes, there are many people on the streets who are addicted to alcohol and drugs. But, although poverty is a contributing factor, drug abuse is epidemic across all social strata. To say that it is the cause of homelessness is to ignore the larger social context, particularly the differing ways we respond to rich and poor chemically dependent people. When well-off people become addicted to drugs they go to treatment. When the poor become addicted, they go to jail.

We need to look beyond drugs to “just say no” to homelessness. The only generalization that applies to all homeless people is this: man, woman, skilled, unskilled, drug addict, handicapped, veteran (so many veterans) and child, all homeless people are poor. (Brown 1989:A18)

For the programs reviewed in this section, addiction emerged as the dominant explanation of homelessness and rehabilitation the solution. The programs and shelters embracing the new framing shifted away from free night shelter to create smaller, intensive, long-term addiction programs. While the intensity of services increased, the availability of shelter space declined. The Task Force for the Homeless reflected on this in their newsletter in 1994:

[Despite new programs] we are losing ground in providing free, emergency housing. Shelters and transitional programs are continually being displaced or reducing the numbers served.

However, all the programs and shelters in the world won’t prevent or eliminate homelessness. The causes lie in public policies developed over two decades. Changing those policies requires information, data, passionate language, and sometimes

⁵⁵ The name is revealing of the Mission’s framing. In the Christian New Testament Dorcas is the woman in Joppa who the apostle Peter raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-43).

confrontation that symbolically grabs elected officials by the collar to say, “It is not all right for human beings to be rejected from our communities, prohibited from sharing our public spaces, and prevented from touching our lives.

Recommendations were made to decentralize services to homeless people – away from downtown. Small programs with more services to rehabilitate individual homeless people became the “solution” to homelessness. Well-intentioned reductions in the numbers occurred as congregations began to choose to serve fewer with “more services.” Such treatment and services need to be established. However, they must be attached to housing and they must be offered, not required in order to be successful. (Beaty 1994:4)

The cumulative impact of these changes was to shift the emphasis from housing the homeless poor to establishing institutions whose goal is to change the homeless poor. Implicitly, these changes were offered to individuals who fit the criteria, and given the extent of the need, they had a large population to choose from.

CONCLUSION

So how do frames change? In this chapter I have examined several organizations that developed new diagnostic and prognostic framings of homelessness during the late 1980’s. There were discrete sources of the particular frame changes, but in general there was a desire on the part of those designing and implementing programs to “do better” to “be more effective” in their programs – to see that the help they were offering was making a difference. There is little evidence that the impetus for this came from the homeless themselves. Those designing and carrying out the programs initiated the changes. Sheltering itself was not sufficiently engaging; the routine maintenance activities of providing day shelter, night shelter, or food were not sufficiently motivating. Change was desired and the sense of effectiveness arose from “making a difference” in the lives of homeless individuals. This change was not to the structure of society, but in the behavior of the homeless poor. Working closely with individuals for individual change was the goal of many of these new program entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER 11: THE CHALLENGE OF COALITION 1990-2002: TASK FORCE OR HOMELESS ACTION GROUP?

The emergence of new nonprofit organizations and new leadership in the late 1980's expanded the number of actors involved in framing homelessness. These new actors engendered both increased competition for resources and the creation of more complex diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing of homelessness. The Task Force for the Homeless sought to position itself as the network coordinator, identifying gaps and encouraging the development of new shelters. Since the publication of the working paper in 1987, the Task Force had consistently resisted being placed in the role of directly managing or funding constituent groups. At a 1989 meeting, Jim Beaty, one of the directors of the Task Force reiterated how the organization viewed its role: "the Task Force will act as an advisory body, not a legislative body. What the existing entities (Samaritan House, Odyssey 3) need is money, not oversight" (Beaty 1989). From the Task Force's perspective, the system needed additional resources, not increased supervision by anyone, including the Task Force. The Task Force advised, encouraged and provided advice about needed services to the new emerging organizations.

But by 1990 the situation had changed; unlike the volunteer shelter system, which relied upon the Task Force for information, the new nonprofits that emerged were "mission-driven" and actively worked to develop their organizations. These groups cultivated direct relationships with funding sources and maintained no organizational accountability to the Task Force. The new social service orientation and disability framing focused on strategies of individual change combined with careful allocation of their limited resources. In part, this change was structural, as the new organizations, unlike the Task Force, which was primarily funded by government contracts, had to diversify their funding streams to survive. The hunt for new resources and the pressure for donor accountability resulted in increasing sympathy with the business framing.

These new groups actively created a network effectively created an alternative service system among those sharing the disability/responsibility frame. The creation of the parallel system ran counter to the Task Force's advocacy approach that focused on pressuring existing programs to incorporate the homeless in their services. Creating new service alternatives effectively reduced this pressure on the state to extend its services. For the most part, the new programs had little interest, and saw little benefit, in pursuing a rights/injustice frame that increasingly dominated the activities of the Task Force and Open Door Community. For the new entrepreneurial leaders, it was resources for program, not rights, which served as their principal motivation.

The growth of these new services and the associated emphasis on the self-responsibility of the homeless for their condition coincided with declining public sympathy for the homeless, both nationally and locally (Booker 1990). The suicide of Washington, D.C. based activist Mitch Snyder in July 1990 provided a potent symbolic epitaph to the movement for commentators (Deparle 1990a; Deparle 1990b; Wilkerson 1991). News coverage of his suicide and the discussions among the national and local movement began to focus on declining revenue, declining public sympathy, and division within the national movement (Booker 1990, Wilkerson 1991, Deparle 1990b). This was not unique to Atlanta; many cities across the nation were becoming increasingly impatient with charitable approaches and used social control functions to address homelessness.

TASK FORCE'S INJUSTICE FRAME

By the late 1980's, the cumulative effect of the trends described above was to develop a clear division within the movement between groups aligned with and supportive of the Task Force for the Homeless and groups operating outside its frame. The Task Force sought to

balance two disparate roles, first it actively represented itself as the legitimate convener of the movement, coordinating the varied responses and providing the public face of the movement to various publics. For instance, the Task Force directors collected and provided authoritative information on the movement. At the same time, the Task Force sought to realize a strong advocacy agenda. Central to this agenda, was the Task Force's view that the causes of homelessness were embedded in the structure of society. Their proposals sought to change that structure. The Task Force retained its legitimacy as a group that had valuable contacts and resources to support the overall system and it was still capable of convening meetings and coordinating teams to work on a variety of issues.

As a tactical decision, the Task Force for the Homeless effectively embraced an injustice/conflict frame as its central prognostic frame by 1990. While it used a variety of tactics (persuasion, documentation, resources), increasingly conflict/confrontation emerged as a central technique of the Task Force. Their call for redistribution of wealth and an enhanced social safety net as the ultimate resolutions to homelessness failed to gain traction in a time of reduced revenues and neo-conservative policy. Such calls were particularly unattractive to Atlanta's business and political leaders. The failure of the injustice frame to gain traction in turn led to greater stridency. The injustice frame and conflict approach also failed to expand the coalition. Likewise, the injustice/disaster frame no longer mobilized the movement or expanded the sheltering system. Despite this, the leaders of the Task Force and the Open Door Community remained committed to their analysis and advocacy agenda.

Many people devote time and energy to persuading us that the causes of homelessness lie inside each homeless individual rather than in our massive and nearly complete resistance to developing fair public methods of distributing goods and services.

It is easy for some housed, privileged, enfranchised people to reduce poverty to a description of the needs of individuals who are poor. It adds to our own sense of power to describe poor people in terms of the diagnostic and curative services "they" need in

order to re-enter mainstream society. ...They come into our awareness, asking us for something we control that they need – housing, childcare, jobs, and food – allowing us to analyze their needs and prescribe programs that meet their needs. This process we describe in many ways – “continuum of care,” “case management,” tiered housing.” (Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless 1994:72)

In part this analysis was supported and encouraged by the national network of advocacy of which the Task Force was a member. Beginning in the 1980's, the Task Force had been in close communication with Mitch Snyder of the Community for Creative Nonviolence and with the National Coalition for the Homeless. Anita Beaty served as a board member and later chairperson of the National Coalition of the Homeless. This national advocacy perspective provided a base of support and direction that assisted and supported the Task Force's local advocacy.

THE SPLIT MOVEMENT – FRAME CONFLICTS

The within movement differences were both diagnostic and prognostic. The cumulative effect of the diverging frames fundamentally turned on how homelessness was prognostically framed. The hospitality and disaster frames that characterized the early movement no longer elicited sympathy or resonated with shelter volunteers, political leaders or the new nonprofits. The failure to solve homelessness, or more precisely, to remove the poor from view, through sheltering and other services, opened the door for more aggressive methods of social control. The frames of disability and of effective programs I described in the last chapter were elaborated to include an emphasis on individual responsibility. A city official characterized the split this way:

The biggest conflict [in the movement was] the difference between enabling the homeless to continue claiming their ‘victimhood,’ which I think Anita does, and empowering the homeless to use whatever skills they have to use to move out of homelessness. A lot of homeless have had terrible, terrible life stories, but even so there are some areas of skill which they can draw upon to improve their situation. That fundamental difference in vision, especially, was perhaps less notable in the shelter programs, but more notable in

the support programs that really were trying to work people to a better state. They are probably the first ones to split strongly with the Task Force. (Boyd interview)

Into the early 1990's these differences in diagnostic and prognostic framing did not erupt into overt conflicts. Open conflict within the movement was largely managed or kept in check by decentralization. The multiple funding streams and the decentralization of the movement meant that programs operating under a variety of framings could operate in parallel tracks with relative ease. Organizations with different framings simply focused their energy and attention on building their organizations and delivering services. In an environment lacking services, there was little competition for recipients. This decentralization of the organizations and projects had the advantage of permitting considerable latitude within a movement. Nonetheless, the internal conflicts were a persistent undercurrent and emerged in other ways – “there were lots of conversations and meetings [but it] really came to the surface in the Tri-J process, but [it was] developing already” (Boyd 2005).

INJUSTICE FRAME IN ACTION: THE IMPERIAL HOTEL OCCUPATION

While the injustice frame was not successful in consolidating the larger movement in Atlanta, it did serve to motivate creative direct action and protest by several small groups. Social movement theorists have highlighted the importance of “radical flank” activity to dramatically pressure elites creating space for more conventional parts of the movement (Haines 1988). The movement in Atlanta was characterized by relatively few dramatic protest actions. Occasional protests and civil disobedience resulted in a few arrests. The Open Door Community and activist groups associated with it had relied on dramatic protest actions during the ongoing campaign. During the campaign for public toilets they carried toilets to city hall and blocked the public restroom. In efforts to challenge the exclusionary ordinances, they conducted a sleep-in in

Woodruff Park to challenge the urban camping ordinance and a lay-in to challenge ordinance prohibiting lying down in downtown parks.

Other groups also used civil disobedience to highlight homelessness. In 1988, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) had carefully identified a foreclosed home as a target for action. Accompanied by Mitch Snyder, and with great press publicity, SCLC representatives broke into the house and began renovating it for a homeless family, but it was limited to a single action and larger claims were not asserted. Unlike the civil rights movement, and the homeless movement in other sections of the country, there were no persistent campaigns undertaken. In addition, they were not successful in eliciting public support and while the press dutifully covered such actions, the editorial pages disparaged and discouraged such tactics. For example, the following criticism appeared in an editorial in the *Atlanta Journal* shortly after the “takeover” of a foreclosed home.

Equally ill advised is the protesters’ decision to resort to radical tactics. ... Breaking property laws when there is no clear moral imperative for a change squanders public sentiment for the protesters’ cause. The first step must be to provide shelter for the homeless. Instead of liberating one house, the protesters would have better served homeless [in other ways]. (Kent 1989:A14)

The most successful direct action by advocates for the homeless was the 1990 occupation of the Imperial Hotel in downtown Atlanta. Owned by developer John Portman, the Imperial Hotel, located on the northern edge of Atlanta’s downtown area, had long been an SRO hotel, but for the last few years had been vacant while awaiting demolition. It was one of the most visible of the city’s old housing for the poor. Advocates chose it as a potent symbol of the failure of the city’s pro-growth development policy to create housing for the poor. The protest also targeted Mayor Maynard Jackson, who had pledged during his campaign to use his experience as a bond trader to secure funds to create low-income housing in Atlanta.

In the early morning of July 3, 1990, the People for Urban Justice (PUJ), consisting primarily of members of the Open Door Community, entered the vacant Imperial Hotel. They climbed to the top floors where they waited. In the early afternoon, they unfurled from the building a banner proclaiming "House the Homeless Here." Through press alerts they called on Maynard Jackson (recently re-elected as mayor) to honor his pledge to create more affordable housing (Bronstein 1990). The Imperial Hotel was a potent symbolic target for their action. It was one of the last SRO hotels, it overlooked St Luke's soup kitchen, and was owned and kept vacant by a prominent downtown developer. It highlighted the displacement of the poor by development interests.

The activists expected to be arrested quickly. Downtown developer John Portman, however, initially declined to press trespassing charges. This hiatus provided a strategic opening for the protesters to expand their claims. Homeless persons were invited to join the protesters, eventually growing to 50. Advocates and the homeless cleared the first two floors, placing debris on the road. Generators were brought in and meals served. They renamed the building Welcome House to highlight the need for shelter for all. The press was courted. City officials expressed concern over the safety of the vacant hotel. Two weeks into the occupation, the city issued a deadline for a forcible removal. Mayor Maynard Jackson reached an agreement with the protesters, promising them that the city would create 3500 units of SRO housing within 4 years, breaking ground for the first units no later than September 1. In addition, the homeless men and women who stayed in the shelter were offered the opportunity to run their own emergency

facility, which the city prepared, in a leased property at a cost of \$75,000.⁵⁶ The occupation ended on July 14 (Blake 1990:B2).

As had been the case with the SCLC housing take-over, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* criticized the role of activists in the Imperial Hotel takeover. An editorial writer declared, “militancy is passé in Atlanta” with its upwardly mobile black professionals and neo-conservative political leaders. In addition, homelessness “is a much more complicated issue than good versus evil” (Tucker 1990: A17).

The Mayor had committed to starting construction on new SRO housing by September, but when this deadline passed PUJ continued a campaign of public demonstrations reminding the Mayor of his promise. The Mayor’s commitment, notwithstanding, the city had few resources with which to begin creating housing for the homeless. The city’s Housing Commissioner, Scott Carlson, used the Mayor’s commitment as the opportunity to convene meetings with nonprofit housing developers. The Housing Forum, founded by Bill Bolling after his split with the Task Force, became an integral partner in this process. One of these developers, Progressive Redevelopment, Inc. (PRI)⁵⁷ took on the first SRO Project, known as Welcome House (after the name the protesters had adopted during their occupation). It took two years for ground to be broken for the SRO that would provide housing for 200 residents (Harris 1992).

The role of PRI and the new housing development highlights the opening the Imperial Hotel occupation provided. By staging a dramatic action and framing the problem of homelessness as one of housing injustice, People for Urban Justice (PUJ) mobilized the city to

⁵⁶ A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding developed between the Mayor and the occupiers of the Imperial Hotel is contained in Wheeler (1992).

⁵⁷ Progressive Redevelopment, Inc. later was responsible for redeveloping the Imperial Hotel into a SRO for the working poor. The renovation of the Imperial Hotel was completed in December of 1996 and provides 120 apartments for “permanent supportive housing.” A complex financing arrangement required 11 sources of private and public funding (Crabb 1997).

respond and secured the city's commitment to affordable housing. Using this commitment as leverage, PUJ continued keep the pressure on the city through public demonstrations to move the process forward. They did not, however, immerse themselves in the technical details of housing construction. With PUJ providing a disruptive potential, Bruce Gunter and Progressive Redevelopment positioned itself as a professional developer capable of taking the actions necessary to create the new housing. However, ironically, while the new Welcome House opened with great fanfare, at \$7 to \$9 a night it was priced beyond the reach of many homeless who worked as contingent laborers. Even with substantial subsidies of rent, Welcome House was unable to develop housing that reduced rents to a level that those dependent on income derived from contingent labor pool employment could afford. Jon Abercrombie, executive director of a religiously based nonprofit housing program, framed the problem:

One of the challenges is that SROs have to pay their own way, and no one has been able to get the numbers down low enough for those who are living out there on the street. Until we can subsidize folks' rents to lower the cost, we are still missing folks at the bottom end of the economic ladder. (Harris 1992b:D10)

The new mayor's ordinances: increasing social control

On September 18, 1990, the International Olympic Committee announced that the City of Atlanta had been awarded the 1996 Summer Olympic Games over five other finalists. The People for Urban Justice had taken advantage of a critical political moment to stage their protest and secure the commitments of the Mayor. City political and business leaders selling the Olympic bid⁵⁸ had promoted Atlanta's congenial climate and harmonious relationships. The low-key and private campaign to secure the Olympics for Atlanta succeeded in preventing open public discussion of the bid. In contrast, activists in the city of Toronto had mobilized Bread Not

⁵⁸ Billy Payne estimated in September 1990 that the Olympic bid process had cost about \$7 million that's "come 90% from the business community" (WSB 1990).

Circuses to defeat their city's bid. Using protest, public discussion and even demonstrating at the IOC meeting in Japan, they successfully eliminated their city from the competition.

The prospect of the city of Atlanta on the world stage changed the political dynamics of the city (Whitelegg 2000). Social control measures previously rejected as distasteful were revived and given new life. The first of the new control measures to come forward concerned vacant buildings.

One of the unintended consequences of the Imperial Hotel takeover was to give city officials greater impetus to draft a vacant building ordinance permitting the police to arrest individuals once the owner had posted a no trespassing sign. In October of 1990, the Jackson administration released drafts of ordinances being developed to address business concerns about downtown crime (Sherman & Hill 1990). Early versions of the proposed ordinances sought to outlaw all public drunkenness and panhandling. The proposal to recriminalize public drunkenness was removed after business interests expressed concerns that the enforcement of such ordinances might involve the arrest of conventioners.

Altogether the proposed public safety ordinances represented a wide-ranging regime of social control. Homeless rights advocates immediately reacted, accusing the Mayor and Police Chief Eldrin Bell of criminalizing homelessness by making illegal activities on which homeless persons relied to survive.

Over the next eight months, a series of acrimonious debates and public hearings were held and modifications made to the proposed ordinances. The ordinance on panhandling, after involvement by the ACLU and homeless advocates, was modified to define and target a specific behavior - "aggressive panhandling." A central concern of the new ordinance was that much of the definition of aggression depended upon the perception of the person being asked. The new

ordinances also criminalized sleeping in city parks after their closing time and urinating in public. In addition, ordinances were clarified to outlaw trespassing in vacant buildings and being in parking lots where one did not have a car (Hill 1991).

Atlanta business and convention leaders framed the new ordinances as a way to make the city safe for conventioners and for the impending Olympics, which brought needed income to the city. While homeless advocates were critical, the revised ordinances had strong support from business and convention interests, including the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Georgia Hospitality and Travel Association, Central Atlanta Progress, and other business interests.

Atlanta City Council approved the ordinances in July of 1991. The ordinances represented a victory for CAP and downtown business interests and they were similar to ordinances proposed as part of the original Safeguard Zone plan. CAP had been frustrated repeatedly by the ability of advocates to block approval by invoking race and poverty in opposition to the proposed ordinances. In the intervening five years, the political climate had changed. The new ordinances had been sponsored by, and strongly supported by, the Mayor, who used his political allies to pass the ordinances. The Olympics provided a potent political moment. The urgency of preparing the city for the Olympics had highlighted the importance of public space and the “image of the city.” With these new factors in play, homeless advocates were unsuccessful in mobilizing the resistance required to defeat the ordinances.

While supporters of the ordinances had argued the ordinances were about crime and the perception of crime, vocal homeless advocates saw the ordinances as criminalizing the behavior or acts that homeless people had to perform in order to survive (e.g., if no public toilets existed and private toilet facilities were denied them, then public urination became necessary).

Advocates were given assurances from the Mayor and sympathetic city council members that the ordinances would not be selectively enforced and would be repealed if such a pattern were demonstrated.

In August of 1991, Atlanta Police Chief Eldrin Bell announced the new ordinances would be aggressively enforced (Cruggs and Robinson 1991). Earlier, the new police chief had promoted the ordinance as providing important “tools” for police and he intended to use them. To this end, Atlanta city police conducted undercover operations to identify and arrest offenders. Despite the prominence given to the ordinances, subsequent analysis revealed that the ordinances were used to make very few arrests. Instead the ordinances served to signal Atlanta police officers as to the importance of controlling the homeless in the downtown area. Given the discretionary power of the police, ordinances for disorderly conduct and public urination were easier to use to achieve the purpose of limiting the visible presence of the homeless in the central city.

Resisting the ordinances.

Despite assurances the ordinances would not be selectively enforced against homeless people and the framing of the new ordinances as targeting “crime” and not “homelessness,” injustice frame advocates, including the Task Force for the Homeless and the Open Door Community, undertook a series of actions to challenge the ordinances.

Beginning in May of 1993, the Task Force for the Homeless began monitoring arrest records at Atlanta’s pretrial detention center. By July, they used this data to argue that the city showed a concerted campaign to “hide” the homeless during large conventions and other public events in the city. Adam Feuerstein of the Task Force for the Homeless reported: “We’re seeing more and more intolerance toward homeless people. Some of the ordinances we’re seeing are a

result of the fact that the Olympics are coming to town...so the city can put its best face forward” (Hill 1992:C2).

In September, the Task Force for the Homeless published its analysis of the impact of the ordinances in a report titled *The Criminalization of Poverty: City Ordinances Unfairly Target Homeless People for Arrest* (Metro Task Force 1993). The study relied upon an analysis of arrest records at the Atlanta’s Pretrial Detention Center. The central assertion of the report was that Atlanta’s public policy was designed for a single purpose – to “get homeless people off the streets at any cost,” rather than creating progressive policies to end homelessness. “Legislative bodies like the Atlanta City Council are enacting strict public nuisance laws that criminalize homeless people for basic daily activities. Many of the laws are being put into place today as a way for the city to deal with homeless people during the 1996 Olympic Games” (Metro Atlanta Task Force 1993:i).

The same month the Task Force published *Criminalization*, the Open Door Community and People for Urban Justice undertook a concerted campaign to challenge the 1991 ordinance that prohibited lying down on park benches (Gathje 2006). On September 13, eleven members of the group entered Woodruff Park and lay down on benches and, after refusing a police request to move, were arrested. A month later, October 4, ten more people were arrested in Woodruff Park for violating the ordinance under similar circumstances (*The Atlanta Journal* 1993). On October 18, the Atlanta City Council unanimously voted to remove that section of the law (Gathje 2006). Shortly after the revocation of the section of the ordinance, park officials installed physical barriers on downtown park benches to prevent lying down.

Building on their small success on the lying down ordinance, advocates turned their attention to the parking lot ordinance. Claiming the laws were “only being used on blacks and

the homeless,” (*The Atlanta Journal* 1993:C2) protesters courted arrest by standing in parking lots. Atlanta police had become more sophisticated in the interim and refused to arrest the protesters, which defused the issue.

Along with documentation, public advocacy and protest strategies, the Task Force turned to legal strategies to challenge the ordinances. Working with the American Civil Liberties Union, the Task Force had successfully defeated earlier ordinances during the legislative stage. As these strategies were no longer working, the Task Force and its allies turned to litigation to challenge the constitutionality of the ordinances. Several lawsuits were brought on behalf of homeless men that resulted in some changes in policy (Herz & Agler 1994).

The increased militancy of the Task Force on a variety of “rights” issues served to further highlight differences within the movement. The effort of the Task Force to align frames with its constituent groups was increasingly difficult. While the Task Force sought to position itself as the coordinator of action, some of the new organizations began to perceive the organization as a dictator of action. The rights perspective that began to absorb more of the Task Force’s public advocacy had little resonance with shelter and service providers.

The injustice frame: reframing the 1996 Olympics

As we have seen, the Task Force framed the new ordinances as part of a general strategy by the city of Atlanta to remove the homeless from downtown in advance of big events, particularly the 1996 Olympic Games. The Olympics mega-event provided a larger context of action during early 1990’s. Immediately after the announcement that Atlanta had been selected as the site for the 1996 Olympic Games, the Task Force convened activists from several local community groups to form The Olympic Conscience Coalition. Olympic Conscience was modeled after the Bread Not Circuses Coalition of Toronto that had successfully defeated that

city's Olympic bid by highlighting the costs of the Olympics and the social needs of the city. Bread not Circuses, however, began their campaign long before the Olympic bid. Locally, the Task Force and the Olympic Conscience Coalition partners sought to shape a social agenda for the Olympics which included job creation and housing as well as protecting the homeless and poor during the Olympic event.

Facing repeated frustration of their efforts to shape the Olympics or to incorporate the social justice approach to homelessness, the injustice advocates became more militant in their demands. This came together with protest over criminalization in an October 1994 protest.

In October of 1994, Woodruff Park was scheduled for a \$5 million renovation in preparation for Olympics. This year long project entailed the enclosure of the park with a chain link fence during a period of construction. A visual arts critic praised the renovation plans and the park's potential to become the symbolic center of Atlanta. She cautioned, however, "a park won't attract users unless it appears safe," noting with approval plans for "increased lighting and an adjacent police precinct to protect citizens," and plans to remove foliage and make the entire park visible from the street (Fox 1994:D4).

The scheduled closure of Woodruff Park occurred at a time of a number of crises for the movement. The Olympic Conscience Coalition had had little success with its agenda of a social Olympics. The winter shelter season was beginning and the Task Force was finding that church-based shelters were either not re-opening or struggling to recruit volunteers as the Olympics drew their attention. The creation of Centennial Olympic Park had resulted in the closure of several homeless shelters and day labor centers with no planning for their replacement. Finally, efforts to repeal ordinances had been unsuccessful. For advocates critical of the Olympics, the

allocation of \$5 million dollars to renovate a park highlighted the insulation of the city's leaders from the suffering of the poor.

On October 17, 1994, a ceremony was to be held at Woodruff Park to celebrate the renovation. It was intended to serve as another opportunity to highlight downtown revitalization. Dignitaries from city government, the business community, Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and the International Olympic Committee were participating. The Georgia State University orchestra provided music.

In response to the planned event, the Olympic Conscience Coalition called for a march down Peachtree Street to highlight their agenda and call for the repeal of the objectionable ordinances. Closure of Woodruff Park also led to calls for the establishment of other "safe" areas for the homeless to congregate. Leaders of the Task Force actively recruited homeless participants in the march. As the march entered Woodruff Park, marchers chanted and yelled slogans. As the exchange became more heated, protesters drowned out the Park celebration speakers, surrounding the podium and disrupting the event. The newspaper images were of homeless men screaming and yelling over the speeches of assembled dignitaries.

The march and the disruption of the Woodruff Park event did not have the intended consequence. Jim Beatty reflecting on the event several years later referred to the protest as a "\$100 million mistake." While it served to embarrass city officials, it also starkly illustrated the difference in the priorities and approaches to changes. The protest and the ensuing controversy also served to crystallize the frustration of city leaders with the group charged with coordinating the response to homelessness in the city. Columnist Cynthia Tucker wrote:

Though the renovation comes at a time when the park has been abandoned by people sick of being harassed by the homeless people and drunks who populate it, homeless advocates have the gall to suggest its closing is a direct assault on the rights of the

homeless....Homeless advocates have become extremists whose rantings only serve to harden the hearts of people who should be their allies. (Tucker 1994: A17)

By an objective standard, the increasingly confrontational strategy undertaken by the Task Force during the period was a risky one. Their primary sources of financial support were federal, city and county funds, and the Task Force's increasing militancy does not appear to have taken into account the vulnerability of their resource base. In any case, the Task Force did not moderate its militant voice to protect its funding base.

*The 1995 SuperNOFA: the frame imposed*⁵⁹

Despite the increasing criticism of "homeless advocates" voiced by business leaders and writers in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the Task Force continued to successfully position itself as the central and legitimate coordinating body on issues related to homelessness in the city. HUD awarded the Task Force grants of \$997,500 in both 1994 and 1995. The 1994 grant was used to develop "a system to combat homelessness," while the 1995 grant was for "aggressive outreach and assistance to help homeless persons most affected by the harsh winter weather." (HUD audit 1998: 1)

Despite the fragmented nature of the movement and simmering framing differences with the Task Force for the Homeless, changes in how the U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) distributed funds for homeless services provided the Task Force the opportunity to assume a dominant role in shaping homeless services in the Metropolitan Atlanta region.

In the early 1990's, efforts to improve the utilization of federal funds for homelessness focused on the problem of coordination. The McKinney Act passed in 1987 had provided for a

⁵⁹ NOFA means Notice of Fund Availability and the formal way the federal government announces programs.

hodgepodge of grants programs and funding streams. In part this was deliberate strategy and reflected concern by the bill's authors that federal agencies and local governments were not doing enough to address the needs of homeless persons who already fell within their purview. The grant programs reflected the desire to mobilize existing federal programs rather than create new ones. By the early 1990's, a principal critique was that lack of coordination plagued efforts to end homelessness. Groups on many levels were receiving both private and public funds, but were failing to effectively reduce homelessness. To address this concern, the Department of Housing and Urban Development required local and state governments develop a single integrated plan for Fiscal Year 1995 funding applications. The development and submission of a "consolidated plan" was now required to receive the entitlement grants which local governments had previously relied on to fund their own programs and grants to nonprofits. Two of the federal programs falling under these requirements were the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG). Both these programs were important funding sources for the nonprofit and city sheltering and service system. For the federal fiscal year 1995, HUD required that in Atlanta three jurisdictions (the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County) submit a single "consolidated" application for McKinney-Veto Homeless Assistance Grants. HUD encouraged the three central jurisdictions to collaborate with outlying metro counties and develop a regional approach to homelessness.

The goal of the new "consolidated" planning process was to encourage governments and nonprofits to work in a coordinated, systematic way to address homelessness. At the behest of homeless advocates, the 1987 McKinney-Veto Act had contained the requirement that local homeless coalitions be formed. The prior system of providing multiple streams of funding had failed to encourage local planning and had resulted in fragmented, decentralized systems in most

jurisdictions. Homeless service organizations had become adept at submitting funding proposals to support their individual projects, but these projects were not coordinated in a systematic manner. The new directive from HUD now tied funding, which had become essential to organizational survival, to coordinated planning.

Along with the consolidated plan concept that was presented as a condition to receive federal funds, HUD also required local jurisdictions to develop a “Continuum of Care” (CoC). CoC was a planning concept that encouraged and required local groups to develop long-term solutions to the local problems of homelessness. In essence, the continuum of care required that a variety of housing and service options be developed to insure that homeless individuals and groups were able to move from less stable to more stable living arrangements.

In 1994 HUD, in an effort to increase coordination of services on the local level to the homeless, issued an opportunity to apply for funds. In previous years funds were allocated routinely to eligible jurisdictions through an entitlement allocation. The 1994 cycle was a competitive process in which local communities were required to submit their proposed plans with no guarantee of funding. The local HUD office in Atlanta advised the Metro Atlanta governments and nonprofit grantees that a coordinated regional proposal outlining a “continuum of care” would receive more favorable consideration, and, furthermore, that routine applications would be unlikely to receive funding.

The Task Force for the Homeless emerged as the only organization with the ability to coordinate such a plan in the short time before submission. No other entity was positioned, or willing, to assume the role as the lead grant recipient. Local government representatives acknowledged they would be unable to secure agreement from their respective leaders for a multi-county project in the time frame. The county and city governments were unable to take the

lead in HUD's homelessness grant process without extensive review by their elected leadership. In addition, the City of Atlanta, Fulton and DeKalb Counties had little history of successfully collaborating on social programs. These factors provided a political opening for the Task Force to play a central and dominant role in this crucial grant application process. The Task Force already had contractual relationships with the City of Atlanta, DeKalb County and Fulton County for provision of services for homeless people. In addition, the Task Force had cultivated its relationship with the national HUD office through the work of Anita Beaty with the National Coalition for the Homeless, so the national decision makers perceived it favorably.

Thus, the new application policy for federal funds moved the Task Force for the Homeless to center stage in terms of planning services for the homelessness. For the first time, the proposed collaboration linked the survival of nonprofit organizations and a variety of projects over a five county area to the Task Force. It was also a risk for the Task Force. While the Task Force had experience administering grants to multiple sub- recipients, the new grant was over 12 times larger and more complex than any they had previously undertaken.

Ultimately, the encouragement of HUD (and the implied threat of loss of funding) provided sufficient motivation for outlying metro jurisdictions to commit to the collaboration. The threat of losing funding created the impetus for beginning regional planning for homeless services. The SuperNOFA application involved five counties – Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Douglas, and the City of Atlanta. Working together, they designated the Metropolitan Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless as both the administrator of the grant and one of its 16 sub-recipients. The single application strategy was successful. On November 30, 1995, the Metropolitan Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless was awarded a three-year grant of \$12,451,233 to be administered under HUD's Supportive Housing Program. Under the grant,

the Task Force itself received \$561,766 to administer the grant and \$654,150 to provide counseling, training and resettlement assistance. Also included in the grant were funds for Progressive Redevelopment, Inc. to begin development of a “super-center” to provide a centralized intake and service center for homeless persons in Atlanta

For most service providers, the SuperNOFA coalition was a marriage of convenience, undertaken in order to insure they would continue to be funded. Accepting the Task Force as the administrator of the joint application appeared largely a matter of acceding to the regional HUD office’s guidance that only plans demonstrated coordinated planning were likely to receive funding. The federal government and its local office essentially imposed the frame of collaboration. The process was undertaken as it provided the opportunity to receive funds, under the nominal coordination of the Task Force.

Conflicts began to emerge almost immediately between the Task Force and some of its sub-recipients. There appear to have been two central problems. The first had to do with framing the services to be offered, the second with administration of the grants.

According to grantees, the Task Force interpreted its responsibility as administrator of the grant and fiscal agent as an opening to assert its framing of homelessness on them. The Task Force sought to use its new status to provide greater oversight to the work of its subcontractors. Sub-recipients complained the Task Force was demanding they rewrite their proposed programs to be in line with the Task Force’s priorities and analysis. The Task Force, in turn, framed their review as exercising their coordinating function and showing due diligence with fiscal accounting. Some recipients expressed frustration over the Task Force’s attempt to impose its frame on their services. Essentially, service providers argued that the Task Force was serving as an impediment to providing services through its exercise of veto power. Agencies that had

participated in creating the network resisted by first protesting to the Task Force and then to the local HUD over what they regarded as overly intrusive management of their internal operations. For instance, MUST ministries, a Cobb County based nonprofit, was the first of the partners to protest the Task Force's demands they turn over detailed budgets and donor list. The Metro Furniture Bank complained that its survival was threatened by the Task Force's failure to reimburse requests for funds provided by the grant.

In part, the urgency of the appeals to HUD can be attributed to the second complaint; agencies staked their continued existence on grant funds and were not receiving timely reimbursement for their costs. They asserted that the Task Force delayed payments. To some extent the problem was an issue of cash flow; the Task Force itself was always operating with limited cash reserves. Whether the problem was one of deliberately seeking to manipulate the action of regional agencies, asserting of a frame, or other problems is unclear, but the cumulative effect was resistance and frustration.

Relationships between the Task Force and its subrecipients continued to deteriorate. SuperNOFA subrecipients including Cobb Family Resources, the Legal Clinic for the Homeless, and the Metro Atlanta Furniture Bank as well as others complained first to the Task Force. After failing to find relief, they appealed to HUD requesting grants be separated from the Task Force and administered directly by HUD, which was ultimately granted. Despite these complaints, a HUD audit conducted in December 1996 found the Task Force's accounting system generally acceptable and suggested some modifications.

THE ALTERNATIVE COALITION: THE HOMELESS ACTION GROUP (HAG)

In 1995, Atlanta city councilwoman Debi Starnes⁶⁰ convened the Homeless Action Group (HAG). HAG, unlike the Task Force, primarily served as a meeting place for service providers and government leaders to discuss concrete problems. In many ways, HAG represented the nonprofit providers of homeless service, and they constituted the entrepreneurial wing of the homeless movement. The organizations participating had little interest in the civil rights agenda and great interest in creating programs that addressed the rehabilitation needs of the homeless. In their view, homelessness was primarily caused by disability of several kinds. HAG primarily viewed homelessness as a problem of service delivery. While acknowledging the complex origins of the problem, their emphasis was on developing practical programs that made a difference.

Part of the explanation for HAG's rapid expansion was the growing need for coordination within the frame of disability. As the Task Force did not embrace this frame, it resulted in withdrawal and fragmentation. Woody Bartlett of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta described the situation this way:

The homeless effort [involved] a variety of agencies, all of which were doing their thing and supposedly coordinated by the Task Force for the Homeless. Joanna Adams and Bill Bolling had started the Task Force under the sponsorship of the Christian Council, and then when they hired Anita and Jim as their directors they found themselves out on the street, so we were ostensibly coordinated. [The Beatys] were more interested in the Washington, D.C. model [of Mitch Snyder] and his method of dealing with homelessness so it was difficult to get much coordination, so it ended up being a fractured movement. (Bartlett interview)

HAG adopted a loose form of informal coordination through discussion. The group operated without formal organizational structure, staff or budget. HAG positioned itself as the

⁶⁰ Starnes is a community psychologist as well. . For Starnes' view of her contribution see Starnes (2004).

practical response to problems of homelessness in Atlanta, which involved balancing the interests of the city's political and economic leaders with the need to develop a coordinated service system to respond to homelessness. HAG had the advantage of strong political connections. Starnes used her position as a member of the Atlanta City Council and her close alliance with the Mayor to bring together both public, and private entities to coordinate and inform themselves on actions regarding homelessness. In a very short period, HAG grew to include over 100 groups from across metro Atlanta.

The 1996 SuperNOFA Process

In 1996, frustration with the Task Force's grant performance provided Starnes and HAG the opening to assert its framing over the 1996 SuperNOFA planning process. As in the previous year, both local and national HUD officials indicated an expectation for a single consolidated plan and indicated it was unlikely to fund jurisdictions unable to produce such a plan.

The Task Force, too, had an interest in securing these federal funds, and participated, reluctantly, with HAG in the planning process. In April of 1996, the Atlanta City Council, over the objections of the Task Force and other injustice frame advocates, approved legislation introduced by Starnes that tightened laws restricting access to parking lots. For the Task Force, continuing to coordinate with a group that so violated its framing of the problem of homelessness was intolerable and they abruptly withdrew from the planning process.

Given the high stakes of the planning and NOFA process, the Task Force's withdrawal and its threat to submit a separate application for funding, further threatened the funding of homeless serving nonprofits. The Task Force's departure provoked a storm of public criticism. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* published an editorial entitled "Homeless Coalition Imperiled

by One Activist's Agenda" (Tucker 1996:A14). A homeless service provider active with HAG complained that the Task Force actions ultimately threatened the homeless.

Task Force for the Homeless Director Anita Beaty and Chairman Bob Cramer know their last minute abandonment of a coalition of Fulton, Cobb, DeKalb and Gwinnett counties and the City of Atlanta to file their own application for federal homeless funding may result in no money for any metro Atlanta homeless program. They know this because Beaty heard Andrew Cuomo, Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary, tell 150 of us exactly that in a teleconference 2 ½ months ago.

Its decision to risk all of metro Atlanta's 1996 federal homeless funding is surely about power. Homeless people, with little power and wealth, will lose. (Burns 1996: A20)

The Task Force's withdrawal also highlighted the divisions within the movement over how homelessness should be framed. The director of Samaritan House wrote:

Tucker ...highlighted what has been a dirty little secret for several years, one many service providers have been living with in quiet frustration; Beaty has alienated many key leaders and agencies with her uncompromising attitude and determination to be the one person who frames issues surrounding homelessness.

Until HUD holds Beaty accountable, why should she change? All I know is that I am tired and exhausted from fighting and arguing. I will retreat to my corner, do good work and come out when the climate changes. (Reuter 1998:A20)

Reuter reveals both the fragmented nature of the movement at this time and the differences in framing within the movement. In addition, he highlights the "cost" to a movement that fails to create a unifying frame, "fighting and arguing," and its consequence – "retreat to my corner."

Despite the panic among service providers following the withdrawal of the Task Force, both the plan developed through HAG and the project submitted by the Task Force received funding. However, HUD informed Atlanta recipients that the grant amount was less than it would have been with a single proposal.

Both the 1995 and 1996 SuperNOFA proposals included the creation of a "one-stop shop," a centralized facility to assist homeless individuals. The 1995 proposal was to involve a collaborative arrangement between a nonprofit developer PRI and the Task Force for the

Homeless. Differing expectations and views on the facility and more importantly, its location resulted in the PRI withdrawing from 1995 and proposing an identical project in the 1996 cycle. The result was two “one stop shop” projects with the same stated goal but fundamentally different framing. I will examine this controversy in the next section.

The One-Stop Shop

The different frames employed by the Homeless Action Group and the Task Force for the Homeless came into sharp contrast over their competing visions of a “one-stop shop.” The two groups developed starkly different visions and priorities that highlight the internal conflicts of the movement, and their differing approaches to downtown business and neighborhood concerns.

A central component of the 1995 Supernova coordinated by the Task Force for the Homeless was the idea of creating a central service and intake facility colloquially known as the “one-stop shop.” The idea of a comprehensive service center for the homeless had been discussed since the early 1980’s.⁶¹ Lacking such a facility, St. Luke’s Episcopate’s Community Kitchen provided a variety of services in a central location (health clinic, job referral, soup kitchen, mail drop, and mental health services). St. Luke’s internal consideration of reducing the size and scope of the Community Kitchen gave greater urgency to the creation of a dedicated service center for the homeless. Progressive Redevelopment Inc., the nonprofit developer who built Welcome House and was completing the Imperial Hotel renovation, was selected as the

⁶¹ The Depression era City Relief Center was probably the earliest version of the one-stop shop, although there is no indication the contemporary movement was aware of this institution. Research Atlanta’s *Impact* report (1984) recommended either the creation such a facility or adding services to the Downtown Day Labor Center and Samaritan House to provide similar services, but the suggestion was not funded. City officials approached Central Atlanta Progress in 1990 soliciting their assistance to create a comprehensive center, but CAP’s desire to locate the center outside the central city was rebuffed by advocates. St. Luke’s Episcopal’s Community Kitchen also served this function by providing food, medical assistance, mail services and job referral.

developer for the new facility. PRI was budgeted to receive \$1.3 million from HUD's Supportive Housing Program to develop the center.

A building immediately adjacent to the St. Luke's Episcopal Church and owned by the church became available when the Atlanta Ballet moved to another location. Bruce Gunter, CEO of PRI and a member of the church secured an option from the church in October 1995 to purchase the building for the new center. Located at the corner of Peachtree and Pine Streets, the building had the advantage of being adjacent to the familiar St. Luke's services, near public transportation and close to other services used by Atlanta's homeless.

Initially, Gunter and Beatty worked closely together to develop plans for the site. As had been the case with Welcome House, upon being awarded the development grant, PRI sought to gain control over the site by securing funds to purchase the Peachtree and Pine building. Gunter and Beatty envisioned creating a safe space in which homeless individuals and families could receive food, shelter referrals, legal assistance, counseling and a full range of services. A small residential space was envisioned with the remainder serving as day shelter and services (Harris 1996).

The Task Force succeeded in identifying a donor to purchase the building for the facility and Gunter signed over his option to the Task Force. In January of 1997, the Ward law Fund purchased the Peachtree and Pine Facility from St. Luke's Episcopal Church and turned it over to the Task Force for the Homeless. At this point however, PRI became convinced that "the community would not accept a facility there" and it withdrew from the project (ROC 2002). PRI assumed that the development money granted from HUD could be transferred to another site and they petitioned HUD for this change. Instead, HUD transferred the funds to the Task Force as

they now owned the property and were prepared to move forward with the project (Task Force nod.)

The Task Force believed that Gunter (head of PRI) was unwilling to challenge downtown business interests and to support the rights of the homeless to be present downtown. Jim Beatty provided this assessment.

One answer is enough! LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION! Bruce “safe point of light” Gunter sidled up to Anita Beaty years ago in order to deliver the building to developers. He couldn’t deliver; he has been an enemy ever since. The Task Force has been telling the truth about homeless people since its inception. (Beaty 2009)

For both the Task Force and for Gunter, the Peachtree and Pine facility represented important framing issues. For Gunter, giving up on the site was a political calculation based on his assessment that the community support needed for the project to succeed was absent. For Beaty, securing the facility was an important statement about the rights of homeless persons to be in the downtown area. A “one-stop-shop” at Peachtree and Pine had the potential to create a safe haven for the homeless in the midst of a business dominated space.

Despite having lost HUD development funding, the next funding cycle provided another opportunity for PRI. The disenchantment with the Task Force’s leadership of the 1995 SuperNOFA led to the creation of a new group of players, including: HAG, the City of Atlanta, and Fulton County which also saw the need for a centralized service facility. With their support, PRI submitted another super-center proposal in the 1996 SuperNOFA application. HUD subsequently funded this new proposal with its accompanying package of services.

By the beginning of 1997, the City of Atlanta had two different groups of homeless service providers, both funded by HUD and working to implement projects, claiming to be the centralized “one-stop” service facility for the city’s homeless. Gunter’s alliance with HAG was fruitful. Over the next year Gunter and his allies from HAG raised almost \$2 million in grant

funds, including \$300,000 from the City of Atlanta for development of the new center and additional funds were raised for its initial operation (Ezzard 1997).

PRI successfully mobilized resources from the community to support the project concept, but were unable to locate an acceptable site. Central Atlanta Progress, alarmed by the prospect of a facility at Peachtree and Pine, supported the HAG sponsored project and promised assistance finding a suitable site (acceptable to the business community). However, despite the commitment of Debi Starnes, the city government and downtown business community, locating a suitable site took almost four years. Business leaders and PRI found they faced the same community opposition as other shelter providers had faced. For business leaders, a location outside the Central Business District was the only acceptable option. Outside the district, neighborhood groups mobilized to challenge these plans.

Eventually, PRI created a partnership with Reverend Jim Milner's Community Concerns Ministry located on Decatur Street, southeast of the city center. Milner's Odyssey III project was a small outreach program his church had operated since 1988 near a public housing project.⁶² Odyssey III owned the small complex of warehouse buildings. From one renovated warehouse Odyssey III provided a daily soup kitchen, a counseling center and a few transitional shelter beds. Milner agreed to let PRI purchase several of the unused warehouses. The new project, now called the ROCK (Resource Opportunity Center), began renovation in early 1999 at 302 Decatur Street. The architectural firm designing the ROCK facility described the site as "a secluded urban campus is located in two formerly vacant abandoned warehouse building" (Full Scale 2009:1).

⁶² Milner was active with Concerned Black Clergy and with the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta. Under Milner's leadership, his 300 member congregation of the Chapel of Christian Love were involved in a variety of ministries to the poor and homeless (Hiskey 1987).

While PRI and HAG were locating their site and gathering funds for their program, the Task Force for the Homeless proceeded to implement their plans. Thanks to the Wardlaw Fund, the Task Force for the Homeless owned outright a substantial facility in a central location. They estimated an additional \$5 million was needed to develop their operation. They gathered allies including Mayor Andrew Young, State Representative Tyrone Brooks and Representative John Lewis to press their case and appeal for funds. The Task Force hired the city's former Housing Director (Scott Carlson) to coordinate development efforts. Despite these influential advocates, officials at the city level, working with Starnes and CAP, controlled the permitting power to impede the Task Force's plans. The city's planning commissioner and Debi Starnes, a city council member, opposed the Task Force's plan.

At the same time the Task Force was attempting to develop its one stop shop, the city was reducing its inventory of free shelter beds. The city's program for housing single men at the Milton Avenue Shelter closed. In addition, shelter for women and children became increasingly difficult to find. The Task Force had the responsibility of placing homeless individuals in shelter. Due to the lack of shelter space, the Task Force decided to use the resources at their disposal and it redefined the Peachtree and Pine concept to include the provision of emergency shelter for those the homeless.

In many ways, the plan put forward by the Task Force was similar to the shelter that had been operated by Mitch Snyder's Community for Creative Nonviolence in Washington, D.C. - a large shelter providing sufficient space for a variety of different groups to be sheltered. Atlanta City officials strongly opposed these plans. The City's Planning Commissioner Dobbins complained "the effort to mix men and add a Safe Haven [for the mentally ill] is not something

that is workable” (Turner 1998:B1). Beaty argued that the concept of a one-stop shop, “central outreach and intake service” required that provisions be made for all who need assistance.

In her role as a member of the city council, Debi Starnes supported the City’s Planning Director by implementing legislation prohibiting housing women and children in the same facility as single men. Starnes expressed concern that such a combination was dangerous. As a compromise, the city offered to approve the needed permits if the Task Force limited its night shelter program to women and children. City officials contended shelter for this population was the greatest in need. The Task Force declined this, arguing that single men were the largest portion of the homeless population and faced the greatest need. In the standoff that ensued, the Task Force permitted women and children to sleep in their waiting room and challenged the city to find them shelter.

Unlike the Center at Peachtree and Pine, the ROCK did not provide emergency shelter beds. ROCK provided assessment and referral to shelter. Limited transitional housing was available for a maximum of 32 individuals. The HAG network strongly supported the ROCK program being prepared by PRI. The ROCK approach was touted as the definitive solution to homelessness. Proponents argued that the ROCK would provide effective services that would attract the homeless away from the Central Business District. As envisioned in their plans, the ROCK would provide a new kind of collaboration for the organizations no longer sharing the Task Force’s frame. Starnes, the convener of the HAG, was blunt in her assessment:

If Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless was doing a good job of intake and coordination of services, and if they had the confidence of all the parties involved in advocating for the homeless, then there would be no need for a Decatur Street [one-stop shop]. It is true, basically we're having to start over with different agencies, a different approach and a new computer system. But we're building in a lot of collaboration and cooperation from the very beginning. (Byrd 1999:JD7)

The ROCK opened in June of 1999. In contrast with generally negative coverage of the Center at Peachtree & Pine, the ROCK's opening received an enthusiastic welcome by Central Atlanta Progress, HAG, and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (Byrd 1999, Ezzard 1997; Suggs 1999; Campbell 2000). Newspaper coverage emphasized that the new facility provided a "bridge to self-reliance" (Suggs 1999), in contrast with the Task Force's facility.

The ROCK as developed by PRI had required a complex series of grants to develop and to fund. The ROCK itself primarily provided a facility for other organizations to deliver their services and recruit participants in their programs, but the site's location never succeeded in drawing large numbers of homeless persons away from the city center. In part, this was due to the relatively small programs offering their services through the ROCK. The program was too small, too isolated and provided too few services to achieve its stated purposes. As one example, the Samaritan House employment program only provided spaces for 20 individuals at a time. In addition, the ROCK opened at a time when shelter spaces were being reduced, and since the ROCK did not provide shelter, it failed to meet the survival needs of homeless individuals. After two years of operation, PRI determined that the ROCK was not sufficiently funded to continue operations. The housing component was transferred to another program and the facilities were turned over to Milner's Community Concerns for their continued program.

De-legitimizing the Task Force I: the 1998 HUD audit

Complaints by the Task Force's sub-recipients led the local HUD office to call for an audit of the Task Force's management of the grant. The subsequent audit and reporting on it by local print media highlighted problems with administration of the grant (Cooper 1998). The Task Force mounted an aggressive defense of its position, drawing on its national and local political contacts as well its local supporters in the nonprofit and religious community.

Central to the Task Force's framing of the audit was the assertion that the criticism was primarily a political attack for its advocacy for homeless people, while the actual audit findings were relatively small accounting matters. Task Force Chairman Bob Cramer viewed this in political terms. "We consider the local HUD Audit Report released last week on the Task Force for the Homeless another outrageous political attack to prevent the task force from going forward with its long-range plans for a facility for homeless services on Peachtree Street" (Cramer 1998).

The executive director of Samaritan House complained the Task Force was "out of touch":

As director of an agency that receives HUD funds channeled through the Task Force for the homeless, I have one big question: What took the Department of Housing and Urban Development so long to audit the (mis)management of HUD Money?

We have been complaining for years about the very issues – delayed reimbursements, mismanagement, poor record-keeping – that the HUD audit revealed only now. An audit years ago would have saved us a lot of grief.

The dismissal of the audit findings as "very, very nitpicky" by Task Force board president Robert Cramer only reveals how out of touch the Task Force is with the social service community's deep anger and frustration with the situation. The problems we have experienced with the task force has cost us lots of time and money, both of which would have been better spent working with homeless men and women in our community. (Reuter 1998:A11)

For the Task Force, the audit, or more importantly, the use of the audit by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, was a political attack. Diagnostically, they traced the roots of the attack to Atlanta's business community, specifically, Central Atlanta Progress (CAP).

It was CAP that lobbied for the misnamed "quality of life ordinances" that have the sole purpose of criminalizing the homeless. Now hundreds of innocent people are in jail, an important coalition of social-service providers that has served this community has been splintered and homelessness is growing faster than ever. (Cramer 1998:A11)

1998 CREATION OF THE TRI-JURISDICTIONAL COLLABORATIVE FOR CONTINUUM OF CARE (TRI-J)

HAG's decision not to institutionalize itself as a formal organization provided it with great flexibility and invited wider participation, but it did not create the legal entity that could

apply for and receive funds. In 1998, Fulton and DeKalb Counties, the City of Atlanta and many of the non-governmental service providers who participated in HAG reorganized themselves as the Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative. Participants in the new “Tri-J” included church, business, local governments, nonprofit organizations and a variety of individuals. Over the next several years, the Tri-J expanded to include over 150 organizations and Tri-J had formal responsibility for the Continuum of Care and submission of the HUD grant process (Weinstein & Clower 2004).

Delegitimizing the Task Force II: Counting the homeless

The Task Force for the Homeless in its role as coordinator of the homeless movement had begun collecting data on homelessness in the mid-1980’s. Early data was gathered by contacting shelters, later efforts focused on the shelter hotline and referral service they offered. Beginning in 1989, the Task Force had begun a 24-hour shelter hotline for the metropolitan Atlanta area. Staff would take telephone calls, gathering data from individual callers that were subsequently used to compile estimates of homelessness. Lacking other sources of information, the Task Force data became the official data. The Task Force regularly generated reports for public presentations, government officials and to provide support to nonprofits seeking funding.

There were challenges to the Task Force’s data. The Task Force did not collect personal identifying information from callers asking for shelter, but attempted to control for duplication in other ways. As a result, the reports they generated were summaries that represented the number of phone calls they received from people requesting shelter over time.

The idea of a new scientific census of the homeless had been discussed in the city for several years. HAG had promoted the need for such a survey during discussion of the 1996 SuperNOFA process (Geshwiler 1996). By 1998, the interest generated by the Homeless Action

Plan (HAP) process had generated sufficient interest. One of the key leaders of the HAP process describes it in the following way:

The thing I'm probably proudest of is someplace, we got a little bit of money from the three governments and commissioned Research Atlanta to do a homeless study and count, that was part of [the HAP process]. They looked at all the documentation they could find and inferred how many homeless. It was not a bad count. They said 11,000 [were homeless at any time] and 40,000 homeless over the course of the year. So we started having some numbers and percentages of how many were mentally ill, addicted, ... had an array of those things. (Bartlett interview)

For Bartlett and HAG, and the HAP process, the new study (Jaret & Adelman 1997) became the official numbers on which planners began to build their estimates. However, there were now two competing claims as to the number of homeless in Atlanta. Using these new estimates, Bartlett took action:

Meanwhile Anita had about five times that many in her estimates, and finally one time they put her estimate in the newspaper [the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*] and I just called them up, and said...why don't you take something a little more official you know and I sent them this thing and they used those numbers from then on. (Bartlett interview)

The estimates generated by the HAP process now became the population estimates that official sources and the media used. Effectively, Bartlett used the Research Atlanta data on homelessness to delegitimize the Task Force.

THE HOMELESS ACTION PLAN 1998

While HAG was a coordinating body and engaged informally in planning, it did not undertake a formal planning process. In 1997, Bartlett drafted a plan for review by HAG suggesting the creation of a series of working groups that would produce a "business plan" to develop project proposals. By this point, HAG was connecting with important leaders of business and government and Bartlett succeeded in securing F. Duanne Ackerman (BellSouth), Representative Jim Martin (Georgia House of Representatives) and others for a planning committee. Their first commitment was to develop a series of projects rather than engage in a

“classic” planning process. Over the course of the next year, by building on the HAG network, Bartlett and other leaders developed a series of working groups whose meetings were coordinated by the Atlanta Regional Commission. The central commitment of the planners was to view homelessness as a regional problem with the goal of expanding funding for projects rather than competing with current funding streams. As this political support for the planning project grew, additional important actors were drawn into the project. This included Charles Battle of Central Atlanta Progress and Anita Beaty of the Task Force for the Homeless.

The Atlanta Regional Commission released the *Homeless Action Plan: A Regional Approach for Addressing Homelessness* at the end of a eight month planning process (HAG/ARC 1998). The central tactical approach of the HAP plan was to use the regional approach as a way to attract private and state resources to bear on homelessness by providing specific, fundable projects.

The Homeless Action Plan was predicated on drawing both state and federal funds to support projects serving the region’s homeless population. According to Bartlett (interview), Republican ascendancy at the State and Federal level resulted in the eradication of funding streams on which the Action Plan had been predicated. The loss of Section 8 (rental subsidy programs) in particular, were the death knell for supportive housing programs. However, an alternate network of collaborative relationships had been created and the vision of a regional approach to homelessness involving business, nonprofit and religious communities in a formal manner had been articulated.

Conclusion

Over the last decade of the 20th century, advocates, service providers, city officials and the business community actively contended over different framings of homelessness. The

injustice frame of the Open Door Community and the Task Force for the Homeless promoted viewing homelessness through a lens of systemic inequity, race, and the lack of affordable housing. Using this framing, advocates confronted and successfully resisted business community initiatives to control public space. Advocates effectively used their disruptive potential to exploit the potent political opportunity provided by the city's bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics.

The political dynamics of the city changed after Atlanta won its Olympic bid. Social control measures were now framed as necessary for the city to “welcome the world.” Attempts by homeless advocates and neighborhood groups to resist the transformation of the city were unsuccessful.

Despite these setbacks, the 1995 SuperNOFA provided a powerful opportunity for the Task Force for the Homeless to assert its legitimacy as coordinator of the homeless movement. Its subsequent failure to effectively manage the complex grant and respond to the changing organizational field of non-profit organizations provided an opening for a new coalition to seize the dynamic. The new mission driven non-profits required the support of the community's institutional donors and the business community. Their results-driven mission was to make “effective” change in individuals and not primarily changing the social service delivery system. The strategic choice of the HAG not to institutionalize, like the Task Force's choices earlier, provided a broad-based forum, but failed to take advantage of the potential to create a system of service delivery. The HAP plan, while sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Commission and HAG, never had the political support implement its vision.

The Center at Peachtree & Pine and the ROCK articulated two alternative visions of how the homeless should receive assistance. The city government supported one and obstructed the

other, but the Task Force used its considerable political capital to hang on. In the end, it was the ROCK that failed to provide its promised services. What was planned to meet the visions of HAG's constituent agencies and business interests, failed to secure the support needed to maintain its effective existence.

CHAPTER 12: THE NEW HEGEMONY

The various efforts of the late 1990's were attempts to find an institutional vehicle and policy solutions that were politically feasible, financially viable, and acceptable to the business interests in the city (particularly those based in downtown Atlanta). The erosion of confidence in the Task Force led to the creation of HAG as a forum for discussions that successfully unified a number of previously disconnected groups. The 1996 SuperNOFA provided this network an opportunity for joint planning and funding. Despite the parallel initiatives of the Task Force and HAG, at the level of individual nonprofits there were many disparate efforts but no coordination and shrinking resources. While the business community had actively been undertaking a variety of initiatives for over a quarter of a century to remove the homeless poor from downtown, it continued to be frustrated by lack of visible success. Despite these many initiatives, homeless people remained for business a persistent irritant; their many initiatives to remove the homeless from downtown had been unsuccessful.

In November of 2002, Mayor Shirley Franklin asked United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta to develop a practical action plan to deal with homelessness. She asked that all current services be evaluated and fresh thinking brought to consider the best way forward. Franklin's charge to the United Way decisively reflected the new disability/responsibility frame that characterized an emerging plurality of the movement and was articulated through the HAG plan. This is evident in Mayor Franklin's thoughts about homeless people, expressed in a letter to the President of the United Way:

While many people see the homeless merely as an unwanted presence in our parks and streets, an ugly problem to be swept away, I believe that the homeless are people who should be treated with compassion and a sense of accountability. The homeless have a personal responsibility to overcome their current situation, and at the same time we have as a society an obligation to make sure that services are available to assist the homeless in making themselves self-reliant. (Franklin 2002)

Franklin provided the opportunity for United Way to bring its metropolitan Atlanta perspective, nonprofit social service network and corporate legitimacy to the development of policy recommendations to address homelessness metro wide. United Way took that challenge and seized the opportunity it provided to develop a regional plan for homelessness. It was a strategic choice for which United Way was well-positioned. United Way had a strong presence and legitimacy in the counties beyond the city center. In addition, the considerable devolvement of social safety net functions to nonprofit agencies had effectively made United Way through its member agencies, the leading social service provider for the Metropolitan region. Finally, the United Way's broad-based support from the business community insured that solutions the United Way developed would have the support of corporate interests with the ability to secure funding. As an indicator of this early corporate support, United Way received consulting assistance from Deloitte and Touche, an international consulting firm.

The mayor asked for United Way to convene a working group to formulate specific practical plans to address homelessness. As a first step, United Way established a 16 member Commission on Homelessness comprised of influential individuals representing the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The commission was chaired by a prominent retired attorney (Horace Sibley) and co-chaired by two prominent African American leaders - former Atlanta City Council member Myrtle Davis and Dr. Louis Sullivan, former President of the Morehouse School of Medicine.

With the resources of United Way and the consulting expertise of Deloitte and Touche, the Commission's study of homelessness in Atlanta was a disciplined and efficient process. Most notably, the removal of the Homeless Commission from the public sector insulated the

process from politics. It also insulated the process from democratic oversight.⁶³ The Commission reviewed previous plans as well as those of other cities.⁶⁴ A series of public hearings were held and comments elicited at which thirty-nine speakers presented their view on homelessness. In addition, United Way staff solicited feedback from service providers and homeless persons.

Early in the process, the Commission adopted the concept of a single centralized “one stop shop” – a location that would serve as an access point for most homeless services. Commission members and staff evaluated several buildings, including the Task Force’s Peachtree and Pine facility and Atlanta’s City Jail.⁶⁵ One member of the Commission championed the latter site and ultimately recommended it as the main center for homeless services. In presenting the rationale for their recommendation, the report cited the cost of renovating the facility as the critical factor determining the choice.

On March 24, 2003, the Commission presented to the Mayor its “Blueprint to End Homelessness in Atlanta in Ten Years”(Commission 2003).⁶⁶ The 120-page blueprint

⁶³ Jennifer Wolch refers to the process by which the state turns to the nonprofit sector to carry out its function “the Shadow State.” See (Wolch 1990).

⁶⁴ As an indicator of the framing of problem, the Task Force Working Paper 1987 was noticeably absent.

⁶⁵ The Atlanta Jail was formally known as the Atlanta Pre-Trial Detention Center. The facility was completed in 1983 and designed to hold 305 individuals awaiting trial. In 1988, city officials added an additional 216 beds without expanding the facility. The pre-trial detention center frequently exceeded even this expanded capacity (Blackmon 1992). The 1996 Summer Olympics created the political momentum to build a new \$50 million jail facility with an 880 capacity. The Pre-Trial center was unused after the Olympics. The decision to lease the facility for the Gateway Homeless Center prevented the city from realizing the revenue it could have earned by housing prisoners from other jurisdictions.

⁶⁶ The Ten Year Plan concept was introduced by the National Alliance to End Homeless in 2000. In their publication *A Plan, Not a Dream* (2000), the Alliance promoted a research based approach out of which four key strategies were distilled. The ten year concept was subsequently endorsed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. By 2007, 300 communities

recommended 29 new programs to address the emergency and long-term needs of the homeless.

The Mayor formally accepted the Commission's recommendations at a joint press conference on March 26. As an immediate initiative, the Mayor and the Commission adopted a "Seven-Point plan to jump start the long-term effort" (City of Atlanta 2003:1). The seven-point plan included:

1. Create a 24/7⁶⁷ Services Center to provide the homeless with access to showers, toilets, storage, telephones and emergency beds, and for the appropriate staffing to administer specialized services.
2. Expand a reunification program to assist those homeless persons who wish to be reunited with verified family or support systems.
3. Establish Hope House, to provide transitional housing program for 70 homeless men who are participating in a program leading to self-sufficiency.⁶⁸
4. Expand Foreclosure/Eviction Prevention to increase availability of funds for mortgage and rent assistance.
5. Establish Shelter-A-Family Community Initiative to select families from shelters and match them with local congregations or civic organizations for six months to a year. The congregation supports the family until the family reaches self-sufficiency.
6. Expand Community Court to provide an alternative to jail and as a gateway for homeless and addicted or mentally ill persons to receive the treatment services available to them.
7. Create Permanent Supportive Housing with on-site services (and supervision in addition to property management) for mentally ill, substance addicted, or dually diagnosed homeless adult individuals. (City of Atlanta 2003:1)

The centerpiece of this new initiative was the creation of 24/7 Services Center that would provide comprehensive services to the region's homeless. The Commission envisioned the facility providing shelter and transitional housing for 300 persons and "gateway" into the service system. As indicated above, the Commission formally recommended that United Way lease and renovate from the City of Atlanta the vacant city jail [pretrial detention center] at Garnett and

had undertaken initiatives to end homelessness and 180 communities had created formal 10 year plans (National Alliance 2000; 2007).

⁶⁷ 24 hours a day, 7 day a week.

⁶⁸ After great difficulty finding a location, Hope House opened in March of 2005. It was located two blocks south of City Hall on at the corner of Washington Street and Memorial Drive. The 70 homeless men were housed in "dorm-style" rooms and provided addiction program and job assistance. The city leased the land and the Homeless Commission raised the funds to establish the facility (Tagami 2005:B2).

Pryor Street (Schneider 2003). Perhaps the most significant elements of this proposal were the commitments by United Way to first, raise funds for, and supervise the renovation of the jail, and second, assume the administrative control and ongoing support of the new center.

The Commission envisioned the new Gateway Center serving as the central intake facility for Atlanta's homeless. The Commission attempted to present the Gateway as building upon the previous work of the Task Force for the Homeless. In their letter of transmittal to Mayor Franklin, Mark O'Connell, President of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta and Horace Sibley, Chair of the Commission, sought to both praise the Task Force for the Homeless and redefine its position in the new service system. They framed the Task Force's conversion of the Center at Peachtree and Pine from a service center into an overflow shelter as a response to an emergency need for shelter:

Because our society has not provided sufficient housing, some years ago, the leaders of the Center, in a departure from their original mission, decided to provide overflow shelter so as "leave no one outside." As the homeless population grew, this policy resulted in hundreds of men depending on that Center for shelter each night. This large number has strained the staff and other resources of the Center with the result that the residents of that Center are not receiving the full range of assistance they need, the Center has been unable to achieve its original mission, and significant friction has developed between the City and the neighborhood. (Commission 2003:2)

Sibley and O'Connell praised the Task Force for the undertaking their provision of overflow shelter and positioned the Gateway Center as a means for the Task Force to

fulfill more fully its original mission as the operator of the Homeless Hotline, a Resource Center and a provider of transitional housing, transportation and outreach. We support and recommend that the City and community support the Center at Peachtree & Pine and the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless for those purposes. (Commission 2003:2)

The Gateway Center, like the ROCK seven years previously, was promoted as the new great hope for downtown. Atlanta's City Council quickly approved a complicated leasing

arrangement that distanced the city from the actual operation of the facility. The city leased the jail to the Downtown Development Authority, which subsequently leased it to United Way, which in turn subcontracted the actual operation of the center to an established manager. United Way led the fundraising campaign with an initial fundraising goal of \$5 million for renovation and an additional \$1.7 million annually to operate. The Commission optimistically projected that the center could be renovated and in operation by December 2003. United Way faced greater difficulty raising private and corporate funds than it had anticipated.

While the Homeless Commission was engaged in its work, the Mayor also actively raised the profile of homelessness as one of the practical issues needing the city's attention in order to move forward. Franklin had served as a senior member of the city bureaucracy for over 20 years and knew the full range of homeless actors. In a series of speeches and interviews, the Mayor discussed a personal connection to homelessness. In garnering support for the homeless initiative in public presentations and background articles in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, she shared her memories of her father's experience with alcoholism and homelessness. Franklin's personal experience served to buttress her claims of both being sympathetic to the homeless and her personal knowledge of the need for rehabilitation. As a tale of sin and redemption, the Mayor's story provided a potent counter-narrative to the advocates who claimed she did not understand homelessness (Tagami 2001:A1).

Reactions to the Mayor's personal revelation were generally positive. Newspaper stories and editorial commentary lauded the Mayor's personal courage sharing her troubled childhood and her willingness to make homelessness a priority for her administration. Bill Bolling praised Franklin for her personal commitment to the issue. Prominent injustice advocates viewed the Mayor's story with skepticism. Beaty told news reporters Franklin's use of personal narrative

was a “gimmick to convince the public that she has the best interests of homeless people at heart, but that’s not borne out by her policies” (Tagami 2005:A1).

With planning for the new service center underway, the Mayor, working with CAP and Georgia State University coordinated a new campaign to “clean-up” downtown, placing special emphasis on Woodruff Park. Beginning in June of 2003, the “100 day” initiative included both public and private efforts, such as deploying additional police, installing bike racks, steam cleaning sidewalks, cleaning up Woodruff Park and enforcing quality of life ordinances. In the campaign, Woodruff Park was again highlighted as the symbolic center of downtown. The central goal of the campaign was to create a city center that was “full of life” (Saporta 2003: E1).

The 100-day initiative included efforts to discourage religious groups from distributing food to the homeless in Woodruff Park. While Georgia State University police had been discouraging such handouts the previous year, the weight of city government now supported the efforts. On July 11, Franklin issued an executive order prohibiting feeding in city parks. The city attempted to frame the problem of feeding the homeless as one of health. The city claimed the park had a rat problem and that feeding resulted in litter. But in restricting food distribution, the city claimed it was merely following the Fulton County Health Code. As Franklin defended the new policy “public food distribution causes a safety problem related to health, litter and traffic – and it also violates the Fulton County health code (City of Atlanta 2003, Schneider 2003: A1).

Horace Sibley, Chair of the Homeless Commission supported the Mayor’s executive order, describing it as both “balanced and compassionate. It upholds a strong public interest in health and safety” (City of Atlanta 2003). The new order directed those wishing to feed the

homeless to work with eight approved homeless service providers who would provide the actual food distribution.

The combination of the Gateway Center and the Woodruff Park 100 day initiative demonstrate the new approach to homelessness. The city, nonprofits, and business coordinated their effort to remove the visible homeless from downtown. This was framed in terms of cleaning up downtown, adherence to law and serving the homeless “effectively.”

In January of 2005, Shirley Franklin delivered her annual State of the City address. Her administration’s response to homelessness and the public-private partnership making it possible provided the focal point of her address.

We stand on the brink of being able to eliminate homelessness as we know it in Atlanta, and the centerpiece of that effort, the Gateway Center, has been largely privately funded. But that money would never have been raised had we not done the necessary and the possible, United Way and [others] wouldn’t have been attracted. (Franklin 2005)

On July 27, 2005, the Gateway Center opened (Hadley 2005). The Union Mission was persuaded by the United Way and business leaders to serve as the operator of the Gateway (Commission 2003).⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, a prominent Atlanta attorney declared that homelessness as a social problem was solved in the city of Atlanta. By this he did not mean that all the homeless were no longer visible, but that the institutional mechanisms were in place to end homelessness.

On August 16, 2005, the City Council of Atlanta voted 12-3 to approve a commercial solicitation ordinance prohibiting panhandling in most of downtown Atlanta. Like similar hearings in the City Council chambers, many of the same supporters and opponents were lined

⁶⁹ The Mission’s management of the Gateway required that it collaborate with a host of other nonprofit agencies. While the Union Mission had considerable experience operating its own large shelter and rehabilitation programs it had little experience collaborating with other groups. The clash of cultures that ensued resulted in the creation a new organization to assume management (Boyd interview).

up to speak. Over 200 attended the raucous session. Central Atlanta Progress, the Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association, and even Georgia Aquarium funder Bernie Marcus supported the ordinance (Tharpe & Tagami 2005). Opposing the ordinance were the Open Door Community, Concerned Black Clergy, the Rainbow Coalition, the Task Force for the Homeless, and others (Tagami and Suggs 2005).

Conclusion

The creation of the Regional Commission on Homelessness and the opening of the Gateway Center have not proved to be the panacea promised, but their establishment nonetheless provides a pivotal moment at which to end this case study. Homelessness has continued to be a problem for the city. The visible poor continue to be a presence on the streets of downtown Atlanta. The Task Force for the Homeless, to the chagrin of business and political leaders, continues to maintain its large shelter in downtown Atlanta at Peachtree and Pine Streets.

In this and the previous chapter I have traced through the lens of framing how the movement changed as the century turned. In 1990, the movement had a single organization, which claimed to represent and coordinate the largely volunteer network. While there were substantive changes in framing beginning to emerge, these were largely isolated in individual projects. As the decade progressed, however, the “rights agenda” of the Task Force was increasingly in conflict with the “services orientation” of the emerging organizations trying to help the homeless. In addition, declining public tolerance for homelessness reduced the credibility and resonance of the rights agenda. At the same time, the volunteer run shelter network was beginning to evaporate. Churches that had provided the backbone of the shelter system for many years moved on to other projects. A Catholic priest in the West End was unapologetic in his church’s closure of its shelter, saying, “We’ve paid our dues,” while at the

same time mentioning his church still provided a free lunch for community members (McInerney 1990). In their place, a new generation of mission driven non-profits arose claiming to make “effective” changes in the lives of homeless individuals. These new groups embraced new frames, new strategies, and new organizational forms, very different from the first shelters. The result was a fundamental tension.

As I have shown, those groups holding a rights/injustice frame ultimately lost credibility with this emergent system through a combination of frame imposition that served to generate resistance and fiscal problems that threatened organizational survival. The old agents of framing lost credibility, their frames no longer resonated.

Increasingly the state and business forged “partnerships” with the organized nonprofit community to address homelessness. The reduction in available funds for social services increasingly resulted in both the state and nonprofit providers turning to business interests to secure their support and donations. The business community also changed its approach in this final period. After decades of primarily pursuing a social control strategy, they came to embrace and support an approach that also included “effective” programs of change as the necessary price for securing the social control they desired.

CHAPTER 13 CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF FRAMES

In the Bible, the Hebrew prophets established the standard for judging “the morality of a nation: How do you treat the powerless? The orphan? The widow? Those who have no ability to pay you back?” (Carter 2009:36). How do you treat the stranger? Is the stranger someone to be run off, or the guest to be taken in? Communities of faith and governmental bodies continue to be tested by this standard. The city of Atlanta in the 20th century was no exception.

The focus of this case study has been the organized responses to homelessness in Atlanta, Georgia over the course of the 20th century. During this time, varied casts of individuals and groups mobilized to address the problem posed by the visible poor on the streets of Atlanta. Throughout the century, religious groups were at the forefront of this response, serving variously as agents of social control and prophets calling for justice. As I have shown, how religious groups framed homelessness varied widely and, in turn, these framings generated dramatically different responses.

The initiatives of religious groups (and, to a lesser degree, nonprofit organizations) took place within a political environment dominated by persistent and durably cohesive political-economic elites. These elites actively pursued policies to achieve their vision of a particular kind of city. Within this vision, the homeless poor posed one of many “threats” to a economically vibrant, beautiful, and safe city. These elites responded aggressively to the perceived dangers of disorder posed by the visible poor. The primary management tools were campaigns of social control, including the aggressive use of vagrancy statutes, the prohibition of begging and the control of public spaces.

During most of this period, the religious community endorsed these campaigns of social control and situated their ameliorative efforts comfortably within this context. Like the city’s

economic and political leaders, religious groups viewed the visible poor as dangerous to the moral order. Religion provided a means to salvation. The visible poor were framed as fallen sinners who could be redeemed through saving experiences and programs of working out redemption.

Breaking away from that approach, the early innovators of the modern movement drew on the civil rights movement, changing racial politics, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker tradition to craft their understanding of the visible poor. Drawing on these sources, the second wave of religious response created alternative approaches that included challenging social control as the appropriate response to homelessness.

The Utility of Frame Theory: Frames as Method of Analysis

The primary theoretical lens for this study is framing theory, but I have also drawn from resource mobilization and political opportunity theorists to enrich my reading of the movement. Together the three sets of lenses provide a complex explanation of the ability of individuals and organizations to mobilize and shape collective responses to the visible poor.

I translated Snow and Benford's (2000) theoretical specification of the three framing tasks into an analytical tool that I used to examine shifts in framing by the city's religious and political leaders over 20th century. Through close examination of the writing and statements of movement and business leaders, I disentangled the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational elements as they were articulated at different periods. This untangling process provides the opportunity to compare and contrast the trend of the movement over time. By examining the movement through the lens of the three framing tasks, it becomes possible to determine the degree to which the movement provided answers to the three core questions. Using these

categories was particularly useful in understanding how frames emerge, diffuse and differentiate in the modern movement.

The frames created by movements are the fruits of a creative process by which social problems are understood and analyzed. These understandings arise out of particular historical and cultural contexts. In both the early and modern waves of the movement, I have shown how leaders crafted their interpretative schemata by drawing on a range of influences. From their cultural “toolkit,” movement leaders first crafted rudimentary frames to explain and justify their actions. On this armature, the movement extended and developed more complex explanations. For the early movement, the evangelical revival provided both an analysis and direction for saving the poor. Booth’s imagery of darkest England provided both an inspiring adventure narrative and a description of methods for taming the savage underclass. In Atlanta, this vision was manifested in social work and sheltering in the [white] slums. Whether these redemption projects were homegrown, like the Union Missionists, or part of an international organization like the Salvationists, they shared a common frame. Their frame of redeeming the poor fit well with the progressive city narrative of Henry Grady and his followers. The religious movement’s emphasis on individual salvation through work posed no challenge to the existing economic and political order and confirmed the elite’s contention that the city was socially progressive. In addition, the movement’s emphasis on individual salvation complimented the dominant social control approach of viewing the visible poor as threats to public order. The open hand of the missions supported the fist of state power.

Like the early movement, the modern movement grew out of and drew its inspiration and energizing images from religious tradition. It drew, however, on very different sources for inspiration. The civil rights movement, liberation theology and the Catholic Worker movement

provided examples of personal responsibility and a critical analysis of the power of the state. As a result, the new movement was rooted in solidarity with the visible poor who were perceived as victims of structural injustice rather than subjects requiring redemption. In the new movement, the emphasis was on social inequality as the condition to ameliorate, rather than upon the poor as responsible for their condition. This hospitality/injustice frame provided powerful motivation to the early innovators of the modern movement.

The hospitality/injustice framers developed a distinctive, prognostic frame – church based, volunteer run, free shelters for the homeless. The Missionists and Salvationists had established their shelters as specialized institutions in marginal neighborhoods close to the poor. The modern movement reversed this practice, bringing the poor into their sanctuaries and church facilities, albeit during unused times. White flight from the central city left a large stock of underutilized resources (church buildings, institutional kitchens) with potential for mobilization.

While the hospitality/injustice frame and resources provided necessary conditions for the establishment of the Clifton Shelter, they proved insufficient to ignite a wider mobilization. The deaths during the winter of 1981 provided the tinder to create a broader movement.

Studies using the three framing tasks as a tool to analyze social movements have been lacking. By applying this approach, I highlighted the similarities and differences in framing. This reveals both the diversity of frames within the movement at particular moments and their changes over time. This account provides a complex view of how movements create and modify frames based on ongoing experience. In addition, examining how elements of the movement addressed the three framing tasks provides deeper understanding of important differences within the movement. As I have shown, prominent leaders of the movement to end homelessness embraced different framing of the problem, even as they cooperated with one another. The

broad unity around the prognostic frame of emergency night shelter served to mask the substantial differences in framing. To those outside the shelter movement this appeared as a unified phenomena, but as we have seen, there were differences within it. It was decentralization of the movement that masked the diversity within it.

These internal differences track almost to the beginning of the modern movement. The early hospitality/injustice framers developed a more complex analysis with diagnostic and prognostic frames than did the disaster framers who joined them. While the disaster framers adopted the prognostic template of church-based sheltering whole cloth, few shared the diagnostic frame of the early initiators. It was the motivational push of disaster and death that provided the unity. These differences in framing help explain the longevity of the first frame and the perishability of the second. While the injustice framers have remained consistently smaller in number, they have continued to promote their position and analysis. In contrast, the disaster frame was very successful mobilizing thousands of volunteers and establishing new shelters. The disaster frame implied a short-term problem, but when the problem of homelessness persisted, many volunteers dropped away and shelters closed. The disaster frame no longer had the experiential resonance and lacked a diagnostic frame to explain the enduring phenomena. The failure of the crisis to abate led to a search for new framings that fit with the persistence of the problem. This search led to the resurgence of the individual disability/rehabilitation frame.

By specifying the content of frames and comparing them to one another, we can explain more clearly the process within the movement through which one frame loses resonance and declines, while others attract supporters and resources. This process may take place at different rates, the pacing can be either slow or fast, but studies over time permit tracking these changes. This specification process also explains abrupt cleavages that occur. The framing split occurring

immediately after the toilet campaign revealed an early cleavage between the injustice and disaster frames of the movement. On the one hand were elements of the movement that identified the city's economic-political alliance as responsible for the creation and maintenance of homelessness, and they chose a prognostic frame of service and confrontation. On the other hand, were those who believed cooperation with the city's elites provided the best opportunity to address the needs of the visible poor.

The analysis of how different leaders articulate the movement's frame highlights a key finding. At any point in time, different individuals and organizations in a broad movement maintain different views of the "problem." This highlights the struggle for movement unity. As a general principle, it appears the more decentralized the movement, in terms of organizations and sites, the greater the diversity of framings. The development of the movement within a decentralized church structure, with individual churches drawing on their own resources, permitted great creativity and diversity within the movement, thereby facilitating alternate visions. So while I conceptualize a movement to end homelessness as a singular phenomenon for the object of study, it was a diverse network of groups and organizations. The various groups overlapped to greater and lesser degrees.

This diversity became more explicit as umbrella groups formed. In my examination of the formation of these quasi-formal organizations, the process by which these groups negotiated their frames is revealed. The creation of the Task Force for the Homeless, Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless, and later the Homeless Action Group, illustrate the process of articulation and differentiation of frames within the movement. Umbrella groups provide indicators of the shifting center of gravity within a movement, and their formation provides a rich ground for

understanding how frames change within movements. These groups ultimately competed with one another for legitimacy and resources.

Frames, Resources and Political Opportunity

Another key finding of this study is the relationship between framing, resources and political opportunity. The early Salvationist movement muted its structural analysis in order to secure the donors supporting its missionary work. Adopting this practice, the Salvationists became an integral part of Atlanta's philanthropic response to homelessness. This shifting of diagnostic frames from challenge of the dominant order to ones that emphasize changing the individual homeless is a longstanding pattern in America's practices of social change.

This story of resources too is more complex. The modern movement grew up in a particular political and economic environment. The flight of whites from Atlanta's intown neighborhoods and the central business district created a vacuum. The loss of white congregations left large downtown churches with excess physical capacity and resources. As Atlanta's political and economic elites were divided, downtown economic life was suppressed; there was a political opening to act. Loring's development of shelter was not dependent on outside resources. Rather resources were generated within the congregation and volunteers. This permitted the establishment of free spaces (Evans & Boyte 1992) where new practices and understandings could be developed. The churches that developed shelters in the five years that followed drew on resources provided by volunteers and donated by the church. The frame of disaster was predicated on churches mobilizing to undertake a mission. These free spaces provided the opportunity for new creativity and energy to develop.

But the dramatic rise of the volunteer-run church sheltering system obscures the reality that only a small portion of the religious community's resources ever mobilized to provide

shelter. Many volunteers framed homelessness as a “downtown” problem. Through congregational mobilization they provided substantial periodic support to those churches. Bevis’s vision of 100 shelters was never even remotely achieved.

The rise of the disability framers in the mid-1980s reveals important connections between frame and resources. Like the Salvationists a century earlier, the creation of mission-driven organizations required the solicitation of funds. Unlike the shelters, which largely relied on their own resources, the new organizations sought financial support from the donor community, including government and foundation grants. Aligning their mission with donors’ frames involved emphasizing assistance to individuals as the most “practical” approach to homelessness. The search for resources shapes the framing of the problem (Lyon-Callo 2004, Ignite! 2007).

Much of the literature on frames examines frames as fully crafted movement products. In this study, I have focused on processes by which frames are created and changed by social movements. Frames are metaphors, not objects in themselves. By viewing frames as dynamic creations by specific actors and tracking their change over the time, we gain a more realistic view of the way frames actually function in social movements. This dynamism becomes self-evident in this longitudinal analysis. One of the important engines for modifying frames is conflict. While the basic architecture of a frame appears relatively stable over time, this study highlights how conflict provides the mechanism for greater specification of the diagnostic framing. The failure of the toilet campaign led to a more specified injustice frame, one that asserted that the business community played a role in perpetuating homelessness and highlighting the demand for recognizing homeless people’s rights. In contrast, the disaster framers read the experience very differently.

Articulation of Frames

Conflict has been an important engine for the creation and extension of new frames. Through the active process of struggle, movements articulated new framings to explain their claims to various publics. By examining public documents new frame elements are integrated into the overarching narrative analysis.

Different elements of the movement resonate with differing frames. For instance, legal advocates first introduced the language of rights as a way to frame the injustice of arresting individuals who lacked access to public toilets. Once this new framing of rights had been introduced, it was increasingly included in the movement analysis and became integrated into the movement's language of contention. This language of rights became increasingly salient as struggles over public space and the "right" to public space became more prevalent.

The ability to gather and mobilize resources also has an impact on the potential of movement actors to assert their framing claims. Both the early mission movement and the later church-based movement demonstrated the ability to mobilize resources. In both cases, the establishment of services for the homeless gave the innovators the legitimacy of experience to define and shape how larger publics perceived their issue. The Salvationist support of the anti-begging campaign was legitimated by their experience working with the homeless and offering services. In the later period, the church-based shelter system mobilized the financial and physical resources of church spaces along with the labor of thousands of volunteers. With this mobilization, they assumed the role as the principal framers of homelessness in Atlanta.

A Hierarchy of Frames: Diagnostic and Motivational

Snow and Benford's frame typology specifies the three framing tasks but places no hierarchy or weight on the relative importance of such framing. Much of the attention in social

movement research has been upon what social movements do – the activities that make manifest the prognostic frame. While these activities are important, this study highlights the importance of attending to the processes underlying the diagnostic and motivational framing in movements.

There was no necessity for the movement to end homelessness to emerge from the religious community. In other cities, religious organizations played a peripheral role in sheltering. There is little evidence that the leaders of the modern movement were familiar with the long history of sheltering in Atlanta. Nonetheless, the movement had its origins in the creative actions of leaders and members of a small church. I have traced the origins of the Clifton shelter. They read about shelters in Catholic Worker literature and renovated their church for a ministry to the poor. They developed diagnostic and prognostic frames, but did not act. The development of diagnostic and prognostic frames was insufficient to move from ideas to action. The move from idea to lived reality required a more compelling motivational framing than the mere aspiration. In the case of Clifton, this was provided by Mitch Snyder's visit and his emotional challenge to engage in action. It was the emotional wallop of personal appeal that translated potentiality into action. Snyder provided more than a set of motivational ideals; he provided a inspirational challenge to act.

The deaths on the streets in 1981 led to action without a diagnostic frame. The deaths created a sense of emergency that motivated action and the wholesale adoption of sheltering as the solution to the emergency. While the prognostic frame was embraced, the diagnostic frame was underdeveloped. The language of the early leaders reflects their desire to avoid assigning blame or responsibility for the condition. If these early leaders avoided blaming the homeless for their condition (rejecting the sin frame), they also avoided criticizing the city's political-economic elites for their inaction (rejecting the injustice frame). In this case, the search for

diagnosis came afterwards and arose as reflection on experience, rather than a motivator of experience.

Cooperation or Contention

The diffusion of the sheltering approach through Atlanta's churches occurred without the initiative or dependence on the resources of the state or organized philanthropy. This gave the movement great flexibility to frame a response to homelessness. The sympathetic depiction of the homeless and the religious community's active support of this population, repeated confounded the business community's social control proposals. The movement used powerful narratives of transformative experiences to legitimate the sheltering experience and challenge social control initiatives. Providing shelter to the visible poor raised their status as deserving victims rather than potential scapegoats or threatening outsiders. The ready willingness of city leaders to allow the religious community to take the initiative in responding to homelessness supported the movement's framing. This enhanced both the movement's authority as a leader and helped to discredit social control efforts.

Exhaustion with the disaster frame, the rise of the disability frame and the awarding of the Olympics, all served to restore the hegemony to downtown business interests. The image of the city became paramount in the hierarchy of needs. The Safeguard Zone, Hospitality Zone, Tourist Triangle all were manifestations of the effort to sanitize the central city of the disorderly presence of the visible poor.

Conclusion

This study has not been about providing a solution to homelessness. It has been a study about how movements and other actors advance their claims through a contested process of framing problems and solutions. I have documented a century of work by the local homeless

movement in Atlanta, Georgia and used it as a case with which to examine how framing structures and to explain movement activity. As we have seen, frames have a power to mobilize and coordinate action. Analyzing the detailed processes in which people create frames, and then extend, contest, and challenge those frames provides a valuable way to understand movement dynamics. Looking through the lens of history, the long-term dynamics of frames become more accessible and intelligible.

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APPENDIX 1: TASK FORCE PROPOSAL

The Bolling Draft of May 11, 1982.

The following document was prepared on May 11, 1982 by Bill Bolling for discussion at the Tuesday Morning Fellowship.

The homeless in our community and in communities all across the country are growing dramatically. It is not possible anymore to generalize about who is on the street. It is not just the public inebriate. In the combined experience of many ministers and street workers we can honestly say that most people do not choose to live there. But the number continues to grow. There are a greater number of women and children, young people, greater numbers of former mental patients, much greater numbers of working poor who have never experienced street life before.

The cost to our community is enormous. Whether one considers the cost to our city for police and the judicial system, cost to our business community in business relocations convention trade, or more importantly to us the cost in lives lost and potentials unmet, and the lost of the knowledge that each life is sacred no matter its station of life. It is unacceptable to continue with business as usual. The religious community though the efforts of many churches and hundreds of individual volunteers has responded by providing shelter for over (400?) a night. We believe the most caring, concerned approach of the business community does not have to be at odds with the desires of the business community and local government. Therefore the religious community calls for the formation of a task force for the homeless. The formation of a task force would have the following purposes:

1. A meeting place for all groups touched by or participating in this issue.
2. A place for any particular group to address problems related to homelessness
3. A method of obtaining a consensus strategy if appropriate on any action around this issue.

This task group should have representatives from: downtown business community, city and county governments, including bureau of human services, police courts, appropriate medical programs, religious community, and program directly working with issues of homelessness as well as street people themselves. Those persons appointed should have direct experience with these issues as well as a commitment to creative cooperative responses to this problem. This task force should be composed of 21 persons:

- 4 persons appointed by Mayor Young
- 4 persons appointed by Comm. Lomax
- 6 persons appointed by CAP and/or Chamber of Commerce
- 6 persons appointed by CC of Metro Atlanta and the Jewish Federation
- 3 persons from the street⁷⁰

A very similar coordinating committee was set up when the Public Inebriate Program began. This committee worked effectively to facilitate communication between interested groups. This dialogue must be broadened and deepened to include all those who suffer from homelessness.

⁷⁰ This entry had blue excluding brackets around it.

As Christians we are mandated to care for “the least of these”. As representatives of government we are called on to be responsible to all citizens and members of our community. As representatives of business interest our goal is to create a holistic community that meets the diverse needs of those in our community. The time to act is NOW.

APPENDIX 2: BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE

Atlanta Action Committee for the Homeless
910 Ponce de Leon Ave, NE,
Atlanta, Ga. 30306

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ATLANTA

In order to assure the health and welfare of all people in the city of Atlanta, we call on the citizens and elected officials of the city to accept and observe the following:

All people have the inalienable right:

To be free of harassment by anyone, including law enforcement (local, city, state, and federal), because of race, religion sex, sexual preference, economic status, lack of proof of identity, or lack of a fixed address.

To seek and be granted access to and use of government-controlled human services, e.g., transportation, physical and mental health care (hospitals, medicine, counseling), police protection, toilets, drinking fountains, etc.

To fair and equitable relocation if forced to move from habitual residence due to urban development.

To safe, dry, accessible, and affordable housing, toilets, pure water and clean air, clothing and other necessities for preserving life.

To safe, dry, and accessible emergency shelter.

To freedom of movement and use of all public spaces, limited only by need of public safety of others, e.g., parks, public buildings, all streets, sidewalks in any section of the city, including downtown.

To work at fair market wages.

To receive benefits available from governmental programs, with or without fixed address.

To rid their bodies of waste without being arrested.

To a nonhazardous environment, including safety exposure to, or the threat of, nuclear radiation.

To be heard by societal powers on issues affecting them (that is, the right to have their opinion solicited).

APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| AA | Alcoholics Anonymous |
| AAH | Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless |
| CAP | Central Atlanta Progress |
| CCNV | Community for Creative Nonviolence |
| COC | Continuum of Care |
| COS | Charity Organization Society |
| CWA | Civil Works Administration |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FERA | Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 |
| HAG | Homeless Action Group |
| HAP | Homeless Action Plan |
| HUD | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| NOFA | Notice of Fund Availability |
| PRI | Progressive Redevelopment, Inc |
| PUJ | People for Urban Justice |
| ROCK | Resource Opportunity Center |
| SMO | Social Movement Organization |
| SRO | Single Room Occupancy |
| TFH | Task Force for the Homeless |
| WCTU | Women's Christian Temperance Union |
| WPA | Works Progress Administration |