Landed versus Landless:
Stigma & Astigmatism towards the Subaltern in South Bay Suburbia in Los Angeles
County

By
Ross Piscitello

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There is no such thing as the 'voiceless.'

There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard.

- Suzanna Arundhati Roy¹

I want to wage a war on poverty. To President Bush I, he added,

I want it known that you cannot balance the budget on the backs of the poor.

- Jack French Kemp²

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¹ Arundhati Roy, "Peace and the New Corporate Liberation Theology," The 2004 Sydney Peace Prize Lecture, November 4, 2004, accessed February 27, 2021, https://sydneypeacefoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2004-SPP_-Arundhati-Roy.pdf

² Gerald M. Boyd, "Kemp, Picked as Chief of H.U.D., Pledges to Combat Homelessness," *The New York Times*, December 20, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/20/us/kemp-picked-as-chief-of-hud-pledges-to-combat-houselessness.html>.

Prolegomenon

I remember once my father and I were walking down Fifth Avenue, and a homeless person was sitting right outside of Trump Tower... I remember my father pointing to him and saying, 'You know, that guy has \$8 billion more than me,' because he was in such extreme debt at that point, you know?³

This quote is from former Senior Advisor to the President⁴ Ivanka Trump, in the 2003 documentary *Born Rich* about the experience of growing up in wealthy families, in an interview with Director Jamie Johnson, an heir to the Johnson & Johnson fortune.^{5 6} Please, envision the victimhood and myopia of someone who has led former President⁷ Donald J. Trump's privileged life, comparing his woes to that of a person experiencing houselessness. One can be sure the person pleading for pocket change, hopeful for food, and indigent for shelter at night habitually weeps for him. Stigma emanates from the top; however, we cannot look at those at the top alone. Or else, this would be the conclusion of this thesis.

From Diogenes to today, houselessness has been stigmatized. However, neoliberal politicians have a unique lack of public deliberation in recent years and outright vilification of people experiencing houselessness through rhetoric and policy by overtly right-wing populist and paleoconservative leaders whether through the middle class state apparatus or the heterogenous upper class's bargaining with the state. Therefore, social stigma and norms, codified through law and saturating social media, have not only prevented a remedy or aid to

³ Jamie Johnson and Dirk Wittenborn, *Born Rich*, directed by Jamie Johnson (Los Angeles: Sony Music Entertainment, 2003), https://tubitv.com/movies/503586/born-rich?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed.

⁴ United States, "Annual Report to Congress on White House Office Personnel" (Executive Office of the President, June 30, 2017), <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3883248/07012017-Report-Final.pdf>.

⁵ Huffpost, "Jamie Johnson," Profile, 2011, <https://www.huffpost.com/author/jamie-johnson/>.

⁶ Jansenn is commonly known today for their one-dose COVID-19 vaccine in collaboration with Harvard University.

⁷ Mark Joyella, "Rachel Maddow: Donald Trump 'Apparently Thinks He's Still President'," *Forbes*, February 08, 2021, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markjoyella/2021/02/05/rachel-maddow-donald-trump-apparently-thinks-hes-still-president/?sh=3023c70e6dcf/>.

houselessness but exacerbated it. This stigma is evident in the South Bay municipality of Torrance in Los Angeles County, and unless scholar-activists initiate widespread mobilization of those experiencing houselessness, both the stigma and houselessness itself will not subside. Essentially, the social conditions projected onto houselessness exacerbate it just as much as the economic forces in play.

In this paper, I examine both policy and vilifying rhetoric to houselessness in the South Bay area of Los Angeles County to exhibit how and why the issues related to houselessness have been stigmatized and largely ignored. The qualitative study aims to help realize what public policy changes are needed to resolve unequal opportunities, unequal distributions of resources, inadequate medical care, and adequately mobilizing advocacy for the current and future houseless community.

The last few years have seen an increased interest in the casual theories surrounding houselessness. To date, no study has explicitly looked at the connection between public policy, social stigma, and the unhoused in Los Angeles County: three components of criminalization. In the first section, the concept of the *(sub)culture of poverty* is explored and lay bare. Next, a purview of socio-political theory regarding the inculcation of social norms onto the unhoused subaltern: then, biological determined racialism and classism are discredited. Last, a case study of the municipality of Torrance shows the prevalence of this inculcation of social stigma and the inaction in public policy. These ideological theories of biologically and culturally determined houselessness, devoid of any reality, inculcate the community, stymie public policy solutions, and exacerbate the unhouseds' material conditions.

What is Stigma?

Society affords persons with a breadth of roles and identities deemed *normal*.⁸ The role-identity they perform in the public domain is delineated for them by society.⁹ However, their self-identity in private (when they are not subject to public scrutiny and criticism) is who they are, their *essential* self.¹⁰ When there is a significant discrepancy between their role-identity and their essential self, and when the performance of their role-identity is unpersuasive to society, we are prone to be labeled undesirably.¹¹ When this adverse labeling is continued over time, stigma ensues.

Paleoconservative Cultural Determinism

In 1995, Italian cultural critic, political and social commentator Umberto Eco wrote a piece for The New York Review of Books. He listed features of right wing totalitarianism. This quote is number 6:

[It] derives from individual or social frustration. That is why one of the most typical features of historical fascism was the appeal to a frustrated middle class, a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups. In our time, when the old *proletarians* are becoming petty bourgeois, the fascism of tomorrow will find its audience in this new majority.¹²

In the history of the United States, those in power have politically stigmatized poverty and houselessness. Houselessness is a severe form of poverty, as houseless people not only lack a permanent residence but lack all the facilities that derive from that—a place to shower, eat, store personal effects, be found by acquaintances and family, and from which to negotiate

⁸ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, 26th pr, A Touchstone Book (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Umberto Eco, "Ur-Fascism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>.

for employment and other social relations.¹³ However, the common ideological thread has been the supposition that the *culture of the neglected* differs from that of middle-class or upper-class society, that the self-perpetuating lower class differs from the prevailing capitalist class, and that **this peculiar culture** keeps the underprivileged entombed in perpetual poverty.¹⁴ Ironically, these claims presuppose a biological or “God-given” distinction between racial and class typologies.

However, culture cannot be detached from socioeconomic conditions.^{15 16} For example, the inhabitants of Appalachia, frequently stereotyped as living in a *subculture of poverty* built upon yellow journalism perpetuating enduring myths and distortions, were exploited by the large-scale logging and coal mining firms of the cultural region.¹⁷ Also, People of Color endured structural racism (who largely continue to do so) and limited resources, not cultural deprivation from *inferior* norms, values, skills, and knowledge.¹⁸ Thus, it is impossible to isolate broader cultural narratives from more significant social relations and power dynamics.

Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot even goes as far as to say that the nation is a communal fiction in the field of politics.¹⁹ I argue that nation and culture is analogous in this way: political claims are often formed through notions and labeling of cultures and a proclaimed historical continuity. These notions are often used to maintain unjust and oppressive hierarchies.

The Habitus: A Counter-Narrative

¹³ Nancy Wilcox, Interview with SBCH Co-Chair, Zoom, February 17, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H-wAPg5Q9rJOt-_Rpz4fxQwqGyeOM_dx/view?usp=sharing.

¹⁴ Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995), 142.

¹⁵ James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), 120.

¹⁶ Charles A. Valentine, *Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counterproposals*, 5. impr (Chicago, Ill.: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972).

¹⁷ James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 26.

The habitus is what Bourdieu demonstrates as the *internalization of externality*.²⁰ It is the structure of understanding within an individual inscribed within them from their specific position in social space. It is promoted by Bourdieu to explicate how social systems perpetuate themselves: they grow up in a *world*, like how Hegel's *phenomenology* rationalizes individual perspectives,²¹ that *world* shapes how that person views reality, and therefore that person enacts their version of reality. By acting in how they grasp life to be, they continue to support society as they understand it, continuing the process of social classes vis-à-vis social stratification.

The exposure to language, the interaction with specific TV programs or social media posts, the exposure to foods, and family financial capability—these are all social features that individuals internalize about their social surroundings and how they interpret the world around them, promoting parts of society they are accustomed to, they act as it was performed on them. This also instills their self-image in their place in the hierarchy of society. Paleoconservatives tout the parameters of the *subculture of poverty*,²² but such a dialogue cannot exist without the normative claim that certain cultures of certain classes persist. In this context, they link the economic and cultural to create an individual standpoint that propagates that standpoint.

Dominated v. Dominator and Landed v. Landless

By Bourdieu, symbolic violence is that the *dominateds'* definitions of a social situation align with the dominators' definitions.²³ The internalization of someone else's externalities can exemplify symbolic violence. For example, if represented in a particular manner, the *subculture*

²⁰ Christian Fuchs, "Some Implications of Pierre Bourdieu's Works for a Theory of Social Self Organization," *European Journal of Social Theory* 6, no. 4 (November 2003): 387–408, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310030064002>.

²¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Terry P. Pinkard, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: The Phenomenology of Spirit*, The American Society of Missiology Series, No. 55 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²² Oscar Lewis, Oliver La Farge, and Alberto Beltrán, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1975).

²³ Radka Radimská, "Pierre Bourdieu: Sociologist of Dominance and of the Dominated," *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review* 38, no. 3 (2002): 395–98.

of poverty²⁴ can be depicted as symbolic violence if it presupposes a negative implication to having a lower degree of economic capital. Racism and racialism can be defined this way as well: When Black people adopt the definitions ascribed by the White people in power, that they are *primitive* workers and are destined for a life of slavery based on supposed biology,²⁵ they sublimate themselves through the act of symbolic violence; they accept the ruling class's definition of what their group comprises and whom they are.

Symbolic violence and the effort to define particular facets of social life in various ways sit in the realm of fields. Fields are places where power, both cultural and economic, can be consolidated to perpetuate classes' stereotypes.²⁶ For instance, a social media post portraying a family in poverty acting a certain way is symbolic violence on impoverished persons who do not fulfill the culture industry's stereotype. The violence rests in media production and shapes an image of this specific social group understood to be accurate by everyone outside the group, with only the group itself knowing the truth. But the social pressure and power imbalance prompt the *dominated* group to conform to this social idea of who they are, thus accepting the definition and completing the cycle of symbolic violence.²⁷

The Next Peculiar Institution

Social anthropologist Loic Wacquant places the prison in the historical and cyclical typology of peculiar institutions that have bore the charge of shaping and confining Black people in the United States.²⁸ His historic typologies include chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the

²⁴ Oscar Lewis, Oliver La Farge, and Alberto Beltrán, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*.

²⁵ Evi Taylor *et al.*, "The Historical Perspectives of Stereotypes on African-American Males," *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* 4, no. 3 (September 2019): 213–25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-019-00096-y>.

²⁶ David L. Swartz, "Bourdieu's Concept of Field," *Oxford University Press*, April 28, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756384-0164>.

²⁷ Elliot B. Weininger, "Foundations of Pierre Bourdieu's Class Analysis," in *Approaches to Class Analysis*, ed. Erik Olin Wright, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 82–118. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488900.005>.

²⁸ Loïc Wacquant, "Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh," *Punishment & Society* 3, no. 1 (January 2001): 95–133, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14624740122228276>.

ghetto. According to Wacquant, the crisis of the ghetto as a device for class control and the interrelated need for an ancillary state apparatus for the repression of lower-class Black Americans produces the modern upsurge in the mass incarceration of Black people.

In the War on Crime and mass incarceration era, the neoliberal penal system and remnants of the ghetto have become connected, reproducing a carceral field that entangles young Black men to be socially excluded by *advanced* neoliberal markets. This carceral mesh has been solidified by changes to make the ghetto more like a prison and undermined the *inmate society* residing in United States prisons in ways that make the prison akin to a ghetto. The subsequent “deadly symbiosis” between ghetto and prison not only propagates the socioeconomic idiosyncrasy and symbolic taint of the Black lower-class, sustaining the runaway growth of the carceral system.²⁹ It also plays a pivotal role in the reproducing of *race*, the redefinition of the citizenry via the fabrication of a racialized culture industry of vilification of criminals, and constructing a neoliberal state that replaces the state’s constitution duty of general welfare with penal punishment as can be seen with the criminalization of homelessness.

Spatio-politics of Criminalization

Professor Randall Amster argues that in a world that ostensibly accedes to the hegemonic forces of global capital and neoliberalism, it routinely seems that socio-political movements fail to achieve substantial social change. Capital and gentrification are both localizing and globalizing themselves concurrently and in reciprocally bolstering ways.³⁰ Therefore, as we move toward *global cities*, we will see these forces globalized. Amster purports this is not a 1st versus 3rd World dynamic.³¹ Class, gender, and race analyses will need to be taken at the global level:

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Randall Amster, *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2008), 215.

³¹ *Ibid.*

However, this is not merely a First World versus Third World situation... Some people living in First World countries suffer the negative consequences of globalization as starkly as many in the Third World do.³²

To Amster, global capitalism has facilitated austerity measures on the welfare state and impositions on labor unions, and other efforts to reshape the power relations of spatial-political authorities to influence both “the globality of production and the production of globality.”^{33 34} Thus, the globalized neoliberal practices of deregulation, capital accumulation, cultural hegemony, and geopolitical domination are intrinsically linked to affairs of houselessness, sanitization, and criminalization.³⁵

Amster delineates a three-part dynamic for the ‘lived experience of globalization.’³⁶ This framework includes “homelessness as the *body*, gentrification as the *urban*, and neoliberal economics as the *global*.”³⁷ While he concedes this may be an oversimplification, he states this can be used for ideas for opportunities for future action. It can highlight reasons the houseless are excluded from their communities globally.

Amster contends that issues such as houselessness, gentrification, and privatization are community matters with global roots and repercussions. As neoliberalism globalizes, it concurrently localizes city laws, development norms, and execution regimes.³⁸ The result is “homogeneous local terrains,” connected through communication technologies and ideologically through ideals of ‘civility’ and ‘consumption.’³⁹ Therefore, every locality on this web develops a

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁴ Edward W. Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2000).

³⁵ Randall Amster, *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness*, 217.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 221.

small-scale version, reproducing the overall theme and manifesting as cities yet with mass marketing and generic urbanism.⁴⁰ “The (Global) City” is what he terms this phenomenon.

Contrastly, he argues that the contrary is often realized for the houseless since their persistence and strives for social justice are highly regional and seldom overtly conscious of the global framework. But he also argues there is an intrinsic quality among houseless communities that entails a sense of the bigger picture because they draw values and norms from globalization.⁴¹ Neoliberal austerity in cities contends to attract capital investment. Urban development norms of ‘safety’ and ‘order’ are formed to make public spaces more striking for retail and upscale leases. At the same time, houseless people are both disorderly and unsafe and thus are regulated and pursued to be away from public sight. But there is still activism.

Figure 1 A Facebook post by a Torrance, CA councilperson that ironically highlights this point.⁴²

Where the world is going against the advocates, they persist. This leads to a more in-depth theoretical discussion of cultural hegemony and habitus and how dominance and power affect the law and allow the subaltern to be examined in the 1st World. These global forms are modified by contact with local communities and individuals to become *glocalized*.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/torrancetownhall/permalink/4526584144020798/>

⁴³ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Theory, Culture & Society (London: Sage, 1992).

Cultural Hegemony and Houselessness: The Subaltern

Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks*, describes *cultural hegemony*.⁴⁴ According to Gramsci, this is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class which manipulates the culture of that society so that the normative, unconscious, and conscious, ruling-class worldview becomes the putative cultural norm that ideologically rationalizes the social, political, and economic *status quo* of the society as if it were a natural, standard, inevitable, and perpetual condition that has always existed.⁴⁵ Houseless peoples are part of the subaltern, socially excluded from society's economic institutions, left voiceless.⁴⁶ This notion plays into Bourdieu's idea of symbolic violence.

Every ideology develops from manifestations of *culture* or *subculture*, even as it organizes or challenges those manifestations.⁴⁷ For example, staffing soup kitchens and erecting temporary shelters for the houseless promote an ideology of private and often faith-based charity through *ethical citizenship*,⁴⁸ reinforcing (or at least tolerating) the continued dominance of the socio-political doctrine of the American Dream, which entails the national myths of individual responsibility, hard work, homeownership, and dependence on lucky breaks. Such private charitable practices avoid challenges to the ideological explanations and hegemonic conditions of real estate development, rental policies, and private home construction inherent in neoliberalism and modern conservatism.

Comparably, calls for equal opportunity for pregnant women or transgender persons in the armed forces question gender-discriminatory practices while implicitly conceding

⁴⁴ Antonio Gramsci and Quintin Hoare, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, 8. pr (New York: International Publ, 1985).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Toward a New Legal Common Sense: Law, Globalization, and Emancipation*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 466, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316662427>.

⁴⁷ Lee Artz and Bren Adair Ortega Murphy, *Cultural Hegemony in the United States*, Foundations of Popular Culture, vol. 7 (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2000), 31.

⁴⁸ Andrea Karin Muehlebach, *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*, Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

suppositions about the US military-industrial complex's mandate and endless pre-emptive wars flouting *jus cogens*—perpetuating suicide terrorism.^{49 50 51 52} Likewise, most public pushes for affirmative action accept practices that curb physicians, undergraduate students, and even full-time employees as natural law.⁵³ In these instances, challenges to existing cultural practices reinforce those practices.

Consider these questions: What if eradicating the military-industrial complex solved discrimination in the US military? What if American medical schools and associations did not curtail the number of licensed and board-certified doctors? What if everyone willing and able to work had a living wage? I am not implying these are simple moral choices,⁵⁴ but I argue that some questions more precisely implicate the dominant practices' presuppositions. No ideology is natural or merely dominant or inferior but arises in an intricate labyrinth of socio-political relations. Ideologies of a stable hegemony are so entrenched that even inquiries can reinforce relationships and reconstruct practices that promote the *dominator's* interests.

Unhoused Folk Devils

A moral panic is a public panic over an issue widely incited to threaten the sensibilities of a *decent* society.⁵⁵ This is often fanned by sensationalist, selective reporting in the culture

⁴⁹ Dave Philipps, "As Biden Lifts a Ban, Transgender People Get a Long-Sought Chance to Enlist," *New York Times*, January 25, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/us/biden-transgender-ban-military.html?smid=url-share>.

⁵⁰ John Ismay, "The Pentagon Condemns Tucker Carlson's Sexist Remarks about Women in the Military," *New York Times*, March 11, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/11/us/tucker-carlson-women-military-pentagon.html>.

⁵¹ James Thuo Gathii, "Assessing Claims of a New Doctrine of Pre-Emptive War under the Doctrine of Sources," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 43, no. 1 (2005): 67–103.

⁵² Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House Trade Paperback ed (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006).

⁵³ Abigail Johnson Hess, "How the next Generation of Doctors Is Being Impacted by Coronavirus," *CNBC Make It*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/06/how-the-next-generation-of-doctors-is-being-impacted-by-coronavirus.html>.

⁵⁴ Or are they? Perhaps when political ideologies entail the suffering of another human, they become moral choices. Following Occam's Razor, this might be the actual conclusion. This would coincide both with utilitarian (consequentialist) and deontological (retributive) theories except for perhaps just war theory. However, I attempt to distance myself from (even pluralistic) moral reductionism.

⁵⁵ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, Routledge Classics (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011).

industry and exaggerated accounts offered by *moral entrepreneurs*,⁵⁶ which comprises politicians and advocates searching for a social cause. Moral panics can cause a real phenomenon to be blown way out of proportion or in what is not an actual phenomenon in the first place, being widely believed to be authentic. Stanley Cohen examines how groups and individuals are identified as a threat to dominant cultural values and how mass media plays a crucial role in amplifying this, presenting them negatively or stereotyped ways, thus creating a national panic.⁵⁷ Mass media is an influential institution that often reflects the powerful and represents issues. The public is enticed to agree with *experts* (such as moral entrepreneurs) on how best to deal with the problem.

Those seen as culpable become scapegoats, or *folk devils*,⁵⁸ for crises that often lie with the state; moral panics signify entrenched anxieties. The culture industry creates a self-fulfilling prophecy by inculcating the behaviors it reports. Moral panics can be fleeting and end when seen to be remedied or form part of a more considerable, ongoing panic.

British sociologist Angela McRobbie describes the role the media plays in creating deviant acts and justifying increased social control of marginalized groups.^{59 60} This directly correlates to the social exclusion associated with houselessness.

The Art of Not Being Governed *Like That*

As philosopher Michel Foucault maintains:

⁵⁶ David E. Pozen, "We Are All Entrepreneurs Now," *Wake Forest Law Review* 43, no. 1 (2008): 283–340.

⁵⁷ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁵⁹ Angela McRobbie and Sarah L. Thornton, "Rethinking 'Moral Panic' for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds," *The British Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (December 1995): 559, <https://doi.org/10.2307/591571>.

⁶⁰ Angela McRobbie, "Settling Accounts with Subculture: A Feminist Critique," in *Feminism and Youth Culture*, by Angela McRobbie (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1991), 16–34, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-21168-5_2.

Power is not an institution and not a structure; neither is it a... strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.⁶¹

Foucault argues that the nature of society has changed where power no longer resides only within the state or with one authority figure. Power also exists in *micro-sites* throughout society, such as seminaries, sweatshops, and siblings. Thus, the state's power can no longer be separated from power in society. To understand control mechanisms, we need to move away from merely *studying up*⁶² to the state in political theory. Therefore, as created by power relations, habitus, and cultural hegemony, domination can be best identified by examining the socioeconomic context in which it is produced.⁶³

This socioeconomic context involves neoliberalism which entails the triumph of capitalism over the state or as “anti-humanism” due to its emphasis on individualism and the obliteration of community bonds.⁶⁴ In neoliberalism, labor is a self-owned enterprise and is compelled to be competitive. It assumes notions of rational choice theory and *homo economicus* capable of taking responsibility for themselves and their environment through conceptualizations of biopower and normalization technologies—the stipulatory obligations of society so evident that they are *normal*. These *self-evident* behaviors include recycling and waste reduction, weight loss in response to weight gain and obesity, Neighborhood Watch programs through

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1st American ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 93.

⁶² Laura Nader, “Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from ‘Studying Up,’” in *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes, Pantheon Antitextbooks (New York, NY: Random House, 1969), 284–311.

⁶³ Stephen Reicher, “The Context of Social Identity: Domination, Resistance, and Change,” *Political Psychology* 25, no. 6 (December 2004): 921–45, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00403.x>.

⁶⁴ Michael C. Behrent, “2. CAN THE CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM BE ANTIHUMANIST?,” *History and Theory* 54, no. 3 (October 2015): 372–88, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10766>.

actors such as George Zimmerman,⁶⁵ or quitting smoking and tobacco use in a liquid, reflexive modernity.

Foucault claims discourse surrounding health, work and family instills bodies to act. Symbolic violence and the habitus inculcate individuals to govern themselves and others accordingly. For example, some societies view non-serial, monogamous, heterosexual marriage as the *proper* environment for parenting, and this *truth* is inculcated and instilled from cultural artifacts to governmental discourse on *family values*.⁶⁶ Public policy may also put political capital behind ideas, such as the family, through monetary incentives—tax credits and deductions. Neoliberal governments have found the most challenging way to govern—by endorsing the sense that they are not governing.

For a government to cause the houseless to suffer because a heterogenous upper class abhors them... is dreadful. However, for government to force the subaltern to suffer because the government no longer recalls how to govern? That is... difficult to realize.⁶⁷

A Discursive Approach: Radical Power

Steven Lukes argues that power is not only exercised through overt decision making and covert *nondecision making*,⁶⁸ but also

To prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *State of Florida v. George Zimmerman*, 2012CF001083A (S.C., Fl. 2013)
https://courtrecords.seminoleclerk.org/criminal/crim_details.aspx?d=EuK7wQfxOqRn%2btN6VEA2nQ%3d%3d.

⁶⁶ Juliet R. H. Wakefield, Monika Kalinauskaitė, and Nick Hopkins, "The Nation and the Family: The Impact of National Identification and Perceived Importance of Family Values on Homophobic Attitudes in Lithuania and Scotland," *Sex Roles* 75, no. 9–10 (November 2016): 448–58,
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0641-y>

⁶⁷ Paraphrased from Dr. Julian Bashir's quote in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (DS9) episode, "Past Tense, Part I"— "Causing people to suffer because you hate them... is terrible. But causing people to suffer because you have forgotten how to care... that's really hard to understand."

⁶⁸ Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

This power refers to embracing an unjust system, acquiescent toward its accepted affects and thus resorting to cognitive dissonance reduction as a pragmatic means of coping with oppression. Rather than act in their *self-interest*, they tacitly accept repression and acclimate to oppressive states. In accepting their *space*, of having limited human rights in society due to class status, those experiencing houselessness are not prepared to step forward and claim their right to housing.

As an aside, I find it ironic that those who claim that it is human nature, biologically determined, for humans to be selfish or self-interested, also claim that private charity organized and supported by counter-intuitive altruistic, ethical individuals will solve externalities such as houselessness. The same could be said for the ethical egoist.

Exposing Biological Explanations for Poverty:

Typologies of Race and Class

During the Christian Middle Ages and Renaissance, most knowledge about diversity was lost and reflected reception of Roman and Greek texts where everything “different” was explained as monstrous and un-Christian. Biblical explanations of diversity were based on the three Sons of Noah’s dominant explanation of phenotypic differences. The Nuremberg Chronicle (1498) depicted the monstrous inhabitants of lands beyond Christendom. The first scientific concepts of race date to the 12th-13th century. During the Islamic Middle Ages, Islamic scientists observed variability. Both biblical and adaptive concepts existed (influence of environment), and physical appearance played no role.

During the Age of “Discovery,” colonialism expanded European knowledge of human diversity where the *monstrous* perspective of the Middle Ages was corrected. Initially, the “other” was “exotic but dignified and definitely human.”⁷⁰ But with planter and settler colonialism⁷¹ and

⁷⁰ Theodor deBry, Thomas Hariot, and John White, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, 1590.

⁷¹ And eventually with other forms of colonialism: extractive, trade, transport, imperial power, legal, rogue, missionary, romantic, postcolonial, neoliberal, etc.

the Euro-American slave trade came concepts of Caucasian superiority where *race* was socially constructed as justifications for the exploitation of the other, not scientific or systematic. In 1537, Pope Paul III declared that all humans are the product of one creation where the basis for this scientific theory was monogenism.

Naturalists of the 17th to 18th Centuries classified biodiversity. François Bernier (1625-1688) developed the first European classification of “races” with no biological explanation, Plato’s “Ideal Type.”⁷² He assumed that a high number of morphological traits was necessary to differentiate “races.”⁷³ The systematic characterization of biodiversity in the 18th century was the foundation of “typologies.” Carl von Linné (1707-1778), inventor of zoological taxonomy, defined four subgroups of *Homo sapiens* based on continental varieties founded on humors (more behavioral traits).⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ His system defines “Species” and “Variety” (binomial nomenclature), where varieties evolve through climate, geography, and temperature.⁷⁶ Traits associated with human groups violate Linné’s own rules and reflect assumed character traits, and he still defines mythical “monstrous” human species.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752 –1840), the founder of Physical Anthropology, was the first to employ empirical data: craniometry and anthropometry. Blumenbach listed five races: Caucasians, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans, and Malay.⁷⁷ Blumenbach used the social degeneration theory where there was one optimal “race” where others were degenerations in

⁷² Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, “François Bernier (1620–88),” in *Race in Early Modern England*, ed. Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007), 272–74, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230607330_105.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Staffan Müller-Wille, “Linnaeus and the Four Corners of the World,” in *The Cultural Politics of Blood, 1500–1900*, ed. Kimberly Anne Coles et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 191–209, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137338211_10.

⁷⁵ Marc Ereshefsky, *The Poverty of the Linnaean Hierarchy: A Philosophical Study of Biological Taxonomy*, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Biology (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, “On the educational instinct (nisus formativus) and its influence on generation and reproduction,” *Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaft und Literatur*. 1, 1780, 247–66.

two directions based on environment and life modes (e.g., nutrition).⁷⁸ He created the first ranked model – a theoretical shift. He was the most dominant influence on typological classification approaches, but he realized that variability overlaps and have clinal distributions:

All these differences run so insensibly, by so many shades and transitions, one into the other, that it is impossible to separate them by any but very arbitrary limits.⁷⁹

In the 19th century, race concepts held that humans could be divided into several *races* where moral and intellectual capabilities were not evenly distributed and mental abilities were associated with *racial* features. This was still based on the biblical view of creation (about 6,000 years), implying time was too short to explain variability. Polygenism evolved as opposed to environmentalism and the concept of biological determinism.

Polygenism (racial polyphyletism) was the opposing theory to monogenism (18th-19th century) and the *dominant* view in the US (19th century).⁸⁰ Samuel G. Morton (1799-1851) and Louise Agassiz (1807-1873) were prominent leaders. Morton measured cranial capacity and ranked “Caucasian,” “American,” and “Negro” groups, while Agassiz claimed “races” were created in different creation centers.⁸¹ This racialism held that ethnicity has a biological component besides the socio-cultural one.

Eventually, these claims were corrected. Franz Boas argued there was no relationship between racial biology and cultural achievement.⁸² Julian Huxley (1936) and others argued that zoological typology concepts were unsuitable for humans because universal cultural factors

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Milford H. Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari, “Paleoanthropology and Race,” in *A Companion to Paleoanthropology*, ed. David R. Begun (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013), 321–37, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118332344.ch17>.

⁸¹ David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 38-41.

⁸² Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, [Repr. d. Ausg.] New York, Macmillan, 1922, Classic Reprint Series (Lexington, Ky: Forgotten Books, 2011).

shaped us.⁸³ This prompted a disconnection of cultural and behavioral traits from biologically determined characteristics.

Today, increasing genetic knowledge proves the concept is obsolete.^{84 85 86 87} R. Lewontin (1972) identified that most variation (80-85%) is found within local geographic groups and only 10-15% between groups (using classic markers).⁸⁸ Thus, there is a higher chance of identity between two persons from distant populations. Traits often used for classification are not linked and involve complex, convergent evolution, adaptation, and patterns of variation shaped by culture, ecology, and geography, where clusters form through mating and distance. Rosenberg et al. 2002 found that through using molecular genetic markers: 94.6% of all variance is within populations, while 5.4 % is among populations.⁸⁹ Thus, there are geographic groups, but they do not represent subspecies but grouping results from dispersals and shared ancestry.

Racial typologies represent an arbitrary means of simplifying biological complexity. Humans are about 99.9% genetically identical. Human variability is shaped by isolation, gene flow, genetic drift, and natural selection. Skin color, eye form, and head shape are highly adaptive traits shaped by environmental stressors and selection. Thus, *race* is a political ideology that has maintained a racially stratified society, not biology. Like other social

⁸³ Jean Gayon, "History of the Concept of Allometry," *American Zoologist* 40, no. 5 (October 2000): 748–58, <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/40.5.748>.

⁸⁴ Heather J.H. Edgar and Keith L. Hunley, "Race Reconciled?: How Biological Anthropologists View Human Variation," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139, no. 1 (February 18, 2009): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.20995>.

⁸⁵ L. Lieberman, Rodney C. Kirk, and M. Corcoran, "The Decline of Race in American Physical Anthropology," 2003.

⁸⁶ Jennifer K. Wagner et al., "Anthropologists' Views on Race, Ancestry, and Genetics," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 162, no. 2 (February 2017): 318–27, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.23120>.

⁸⁷ Rama S. Singh, ed., "The Apportionment of Human Diversity: 25 Years Later," in *Thinking about Evolution: Historical, Philosophical, and Political Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁸⁸ R. C. Lewontin, "The Apportionment of Human Diversity," in *Evolutionary Biology*, ed. Theodosius Dobzhansky, Max K. Hecht, and William C. Steere (New York, NY: Springer US, 1972), 381–98, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4684-9063-3_14.

⁸⁹ N. A. Rosenberg, "Genetic Structure of Human Populations," *Science* 298, no. 5602 (December 20, 2002): 2381–85, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1078311>.

constructs, races are real cultural entities. For many BIPOC, affiliation with a racial group constitutes an integral part of their social identity and self-image. But social facts are not biological. In multiethnic communities, races are ethnic groups linked to ambiguous, often contradictory, and stereotypical ideal phenotypes.

Figure 1 Graph detailing typologies created by the author.

However, English cleric and economist Thomas Robert Malthus, best known for a simple notion in *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, published anonymously in 1798, argued that demographic growth will always exceed increases in food production unless slowed by *positive* checks to decrease birth rates (using a biologically determinist argument).⁹⁰ Malthus explained poverty with his “Malthusian Law of Population,” and he prescribed measures to improve it like those that economic elites, many paleoconservatives, and neoliberals still favor today, such as safeguarding private property rights and abolishing the scant laws protecting the poor.⁹¹

⁹⁰ John P. Henderson, “Introduction to Thomas Robert Malthus, ‘An Essay on the Principle of Population’, 1798,” in *Essays in the History of Mainstream Political Economy*, by Warren J. Samuels (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1992), 140–50, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-12266-0_7.

⁹¹ Margaret R. Somers and Fred Block, “From Poverty to Perversity: Ideas, Markets, and

Ironically, given Malthus's lasting notoriety, remarkably, his best-known notion—that population grows geometrically and agricultural production arithmetically—is not widely accepted.⁹² Malthus failed to forecast that advanced technologies and increased globalization would increase food output, slash food prices, and reduce *positive* checks on population growth. Nor did he expect the demographic transition from high fertility rates to low fertility rates and high mortality rates to low mortality rates, observed transnationally.⁹³ Thus, these same pseudoscientific typological concepts can apply not just to race but also to class. Class is not biologically determined nor whether one is housed or not.

Using cultural or biological typologies to explain social disparities ignores the externalities in a socially constructed political economy enforced through state violence, plus the flaws in such arbitrary groupings.

An Example: Stigma and Astigmatism in Suburbia

As these theories should be applied to any community, I shall restrict my analysis to one community with the proviso that the same demonstration can be produced for Downtown Los Angeles or any other major urban center with a houseless population.

The South Bay is a region of Greater Los Angeles, in the southwest corner of Los Angeles County, stretching along the southern shore of Santa Monica Bay. The South Bay comprises segments of the City of Los Angeles, fifteen independent municipalities, and unincorporated portions of Los Angeles county.⁹⁴ The Pacific Ocean surrounds the southwest area and the City of Los Angeles to the northeast.

Institutions over 200 Years of Welfare Debate," *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 2 (April 2005): 260–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000204>.

⁹² Michael Shermer, "Doomsday Catch," *Scientific American* 314, no. 5 (April 19, 2016): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0516-72>.

⁹³ Marc Edelman and Angelique Haugerud, eds., *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism*, Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 5 (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 2005).

⁹⁴ South Bay Cities Council of Governments, "About the South Bay: South Bay Cities Council of Governments," About the South Bay | South Bay Cities Council of Governments, 2021, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.southbaycities.org/about-us/about-south-bay/>.

According to Nancy Wilcox, co-chair of the South Bay Coalition to End Houselessness, most attempts to count houseless people are based on the numbers who use shelter services and counts in geographic areas where houseless people gather at night.⁹⁵ These methods exclude the numbers of people who double-up and live with family and friends but still lack a permanent home. Thus, while these numbers are helpful, population counts of houselessness are variable and likely to underestimate the externalities's full extent. Accurate counts of person experiencing houselessness are tough to obtain.

In 2020, total houselessness rose by three percent in the South Bay while increasing by twelfth percent in Los Angeles County.⁹⁶ However, South Bay's unsheltered houseless population is sixty-five percent of the houseless population, a more significant proportion than Central City East in Los Angeles.⁹⁷ South Bay persons living on the street increased by eight percent, while those living in vehicles decreased by ten percent.⁹⁸ There was seventy-seven houseless youth in the South Bay.⁹⁹ One hundred thirty-seven persons were staying at South Bay Houseless programs, a one-year increase of fifty-six percent.¹⁰⁰ Three hundred nineteen persons, a one-year increase of thirty-two percent, were receiving motel vouchers through the LA Department of Public Social Services, considered "crisis" housing.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Nancy Wilcox, Interview with SBCH Co-Chair, Zoom, February 17, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H-wAPg5Q9rJOt-_Rpz4fxQwqGyeOM_dx/view?usp=sharing.

⁹⁶ South Bay Cities Council of Governments, "About the South Bay: South Bay Cities Council of Governments," About the South Bay | South Bay Cities Council of Governments, 2021, accessed February 27, 2021, <https://www.southbaycities.org/about-us/about-south-bay/>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 2 Pareto graph detailing person experiencing houselessness by South Bay neighborhood created by the author according to 2020 SBDC data.¹⁰²

This graph demonstrates that Torrance, while not the vital few municipalities facing houselessness, has a significant proportion of persons experiencing houselessness. However, transients' travel should be noted, and this is just a snapshot of a night in January 2020. The

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

daytime reality is likely different, although data is unavailable. The figure also shows that moving unhoused peoples from one community to the next would solve no socioeconomic issues.

Figure 3 A Facebook post of Torrance Councilman Aurelio Mattucci where racialism, classism, and social stigma are displayed.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Aurelio Mattucci, "This is what I am trying to avoid in Torrance," Facebook, September 5, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/torrancetownhall/permalink/3605374692808419/>.

Figure 4 A Facebook post of Torrance Councilman Aurelio Mattucci.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Aurelio Mattucci, "Today, I visited the pallet homes (houseless shelter) in Redondo Beach," Facebook, February 22, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/aureliomattuccifans/posts/2901379743483060/>.

Mattucci suggests that being houseless is simply a choice and that US citizens should be threatened with violence if they do not comply with being relegated into a shelter in a polluted industrial area of Torrance. He openly acknowledges the houseless's issue in Torrance's streets-- He is not ignorant. The councilmember advocates for the local police department to spend the money to enforce all ordinances and laws that criminalize houselessness. He makes spurious claims that the houseless are defecating publicly, publicly using illicit drugs, and "trashing our neighborhoods" in a proud statement on Facebook. At the end of figure 3, he makes a bigoted remark he does not want Torrance to appear like Downtown Los Angeles.

Mattucci alludes not to a remedy to houselessness but a solution to keep the city "clean." He emphasizes relegating the houseless into an isolated area away from the middle-class residential areas and away from the public view as if they were the trash cans he brings to the street curb on trash day. Under the guise of finding a solution to houselessness, he states he wants to criminalize houselessness. He relishes the security guard, not for the safety of the houseless but the safety of those outside it. He also is not hesitant to post pictures of the unsheltered houseless people on Facebook. This alludes to a situation like one described in a particular two-parter *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* episode, "Past Tense," just as much as Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Talents* seems to have been a mirror.¹⁰⁵ This may be a case where one could not and cannot wake up Mattucci who is pretending to be asleep.

¹⁰⁵ Emily Van Der Werff, "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Accidentally Predicted the 2020s by writing about the 1990s," Vox, February 16, 2021, <https://www.vox.com/culture/22273263/star-trek-deep-space-nine-past-tense-prediction-2024>.

Aurelio Mattucci · February 21 at 9:43 AM · 🌐

A 40,000 sf Industrial Lot should accommodate up to 100 of these modular homes. The showers and restrooms would be in a separate trailer.

In an effort to remove the homeless from our streets, bus stops, etc., we need to provide shelter (Based on the Martin-Boise ruling). I don't subscribe to the ideology that every city needs to set up temporary shelters, but I do want our homeless off the streets, period. Along with these modular temporary shelters, I would personally request and require an Anti Camping Ordinance, or it's a worthless effort without it. I visited the Redondo Beach site and I was pleasantly surprised how clean and quiet it was. It is also away from residential areas. The facility has 24/7 security and a 10pm curfew. People are allowed to stay there on a temporary basis, but during that time a case worker will try to help them into more permanent solutions. The real issue is where, and will Measure H pay for it considering Measure H was not designed to pay for housing, yes you heard me, a homeless measure that doesn't pay for homes. This is a work in progress. The problem is in front of us, and now we need viable solutions.

64 Square Foot Shelter

The Pallet shelter is proven to help people experiencing homelessness transition into permanent housing, at a fraction of the cost of traditional shelter alternatives.

Set up in less than one hour, Pallet's dignified shelters are a scalable way to rapidly shelter your neighbors without homes.

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Figure 5 A Facebook post of Torrance Councilman Aurelio Mattucci.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Aurelio Mattucci, "A 40,000 sf Industrial Lot should accommodate up to 100 of these modular homes," Facebook, February 21, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/aureliomattuccifans/posts/2900490483571986/>.

Figure 6 A Facebook post of Mattucci bearing a striking resemblance to an OAN host's statement.^{107 108}

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/torrancetownhall/permalink/4277877798891435/>

¹⁰⁸ Namita Singh, "Right Wing News Host Appears to Object That Shooting a Homeless Person Means You 'End up in Jail,'" *The Independent*, April 7, 2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/stephanie-hamill-homeless-shooting-jail-b1827871.html>.

Figure 7¹⁰⁹ Councilmember Mattucci openly advocates for the criminalization of houselessness in another Facebook post.

As evident, Torrance Councilmember Aurelio Mattucci has not strayed from controversy.¹¹⁰ According to his campaign page, he works as the Torrance-based Mattucci Real Estate owner, and he is a Torrance Police Department Neighborhood Watch Captain. The realtor has a Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce Membership and is a West Torrance homeowner.¹¹¹

Mattucci's attitude parallels paleolibertarian Murray Rothbard's. Like his predecessor Ayn Rand, Rothbard was not a supporter of the poor and the houseless. Despite claiming his idyllic society would solve this systemic externality, his attitudes toward them show the contrary. Rothbard made it a frequent routine of ridiculing welfare and sometimes extending his derision to the poor.

A remarkable example is Chapter 8 of his book *For a New Liberty*, where Rothbard criticized the welfare state and the houseless until that point before bringing brutal hooks against welfare and the underprivileged.¹¹² His issues and solutions display his shameless fondness towards the rich while stigmatizing those who were not. Rothbard said that police should be unleashed on the houseless to "clear the streets of bums and vagrants," regarding where they would go; Rothbard's reply purely stated, "who cares?"¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/torrancetownhall/permalink/4376311932381354/>

¹¹⁰ Nick Green, "Torrance Councilman Draws Outrage with Remarks about Black Lives Matter," *Daily Breeze*, June 13, 2020, <https://www.dailybreeze.com/2020/06/13/torrance-councilman-draws-outrage-with-remarks-about-black-lives-matter/>.

¹¹¹ Aurelio Mattucci, "Aurelio Mattucci for Torrance City Council," Council, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.voteformattucci.com/>.

¹¹² Murray N Rothbard et al., *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto* (Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Inst., 2006).

¹¹³ -----, Llewellyn H Rockwell, and Center for Libertarian Studies, "Right-Wing Populism," in *The Irrepressible Rothbard: The Rothbard-Rockwell Report Essays of Murray N. Rothbard* (Burlingame, Calif.: Center for Libertarian Studies, Inc., 2000), <https://web.archive.org/web/20090205111301/https://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/ir/Ch5.html>.

Academics Lars Buur and Steffen Jensen argue that “what constitutes criminal offense within the formal law does not necessarily resonate with crimes against the moral community,”¹¹⁴ such as the criminalization of the houseless. Arresting or citing people residing on the roads does not fight houselessness. Splitting up encampments on public property where people are attempting to persist does not help people surmount suffering. It simply adds to that difficulty. The policemen, whose principal tools are fines, arrests, and threats of violence, are not a solution to hunger and houselessness. It is an immoral thing to do.

Arrests lead to further desolation, lost freedom, susceptibility to brutality and illness in jail, and property loss such as apparel, medications, sheets, family photos, and documents. Criminalization is profoundly damaging to people living in the most uncertain and exposed circumstances. Criminalization makes it more arduous for people to have any form of social mobility. Criminalization may drive people to move away from areas where enforcement is oppressive, and it does not encourage them to find shelter.

The criminalization of houselessness is part of larger neoliberal penalty in turning to law enforcement to solve societal problems, such as “illicit” drug addiction, mental illness, and poverty. This pattern has made the United States a leader in mass incarceration while only exacerbating those social problems caused by immoral neoliberalism. Criminalization begets houselessness. We should repudiate the immorality of criminalization and shift to house and assistance as a compassionate and practical answer to houselessness.

Neoliberal Astigmatism

Mayor Furey is the neoliberal figurehead of Torrance, CA. Patrick J. Furey was first elected to the Torrance City Council in 2008 where he gained his mayoral seat in 2014 and was

¹¹⁴ Lars Buur and Steffen Jensen, “Introduction: Vigilantism and the Policing of Everyday Life in South Africa,” *African Studies* 63, no. 2 (December 2004): 144, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020180412331318724>.

re-elected in 2018.¹¹⁵ Before his election to the Torrance City Council, he served as president of the North Torrance Homeowners Association, chair of the Torrance Unified School District's Personnel Commission, and various other committees such as the president of the Torrance Education Foundation for four terms.¹¹⁶ He resembles a similar middle-class lifestyle to Mattucci.

However, paleoconservatives like Councilmember Aurelio Mattucci have not been alone. Neoliberals silent about such accusations are just as liable in supporting the stigma towards houseless peoples. There have been no denunciations of his social media or statements in general. The sole exception is a small interaction during a city council meeting.

Figure 6 Video from a City Council Meeting in which Mayor Furey confronts Councilmember Mattucci.

¹¹⁵ City of Torrance Government, "Patrick J. Furey, Mayor," Patrick J. Furey, Mayor | City of Torrance, <https://www.torranceca.gov/government/city-council/furey>).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Neoliberal figures such as Mayor Furey participate in what I coin as *astigmatism*.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, astigmatism is an imperfection in the curvature of the eyes' cornea or lens that leads to blurred or distorted vision at near and far distances and is considered is very common.¹¹⁷ This can be used to describe the political field that the neoliberals reside. They do not just ignore externalities that disprove their normative claims, but they also have blurred vision when it comes to issues they do address. This is all while claiming to be opposed to those that stigmatize—hence *astigmatism*. In this clip, the claims that Mattucci makes on his social media are not the issue but rather the fact he posts those claims for all to see. In fact, Mayor Furey may agree with many of Mattucci's positions tacitly. Furey may simply word it in a *nicer* manner in private donor corners.

Political Economy of Social Exclusion

In the twentieth century, there was a fairly stable relationship between labor productivity and wages in the United States and other industrialized nation-states.¹¹⁸ As the economy grew and labor output increased, the amount of money workers took home in their paychecks grew at a similar rate. While this meant that the upper class took home a larger net slice of the profits, many workers felt that as the companies employing them got more affluent, they did.

Although, in 1980, that relationship broke down. In the *Great Decoupling*, productivity, output, and gross domestic product continued to grow, but wage growth for all but the upper class stalled.¹¹⁹ Over time, many people noticed that their monthly wages did not stretch as far as they used to, even though they were doing the same jobs at the same profitable businesses.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-astigmatism>

¹¹⁸ Josh Bivens, Elise Gould, Lawrence Mishel, and Heidi Sherholz, "Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge," *Economic Policy Institute*, June 4, 2014. <https://www.epi.org/publication/raising-americas-pay/>.

¹¹⁹ Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, "The Great Decoupling," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (January 2013): 61–63, <https://doi.org/10.1111/npqu.11362>.

The gap between productivity and a typical worker's compensation has increased dramatically since 1979

Productivity growth and hourly compensation growth, 1948–2019

Notes: Data are for compensation (wages and benefits) of production/nonsupervisory workers in the private sector and net productivity of the total economy. "Net productivity" is the growth of output of goods and services less depreciation per hour worked.

Source: EPI analysis of unpublished Total Economy Productivity data from Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Labor Productivity and Costs program, wage data from the BLS Current Employment Statistics, BLS Employment Cost Trends, BLS Consumer Price Index, and Bureau of Economic Analysis National Income and Product Accounts

Updated from Figure A in *Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge* (Bivens et al. 2014)

Economic Policy Institute

Figure 8.¹²⁰ Graph demonstrating the productivity-pay gap by the Economic Policy Institute.

In the 1990s, efforts to provide services gave way to laws that tried to *contain* homelessness, making it a criminal offense to loiter, panhandle, or congregate in public spaces.¹²¹ Anti-homeless laws passed during the 1990s and 2000s included the outlawing of sitting on sidewalks, loitering, urban camping, panhandling, and gathering.¹²² Neoliberal legislators passed additional laws to privatize formerly public spaces such as outdoor malls and

¹²⁰ Josh Bivens, et al. "Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge," *Economic Policy Institute*, 2014.

¹²¹ Shirley V. Truong, "'Please Do Not Feed the Homeless': The Role of Stereotyping and Media Framing on the Criminalization of Homelessness" (University of California, Santa Cruz, 2012), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9jv4v5nw>.

¹²² Ibid.

some parks.¹²³ By privatizing these places, exclusionary policies became more manageable to enforce than in other publicly accessible areas. While that provides a way for ethical citizenship, it does not provide the unhoused public shelter.¹²⁴ Private charities cannot match the demand inherent in the Third Way system that has subsisted despite ethical citizenship. For example, Torrance has privatized its Trash collection and has used its roads as collateral for the debt.¹²⁵

It is normalized for people not to be a fan of the poor and the houseless. Despite neoliberal ideologues claiming their ideal society would “deal” with them, attitudes toward them show the contrary. Within the mainstream political agenda, politicians make a frequent routine of ridiculing welfare and sometimes extend their derision to the poor and unhoused as the “other.” This is where social exclusion plays a significant role.

According to Nancy Wilcox, Torrance has severely delayed completing a “homeless plan” required to receive Measure H funds. These Measure H funds are used to provide temporary shelter and obtain outreach workers. However, Torrance has only worked on a houseless plan while cities like Redondo beach in Mattucci’s post have built shelters for the houseless. However, shelters are merely one step in a long-term solution, and many social obstacles such as housing discrimination face potential Section 8 tenants.

Framing of Mobilization

In their study of houseless mobilization in eight American cities, Cress and Snow (2000) uncovered that houseless groups furthering articulate and centered frames were more likely to secure representation on city task forces to procure capital and necessities for houseless

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Andrea Karin Muehlebach, *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

¹²⁵ Elizabeth Bauer, “Forget Pension Obligation Bonds. Two Cities Are - No Joke - Leasing Their Streets to Fund Pensions,” *Forbes*, October 2, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ebauer/2020/09/02/forget-pension-obligation-bonds-two-cities-are-no-jokeleasing-their-streets-to-fund-pensions/?sh=5dbe00f72233>.

people.¹²⁶ In various combinations, activists' use of disruptive tactics, their access to sympathetic allies and proactive accomplices, and city agencies targeting houselessness also mattered. However, Cress and Snow unswervingly found that when groups used analytic and extrapolative frames that fixated on explicit problems (for example, shelter conditions rather than "houselessness"), ascribed blame on specific groups rather than "the government," and proposed viable solutions, such as the "investigation of shelter conditions," they were more likely to win results.

In Los Angeles, the municipal government swept the Echo Park encampment for a \$500,000 "rehabilitation effort" after houselessness was exacerbated during the pandemic and ignited locals' fears over litter and public health.¹²⁷ Some community bureaucrats allowed houseless people, who had been residing in the park, a space in one of some inner-city hotels, which the majority accepted.¹²⁸ Some were vexed by the guidelines levied at the inns and stated they preferred the openness of being in the open air.¹²⁹ Previously, the encampment had grown to almost 200 tents and contained practically half the park, growing into a cooperative with a joint food pantry, a vegetable garden, and a semblance of policing.¹³⁰

Police do sweeps of houseless encampments to enforce camping bans. If houseless people refuse to move and their property, they face arrest, fines, or warrants. They face a threat of violence from the state. Landlords will later use this offense as a reason to reject future apartment applications. These misdemeanor convictions exclude someone from housing or even Section 8 housing.

¹²⁶ Daniel M. Cress and David A. Snow, "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation, and Framing," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 4 (January 2000): 1063–1104, <https://doi.org/10.1086/210399>.

¹²⁷ Benjamin Oreskes et al., "It's the Endgame for the Echo Park Homeless Encampment," *LA Times*, March 25, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2021-03-25/echo-park-homeless-encampment-protests-target-lapd>.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Over 200 protesters had met the officers.¹³¹ City Park Rangers and Los Angeles Police Department officers taped notices on trees and light poles at the park, where houseless people have lived since 2019. The placards said the park would close and gave notice that all property must be moved about “tents, chairs, tables, backpacks, bags, and personal items.”¹³² Some houseless people were disinclined to go to the provided rooms extended to citizens living at the park, worried about being searched and subjected to curfews.

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Poverty is the incapacity to provide for one’s well-being—that is, being too poor to get adequate food, shelter, clothing, or health care. External conditions often cause poverty; the individual is powerless to alter or improve, including political oppression, periods of war and reverberations, “acts of God,” disease, economic policy, or mental illness. This does not justify malice or stigma towards impoverished persons, including unhoused peoples.

Large-scale houselessness is a comparatively recent phenomenon in the United States; it was not until the 1980s that it began because of lack of affordable housing, the failure of wages at the lower end to keep pace with housing costs, and the decreased ability of families to afford essential services.¹³³ Coupled with these factors have been social changes, such as the rise in using addictive illicit drugs and the increasing number of single-parent and teen-headed households--groups more vulnerable to houselessness. Further, the trend has been to move more people with mental health problems from health service accommodation into mainstream society, and this has created a new group of vulnerable people.¹³⁴ The response to those vulnerable has been codified stigma.¹³⁵

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Nancy Wilcox, Interview with SBCH Co-Chair, Zoom, February 17, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H-wAPg5Q9rJOt-_Rpz4fxQwqGyeOM_dx/view?usp=sharing.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*, California Series in Public Anthropology 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

The neoliberal state of capitalism has played a historical role in reproducing inequality and social exclusion of economically weaker classes. Social problems appear as individual misfortunes or inadequacies through neoliberal language, but the market alone cannot resolve possible social crises. Thousands of children go hungry, thousands of families with children go houseless, and millions are without jobs, education, or health care. However, in a commodity-driven society, these concerns are questions gratuitously relegated to the market as part of a ‘shock doctrine.’¹³⁶ Neoliberals and conservatives of all forms close schools and slash essential services because an inanimate budget cannot be “balanced” and to do right for the stock market—a dismal display of the upper class’s sentiments that ascends notwithstanding deadly global pandemics, ethnic riots, and mass unemployment. Under the *advanced* American state of capitalism, private profits come before fundamental human rights guaranteed under international law, and stigma and astigmatism plays a notable role.

¹³⁶ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, 1st ed (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007).

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