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ADVOCATING AGAINST THE GRAIN:
EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL CONTEXTS ON ADVOCACY
BEHAVIOR AMONG HOMELESS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Advocating Against the Grain:

Examining the Importance of Local Contexts on Advocacy

Behavior Among Homeless Service Organizations

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Homelessness is a wicked problem, due at least in part to the disenfranchised nature of the population. This population lacks a voice in the democratic process, and subsequently has little leverage to change the perceptions and conditions they face. Many of our most wicked problems require advocacy that can link the voices and needs of the community to public policy efforts and the public sector at large. Human service nonprofits have direct relationships with the homeless as well as essential links to these local communities and the public sector, and may be an ideal vehicle as advocates while simultaneously addressing homelessness.

Advocacy is viewed as an integral part of the function of human service nonprofit organizations. Yet the advocacy road for these organizations is fraught with complexities, often leading to adulterated or nonexistent advocacy activities. Extant literature points to an especially challenging advocacy arena for homeless service organizations to engage in. There are a multitude of barriers: whether due to confusion over the legality of certain behavior, fears of political or funder backlash, or more simply a lack of financial or professional capacity. Given these barriers, it seems that we should see very little engagement in policy advocacy behavior by homeless service organizations, yet there are

examples of organizations that break through these barriers to advocate on behalf of their clients in some extensive ways.

The research on nonprofit advocacy behavior, particularly in human service organizations, is imprecise and non-predictive. This dissertation looks to highlight and adjudicate the gaps in this budding literature, by examining homeless service organizations in-depth, through a case study of homeless service organizations in Philadelphia and Houston, to better ascertain how local context can explain whether, when and how these service provider organizations will break through the barriers to advocacy. The author also examines the types of advocacy activities homeless service organizations employ, and more importantly, how they make those decisions. The analysis allows for a more refined definition of “advocacy” in the field of human service nonprofits, and also aids in the development of a more nuanced typology of nonprofit advocacy behavior.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

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This research is dedicated to everyone who has, or is currently experiencing the lack of a safe and stable living environment. This research is grounded in the belief that your experiences with homelessness are profoundly unjust, and that we, as a society, can do much better. It is also grounded in the undying belief that we have the ability, the fortitude, and the creativity to eradicate this epidemic.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Copyright Page	
Title Page	
Abstract Page	ii
Acknowledgements and Dedication	iv
Tables of Contents	v
Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Problem	1
Chapter 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	11
Chapter 3 - Methodology	31
Chapter 4 - Houston Case Study	48
Chapter 5 - Philadelphia Case Study	78
Chapter 6 – Synthesis and Discussion	105
Chapter 7 - Conclusion	127
Appendices	136
Bibliography	150
Curriculum Vitae	162

Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Problem

Wicked problems, according to Rittel and Webber's 1973 treatise on the subject, are persistent problems within society that do not have a clear "correct" solution. These problems are inherently complex. Definitions of the problems and sufficiency of solutions are political, and have "no definitive or objective answers" (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Homelessness is a wicked problem, due at least in part to the disenfranchised nature of the population. This population lacks a voice in the democratic process, and subsequently has little leverage to change the perceptions and conditions they face. Many of our most wicked problems require advocacy that can link the voices and needs of the community to policymakers, public policy efforts, and the public sector at large.

Human Service Nonprofits (referred to as "HSNPs" throughout this dissertation) take up an important space within society, focusing their energy and resources on serving some of the most underserved and marginalized groups and some of the most pressing and wicked social issues, such as poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, foster care, and prison re-entry. In particular, organizations providing services to the homeless face a formidable dynamic. These organizations often stand as the only potential voice to advocate on behalf of social welfare issues related to homelessness that have gone unaddressed or even exacerbated by both the private and public sectors.

Homelessness as a Wicked Problem

The "wicked" nature of homelessness is rooted in its complexity as a social problem. While the experience of homelessness is by no means an issue new to modern society, and can be traced throughout history especially in times of economic distress

(Rossi, 1990; Jencks, 1995, Levinson, 2004), homelessness as a persistent crisis only became recognized as, what C. Wright Mills (1967) termed, a public problem in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Stern, 1984; Hopper, 1991; Blau, 1992; Baum & Burnes, 1993; Baumohl, 1996). Additionally, research suggests that after a period of significant decline in the 1950s and 1960s, homelessness rapidly increased in the 1980s (Rossi, 1990; Burt, 1991; Burt, 1992), and according to Rossi (1990), the composition of people experiencing homelessness shifted as well, becoming younger, more likely to be a member of a minority group, and experiencing severe poverty. Levinson (2004) points out that while this composition shift was happening, the general public was unaware, often conflating the homeless to drunken panhandlers living on skid rows.

Regardless of the naiveté of public perceptions, scholars agree that the public's attention to homelessness sharply increased in the 1980s (Burt, 1992; Jencks, 1995). This could be aligned with the increases in the homeless populations, but scholars have also pointed to increased media coverage that raised the issue of homelessness to the national spotlight. For example, a famous expose on the extent of homelessness in America was published in Newsweek in 1984 (Alter, 1984), giving newfound attention through a national, mainstream audience. Media coverage of this growing problem only increased from there (Levinson, 2004). It is clear that the 1980s shifted the way both public policy and the general public engaged with the issue of homelessness. In response, governments at all levels were forced to respond to public outcry of what was at least reported to be a growing problem. New programs to respond to the crisis were created, largely in urban areas, across the country, with varying levels of public funds committed to the issue. As

Hopper's (2003) robust historical review highlights, there was no shortage of approaches and service models being created. Among these were city shelters, single-room-occupancy (SRO) programs, transitional housing programs, supportive housing programs, and day shelters. Most cities spent extensive time and effort to create "10-year plans" to end homelessness (Sommer, 2001; Sparks, 2012). Much of this early development of the homeless services response was about trial and error, and operating this work with very limited financial support, often in cities that were themselves in fiscal crisis (Sommer, 2001; Hopper, 2003).

Over the last four decades, the homeless service field has continued to morph and re-shape as nimbly as possible with the information learned along the way. This re-shaping is often the result of program models and approaches going in and out of style over that time (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, n.d.). Sometimes deemed too costly, or ineffective, these changing models have spurred constantly changing policies. However, part of the ongoing challenge in responding to trends and data is that it requires the field and the policy (and funding) to be in constant dialogue. If the data and expertise from the field are not a vibrant part of ongoing policy debate, programs and policies and funding can quickly become out of alignment with street-level trends.

The vast majority of the funding to address homelessness in the United States comes through federal funds under the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (National Alliance, n.d.). Additional resources for homeless-related programming also comes through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and smaller pots from the U.S.

Departments of Education and Labor. Given HUD's role as the key funder, the definition of "homeless" under HUD programs has become the prevailing interpretation in the field. HUD defines homelessness through four categories to determine eligibility of services and assistance (HUD Definition, 2013):

1. Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including a subset of individuals who are exiting an institution where they resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
2. Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
3. Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; or
4. Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

This definition has been changed and updated considerably over the years, and remains contentious within the field. One of the overarching complications is that, for decades, each federal agency has defined homeless in its own way, creating confusion (Cohen, 2018). This issue was significantly improved in 2009 with the re-authorization of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) alongside the HEARTH Act (2009). While the USICH was initially created under the McKinney Vento Act in

1987, this 2009 reauthorization was designed to help bridge the divides between federal agencies, address definitional differences, and ensure comprehensive communication on strategies to address homelessness (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2015). This interagency structure improved the connection and accountability across disparate federal programs, but many of the compartmental fissures remain as each agency still retains its ability to define the problem and population to be served.

To disperse the bulk of homeless service funds into communities, HUD uses the Continuum of Care (CoC) model designed in the 1990s, as a means for integrating local planning of a comprehensive service system at the local level (Hambrick & Rog, 2000; Wong et al, 2006). While the CoC model had been used under the McKinney Vento Act, the passage of the Hearth Act in 2009 initiated some changes to how CoCs operated. Namely, under the new legislation, each CoC was required to have a lead agency, or “collaborative applicant” that would serve as the administrator of all funds, and further empowered these lead agencies to oversee the strategic planning, evaluation, and data management of the CoC (Housing and Urban Development, 2009). Under this new system, local or regional CoCs develop a comprehensive plan for their community and compile a single, joint funding application to HUD for the entire CoC. This is designed to ensure collaboration and avoid duplication of services, as well as the ability for local communities to address the needs specific to their communities, assuming they can fit functionally into HUD’s overarching guidelines and established priorities. This consortial structure has the ability to ensure that local providers have a voice in the development of local homeless response; however, as Wong and her colleagues (2006) point out, structural differences across CoCs can lead to different experiences of local control.

CoCs require that a lead agency serve as the point of contact for the joint application to HUD. Across the country, we see a wide variance of how CoCs are structured (some led by city or county agencies, some led by nonprofit providers or coalitions, some multi-county). This variance appears to impact the operations of the CoC in myriad ways (Hambrick & Rog, 2000), which will be further examined within the following chapters. The CoC model, on the surface, lends potential for local representation in the allocation of resources as well as access to decision-making and shared vision of the local homeless response system, but the street-level interactions in the system need to be examined further to understand if this potential is being actualized effectively.

As Byrne and his colleagues (2013) found, the complexity of homelessness remains one of the core issues related to its persistence as a public problem. Homelessness can often be misconstrued as simply a result of not having a stable place to live, and by common definition, this would be true. The complexity is that the experience of homelessness is largely a symptom of deeper rooted issues at play (Baum & Burns, 1993; Jencks, 1994). It is most often the result of a confluence of any number of factors such as poverty, joblessness, mental and physical health, disparities in education and social services, crime, physical and sexual abuse, etc. (Koegel, et al., 1996; Byrne et al, 2013). As cited above, most research suggests the population of people experiencing homelessness is growing (Byrne, et al, 2013; Agans et al, 2014), and has been growing since at least the 1980s. However, recent trends may suggest a very recent reversal that merits consideration.

HUD's most recent data (Housing and Urban Development, 2017) present some positive trends in the reduction of homelessness since 2007 in some cities, citing

decreases in each sub-category of homelessness. The dilemma in celebrating these successes lies in the contested methods we employ to make these claims. HUD administers (through CoCs) what is referred to as “Point-in-Time” (PIT) counts across the nation. These counts, which generally happen each year across all CoCs intend to document all experiences of homelessness on a particular given night, both sheltered and unsheltered. “Sheltered” individuals and families refer to those that are staying in a shelter at the time of the count, while “unsheltered” are those individuals and families living on the street. To accomplish this PIT count, HUD has developed a Methodology Guide (Housing and Urban Development, 2014) that establishes best practices for CoCs to follow. Their methodology, however, has trouble standing up to scrutiny given the variance of capacity across the country. CoCs grapple with unique challenges such as the wide geographic areas, the number of volunteers (and training) needed to perform the count, the expertise level (or lack thereof) of the volunteers performing the count, and the potential for human error in the method. These counts are problematic, and assumed to be under-representative as a whole (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2017). Recent research into the experiences of homelessness by school-age children and youth shows that the PIT counts of this population are severely undercounting (Voices of Youth Count, 2017). Similarly, Agans and his colleagues (2014) introduced a new estimator into one local PIT count that suggests that the “hidden homeless” population, or the population typically not counted in the PIT methodology, could be between 25-35%.

Nevertheless, the PIT count is commonly considered to be the best current method for determining the extent of homelessness. This dilemma remains, and has a two-fold complication for the homeless service system as a whole. First, a significant

under-estimation of the number of people experiencing homelessness misrepresents the nature and extent of the crisis. Second, this number is the essential component on both the funding that will be allocated nationally and locally to respond to homelessness (meaning ineffective resources), as well as the publicly reported number to the general public (meaning the dissemination of misinformation about a crisis). Effectively funding, addressing, and eliminating a wicked problem like homelessness demands a clear understanding of the scope of the crisis. At present, uncertainty and skepticism remain about how to accurately measure the scope of homelessness.

The Role of the Service Provider as Advocate

In modern American society, nonprofit organizations are faced with increasingly challenging conditions for survival, with decades of federal and state retrenchment and trends toward privatization, even of human service delivery. HSNPs find themselves continually forced to make their case for relevancy and desperately scratch to get even a small piece of an ever-diminishing pot of financial resources. Given this environment, there are a multitude of reasons why HSNPs in particular should be encouraged to engage in full-scale policy advocacy campaigns, using the entire range of tactics to promote the importance of the social issues they work with. Yet we seem to see rather limited forms of policy advocacy, if any, occurring among HSNPs (Schmid et al., 2008).

In fact, various theoretical perspectives suggest a host of reasons why these organizations hesitate to engage in any advocacy at all. Whether it be for reasons of dependence on scarce public funds, fear of breaking from “normal” behavior, or even resource allocation challenges, HSNPs are unlikely to engage in direct forms of policy advocacy (Onyx, 2010; Mosley, 2011). However, there are also examples of HSNPs that

buck this trend and engage in considerable policy advocacy behavior (Berry and Arons, 2003; Chaves et al., 2004). What causes these organizations to seemingly go against the grain and break through the multitude of barriers that block human service organizations from participating in the policy advocacy arena on behalf of the populations they serve?

Denhardt and Denhardt's (2011) seminal work, regarding the need for a New Public Service paradigm, called for government to be directly responsive to the needs of its citizens. The needs and concerns of the homeless are muted due to severe marginalization. Homeless service providers are often, and increasingly so, the ground-level experts on the particular barriers and challenges of the individuals and families they serve, and also on the direct policy implementation and policy barriers faced within this crisis. Despite this considerable expertise, there is significant scholarly debate on how this expertise, and the voice of the most marginalized populations of society, finds its way (or doesn't) to policy-makers.

Policy advocacy has been widely understood as a key tenet for nonprofits to engage and serve their constituencies, give voice to issues and people who have been marginalized, and promote social justice (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014). Interest group and social movement research has been exploring the phenomena of nonprofit political advocacy (Walker, 1991; Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998; Marwell, 2007); however much of the research in this area has focused on the activities of advocacy organizations that specifically focus on issue advocacy as their primary function, rather than service delivery. Human service nonprofit organizations is the center of this study, as their extensive, direct connection and expertise in working with people experiencing homelessness likely represents an untapped base of knowledge about the particular

challenges of serving and eliminating a wicked problem like homelessness. As Mosley (2011) points out, the growing number of HSNPs, and their increasing role as contracted service providers, develops new possibilities for HSNPs to influence social policy. The work of this research is to examine that potential within local contexts to tease out how homeless service providers navigate this complex space.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

An Overview of the Nonprofit Sector

The nonprofit sector has developed a storied, yet contested role in American society, and informal voluntary activity long pre-dates even the dawn of the United States as a nation. The writings of Alexis de Tocqueville celebrate the many “associations” being created in early America (de Tocqueville, 1842), and that tradition of developing associations around interests and causes has continued and morphed in a number of ways into what we understand today as the nonprofit or “third” sector. Lester Salamon’s work has highlighted the “mythology” of the nonprofit sector in modern society (Salamon, 1999) and how an accurate understanding of what a nonprofit organization is, and what it does, has largely been obscured. This mythological nature of the nonprofit sector, according to Salamon, is born from the widely diverse set of organizations it encompasses.

In a very broad sense, the nonprofit sector can be understood best by what it isn’t. It is the sector of structured society that is both non-governmental and not profit-retaining, which is what separates nonprofit organizations and associations from the traditional public (government) and private (for-profit) sector. However, it is important to note here that while nonprofit organizations often interact in public activities, and serve as providers of services often paid for by the government, they are indeed private entities (Frumkin, 2002).

Nonprofit organizations play an important “third” role in society, often designed to fill a variety of gaps left by the private sector or the public sector. Nonprofits may respond to “market failures” (see Weisbrod, 1978; Salamon, 1987) in which the private

market has created inefficient or inequitable distributions of goods or needs to society. Nonprofits may also respond to “government failures” (see Weisbrod, 1978; Young, 1983) in which the public sector has not appropriately addressed the provision of services or access to public goods.

Given the multitude of both market and government failures that can occur, what we see over time, particularly beginning with the New Deal era (Hall, 2006; Salamon, 1999) is the development of an extensive and widely varying sector of nonprofit organizations, conceived to address countless issues (Boris & Steuerle, 2006). That complexity of the world of nonprofit organizations has led to Salamon’s “mythology” of the sector, or what he describes as the poorly understood sector (Salamon, 1999). Today, the nonprofit sector includes voluntary associations and clubs, day-care centers, homeless service-providers, institutions of higher education, hospitals, and even political action committees! To keep up and make sense of this incredibly diverse sector, the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) created a code to distinguish nonprofit “tax exempt” organizations by the types of work that they do. There are no less than thirty separate distinctions of organizations within the IRS code of tax-exempt organizations that govern a variety of activities and behaviors related to the retention of this tax exempt status.

Tax-exemption is one of the core features of nonprofit organizations. Tax exemption, in simplified terms has two important functions. First, it allows the organization exemption from most taxes such as federal income tax, most state taxes, and typically sales and property taxes, which reduces the operating costs of the tax-exempt organization. Second, for a sub-set of nonprofit organization, tax exemption also allows

the organization to offer tax deductibility on donations made by private donors, a benefit largely designed to incentivize private donations to charitable causes (Simon, Dale, and Chisolm, 2006).

As mentioned previously, nonprofits are by legal definition not profit-retaining, meaning that they cannot distribute surpluses to shareholders or board members (Ott and Dicke, 2001). Additionally, nonprofits are limited in the amount of commercial activity they can engage in, with only mission-related enterprises being permissible by the IRS (Arrow, 2000; Froelich, 1999). Given these limitations, the vast majority of the nonprofit sector is in constant need to find the necessary funds to operate. They tend to live in a world of scarce resources. Combined with a constantly expanding sector of nonprofit organizations, competition for these scarce resources is stiff, creating a never-ending game of convincing the government, private foundations or corporations, and private individuals to support the cause; “selling” the mission, the work, and the impact of the organization to keep the proverbial (or literal) doors open. This struggle for resources becomes a quest to make the case for the organization’s (or their clients’) worthiness of the donation or investment, and creating an environment of financial instability at all times for nonprofit organizations.

Human Service Nonprofits as a Sub-Sector

Within the legal category of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations are those defined as “charitable, religious, or educational organizations” by subsection 501c(3) nonprofits. My research focuses on a sub-category of the so-called 501c3 organizations; those referred to as Human Service Nonprofits (HSNPs). HSNPs are designed specifically to respond to variety of human needs focused on issues such as: poverty, housing instability,

inequality, drug use, physical and sexual abuse, social welfare, etc. Many human services are wrapped up, conceptually, in “human rights” and can be understood as stemming from market or government failure.

Like the nonprofit sector as a whole, HSNPs are often working in an environment of intense resource scarcity. According to a national survey of the human service sector by Berry and Arons (2003), the breakdown of funding sources for HSNPs equates to: Government (33%), Private Donors (19%), Fees for Services (17%), Events (11%), Foundations (6%), Corporations (5%), and Other (9%). While the largest portion of this funding pie comes from the government, Berry and Arons further describe the conservative nature of this number, as a large portion of fees for services would also come from government subcontracts, making the reliance on government sources of funds even higher for HSNPs, on average.

This reliance on government funding as the majority of financial support for HSNPs makes intuitive sense considering both the nature of the work and the historical context of the development of the HSNP sector. Indeed, much of the development of the HSNP sector in the United States begins with the Depression era and New Deal policies; a time of particular strife and struggle. The New Deal significantly increased spending on public welfare (Skocpol et al, 1988) in support of human services, some through direct government programs, and others through the subcontracting service provision through HSNPs (Smith and Lipsky, 1993). Of note, the establishment of these policies and the subsequent funding to address the issues at hand, were by nature matters of the “public good.” Over time, many of the programs created under The New Deal to provide a social safety net were chipped away. Throughout this time and leading up to the Reagan

presidency, political conservatives argued that government spending had become far too bloated (O'Connor, 2012). The Reagan Administration subsequently cut portions of social spending from the federal budget, such as housing for low- and moderate-income families, in favor of a heavier reliance on private markets (Pierson, 1994), and devolved much of the decision-making on funding social or human services to state and local levels, for which there were nearly no additional resources (Johnson, 1991).

The resulting environment became the new and persistent reality for the nonprofit sector at large, but particularly for HSNPs. It is a culture of resource scarcity, and the call to provide more and better human services, with fewer resources. Additionally, the competition for resources often happens between like-minded organizations that might otherwise be ideal partners. Nimble (or corporate-mimicking) organizations became favored in the environment of scarce resources. Decreasing pools of funds, coupled with increasing numbers of nonprofit organizations, create further gaps in services. In short, this environment is making human service provision less effective, not more effective.

In response to increasing scarcity of resources, HSNPs learned how to professionalize; not necessarily in their services, but certainly in their marketing, grant-writing, and fundraising. This focus on selling themselves helped HSNPs be more competitive in this suppressed funding environment. The hiring of corporate staff might increase their access to needed funds, but also potentially diminishes indigenous knowledge of the issues they were hired to address (see DeFilippis, 2004; O'Connor, 2012).

HSNPs are now predominantly focused on funding their work (Mosley, 2012). This shift in perspective from mission and service provision to organizational

maintenance or survival may create a mismatch between the goals of the organization and the activities they engage in. It may also produce organizational goals that are out of alignment with the mission of the organization. This dilemma has spawned the colloquial concept of “mission drift” that has become commonplace in nonprofit vernacular; responding to funding opportunities more frequently than to constituent needs. The survival mode of the HSNP sector as a whole could be a powerful determinant of organizational motivations, and the ways that leaders see their role in human service work. Additionally, this funding environment may predict lower levels of advocacy engagement by human service nonprofit, or perhaps variation in the types of advocacy activities they employ.

Human Service Nonprofit Policy Advocacy in the Literature

Research on the advocacy activities of human service nonprofits (HSNPs) demonstrates a fairly complicated scenario, with a wide range of measures on how extensively these organizations are indeed engaging in advocacy. Using survey data, both Berry & Arons (2003) and Mosley (2010) report that large percentages of organizations participate in advocacy activities; 75% and 57% respectively in their studies. Studies by Salamon (2002) and Schmid, et al (2008) suggest that organizations engaging in advocacy are more limited in scale. As Almog-Bar & Schmid (2014) point out, much of the variation is an artifact of the research methods used to measure advocacy.

Advocacy in the nonprofit sector literature is most often defined as “any attempt to influence the decisions of any institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest” (Jenkins, 1987, p.297). This definition has been by far the most cited for its broad nature. How advocacy is conceptualized and operationalized becomes an extremely important

factor in how we understand and measure the activity itself. The conceptualization of “advocacy” is of particular interest given the confusion of the term for practitioners (Berry and Arons, 2003) and its relation to lobbying specifically, which is a regulated legal activity. In addition, Berry and Arons’ national survey indicates a deep misunderstanding by most non-profits about what types of advocacy activities they are legally allowed to perform, and which they are not (Berry and Arons, 2003). Confusion regarding the lobbying guidelines has long been a challenge for nonprofit organizations, and HSNPs in particular (Boris and Mosher-Williams, 1998; Berry and Arons, 2003; Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2014). IRS tax code (Internal Revenue Service, n.d.) stipulates that tax-exempt nonprofits may not use a “substantial part” of their organization’s budget on lobbying, providing a significant lack of specificity for charitable organizations to follow. However, to complicate matters further, lobbying behavior must also comply with state, which can differ significantly by state (Bolder Advocacy, 2018), furthering the complexity by which organizations must understand their legal environment.

There is also a relatively unknown clause within the IRS code that allows tax-exempt organizations to engage in lobbying more extensively. This is known as the H-Election. The option to take the H-Election has been part of the code since 1976, and is open to any charitable organization. This election allows for a significant increase in allowable lobbying expenditures, for most service providers up to and beyond \$500,000 annually, and is filed with a simple form. However, the rule that prohibits the use of federal funds for lobbying remains, meaning that any additional funds for this activity must be raised from private means. Claiming the H-Election clears up much of the gray area surrounding the lobbying guidelines traditionally misunderstood by charitable

organizations. While this solution to the political activity fears is simple, the dilemma is that the vast majority of nonprofits have never heard of it. Berry and Arons' (2003) national survey of nonprofits found that only 2.5% of all 501c3 nonprofits surveyed have selected the H-Election option.

To better understand the advocacy behavior of HSNPs, researchers have attempted a number of approaches. Most have explored the tactics or advocacy strategies employed by nonprofits, correlated with an array of independent variables such as funding sources, size of organization by budget, and organization age, among others. As Almog and Schmid (2014) point out, we must proceed with this analysis with considerable caution, as there have been inconsistencies in how advocacy has been bound and defined, which could explain the variation and disagreements in the results. For instance, Chaves et al. (2004) found that government funding seemed to have a positive effect on nonprofit political behavior, yet their work was not able to delineate between various types of advocacy, just project an overall trend in political behavior in general. Salamon (2002) and Mosley (2012) see similar results likely due to their broad definition of advocacy. Each of these studies show increases in policy advocacy behavior over time, but do not differentiate between the types of advocacy that are occurring and do not grapple with what may be shifts in the tactics that organizations employ. This is an essential distinction in respect to the shift from mission and service provision to organizational survival and maintenance described in the previous section above. It creates a distinction between “advocacy for client needs” and “advocacy for organization needs.”

To get at a more precise understanding of what may influence HSNP policy advocacy behavior, and especially differences in the types of tactics that directors engage in, a cleaner categorization of behaviors is needed. Mosley's (2011) work aims to deal with this, and comes up with a distinction between insider and indirect tactics, with "outsider" tactics being defined as a specific subset of her "indirect" tactics classification. For Mosley, insider tactics "are intended to change policy or regulation by working directly with policy-makers and other institutional elites" that often confers legitimacy to an organization or its issues. Indirect tactics and outsider tactics are more confrontational and do not require inside connections (Mosley, 2011, p. 439). Onyx et al. (2010) discuss distinctions between "institutional" and "radical" types of advocacy by HSNPs, but are much more interested in what they see as a trend toward a merged form of advocacy that is not distinctly radical or institutional, but a hybrid behavior they call "advocacy with gloves on," advocacy behavior that is loud and stern, but also professional and cautious. Onyx and her colleagues attribute this to a trend in professionalization and formalization of the nonprofit sector. Mosley (2011) and Donaldson (2007) agree, with each seeing trends toward institutionalization of nonprofits across the board.

While there are discrepancies in the volume of advocacy behavior HSNPs engage in, recent research provides evidence that much of the advocacy behavior that is occurring is of an "insider" or cooperative nature, as opposed to more indirect, confrontational, or "outsider" forms of behavior (see Chaves et al, 2004; Mosley 2011; Onyx, 2010; and Mosley, 2012).

If the trend of HSNPs is to engage primarily in insider tactics of advocacy, if at all, this begs the question of whether advocacy is occurring more for organizational

maintenance purposes than for the policy benefits of clients. In an environment of increasingly professional relations between nonprofits and government, it is important for an independent nonprofit sector to promote necessary discussion on issues of social welfare. Given the human service nonprofit sector's direct work in communities particularly for underserved and vulnerable populations, a lack of voice in public policy may result in missing expertise within the discourse. Does an insider strategy of advocacy focused on organizational maintenance simply lead to further co-optation and suppression of the important democratic voice that a more client-serving model requires, or could insider tactics provide an ingenious strategy for nonprofits to gain more political leverage than they would otherwise acquire through more confrontational approaches?

Theoretical Framework

What are the determinants of the advocacy behavior of HSNPs? I discuss three major theoretical frameworks that shed light on the decision-making process of HSNPs and the advocacy question: neo-institutional theory, resource dependence theory, and theories of organizational capacity.

Neo-Institutional Theory

Neo-institutional theory, or institutional isomorphism, posits that in order for organizations to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of public officials and their peers, they will conform to the norms and standards that are laid out by those who have the power (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This theory predicts that HSNPs will engage in advocacy behaviors that are more cooperative or “insider” in nature (Mosley, 2011). Meyer and Rowan's theory states that organizations will conform to the

institutionalized culture, even though it might be in direct conflict with the idea of efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). DiMaggio and Powell add that this conformity to the norms and requirements of the institutional environment is not always rational, and that change can come from coercion based on a situation of dependence, largely of financial resources (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Mosley (2011) relates these insights to Piven and Cloward's (1977) ideas of the formalization of social movements into organizations that begin to take insider approaches to the power structure and in turn become less effective. In addition, the institutionalization and professionalization process would seem to lead to leadership that focuses on organizational maintenance as opposed to social change (Piven and Cloward, 1977).

Robert Michels' seminal work on the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" (1949) lays an early foundation for the dilemma of isomorphism and institutionalization. Michels called direct attention to the dilemma of formalized organizations, that in order to achieve productivity and efficiency, a group must appoint leaders, and at that moment, the power imbalance is created and the movement is no longer democratic. According to Michels' "law," those in power become focused on the retention of that power, through the development of a set of norms of leadership, and that leaders pursuing organizational maintenance grow to be at odds with the group or members of the organization.

This phenomenon relates directly to the dilemma of legitimacy within neo-institutional theory, and subsequently to the ongoing need for organizations to acquire scarce resources described below. In order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of funders, organizations and their leaders must, quite simply, become more acceptable to those upon whom they are dependent for resources. The race for legitimacy shifts the balance of

power to elites controlling the purse strings, whether they are in government, or private donors. We see this behavior directly in the works of O'Connor (2012) and DeFilippis (2004) as they describe the professionalization process of the nonprofit sector, particularly where community-based organizations shift over time into formalized and professionalized nonprofits and community development corporations and away from the democratic representations of the community.

Resource Dependence Theory

Resource dependence theory posits that when an organization is dependent for scarce resources on another organization, that the dependent organization tends to conform to the behaviors expected by the organization holding the resources (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). In this theory, a HSNP that is dependent upon financial resources provided by the government is not likely to directly combat government policy initiatives through policy advocacy. In other words, the organization's dependence upon government funding may suppress its advocacy behavior (Smith and Lipsky, 1993; Schmid et al., 2008). Empirical findings on this are mixed. For example, considerable recent research finds that government funding does decrease advocacy activity, and may even enhance it in some circumstances (Berry and Arons, 2003; Chaves et al., 2004; Mosley 2012). However, as Mosley herself points out, extant research has not yet been able to determine whether the presence of government funding may change the kinds of tactics that HSNPs choose to engage in, even if it does not have an overall suppressing effect on advocacy behavior (Mosley, 2011).

The concept of resource dependence is tied to the neo-institutional theory described above, but is further specified by the condition of scarce funding environments

that HSNPs work in today. It is the race to find funds and the race for organizational survival that shifts the balance of power away from nonprofits and towards both government and private funders under resource dependence theory. Practically, this power imbalance leads to an imbalance in voice, and an imbalance in access to agenda-setting. HSNPs are essentially taught to keep their heads down, continue to do the work they were contracted to do, justifying the financial contracts that are awarded. In this scenario, there is limited or no space for HSNPs to share their street-level expertise to challenge status quo policies. There is a culture of staying a-political, and avoiding “biting the hand that feeds you.” A constant fear of losing access to essential resources drives HSNPs away from engaging in political or policy discussions. Berry and Arons’ (2003) work highlights a fear of possibly losing tax-exempt status, and of angering politicians, donors, and even the organization’s own board members by being seen as too political. The “safer” route for most HSNPs is to avoid political conflict.

Organizational Capacity

There are additional theories that address what determines nonprofit engagement in advocacy that are driven more specifically by issues of organizational capacity. Salamon (2002) points to various organizational capacities that are the key causal forces of policy advocacy decisions: organization size, organization age, stable funding streams, and professional and administrative experience. Namely, Salamon finds that older and larger organizations engage more frequently in advocacy. Additionally, organizations with stable funding streams and specialized staff engage in more advocacy. Berry and Arons (2003) point to a convoluted and confusing legal framework determined and regulated by the Internal Revenue Service that leads to less policy advocacy by non-

profits. Most HSNPs lack the specialized expertise to confidently navigate this complex legal environment. Berry and Arons point out that HSNPs engaging in advocacy frequently have a staff person specifically assigned to that work (Berry, 2001).

Organizational capacity is wrapped up in the process toward professionalization of the nonprofit sector. The work of being a nonprofit organization has created all sorts of new bureaucratic challenges that could either enhance or suppress the ability to engage in advocacy. Over time, the functions needed by a professionalized HSNP have become deeply specialized. Fundraising is now a certifiable profession, with specific, and oftentimes elite, training for certified fundraising professionals. For example, becoming certified as a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) has become the gold standard for aspiring fundraising professionals, and has become big business, with an individual exam fee costing \$875, and reaccreditation fees costing \$510 (CFRE, 2019). Grant-writing (especially government grant-writing) has become so sophisticated that it has become a consultant profession, with many HSNPs farming this tedious work to consultant experts (Hager, et al., 2002). In addition, understanding legal and policy issues is seen as a specialized skill set for legal experts. This specialization of job functions creates increased sophistication, but also gaps in where HSNPs will choose to spend their scarce resources (Gronbjerg and Smith, 1999).

The organization capacity theory helps explain why larger and older organizations seem to engage more in advocacy than smaller and younger organizations (Salamon, 2008). However, this organization capacity can take a more nuanced turn in practicality. Organizational capacity in the context of a scarce funding environment can also lead to behaviors that respond to organizational survival. In this circumstance, organizations are

simply making choices where to invest their scarce resources to the places it makes the most sense, perhaps fundraising to generate further resources, or perhaps more directly toward the mission (see Chaskin, 2001; Bass et al, 2007; Donaldson, 2007). One of the Berry's (2001) core findings is that the most effective HSNPs in policy work are the organizations that hired a dedicated policy and advocacy staff person. While this makes intuitive sense, many HSNPs have trouble justifying the investment in advocacy, seeing it as a luxury they hope to one day afford.

Political Opportunity

Taken separately, each of these theoretical perspectives can help to explain the existence or nonexistence of policy advocacy by nonprofit organizations. Taken together, they point to an issue of political opportunity that may be the true driving force of how HSNPs decide to engage in advocacy behaviors, and even what types of tactics they may employ. In the context of social movement organizations, Tarrow's broad definition of the term states that political opportunity refers to "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow, 1994, p. 85). Meyer and Minkoff's (2004) work also focuses primarily on social movements and protest movements, but it highlights the presence of both formal, structural models and informal, signal models of political opportunity. Structural models are formal policy changes by the political system that open or close the door for further advocacy efforts, such as direct policy feedback mechanisms or invitations to give testimony. Signal models are informal messages that can be perceived by organizations as political opportunities for advocacy (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). Each of these models

of political opportunity can play a role in the decision-making of HSNP directors to engage in advocacy or not.

Another important problem for the political opportunity of HSNPs is the trend toward privatizing service provision and devolution of funding and decision-making from the federal government to state and local levels, as discussed above. As noted, this process creates an incredibly challenging funding environment for HSNPs. Donaldson (2007) argues that privatization and devolution impact the advocacy behavior of HSNPs, but she also points out that the localization of policy and especially funding decisions may also provide further opportunity and accessibility for HSNPs to engage in advocacy, as access to local government officials tends to be easier than access to federal officials (see also Berry & Portney, 2014).

I argue that the concept of political opportunity encompasses the convergence of neo-institutional and resource dependence theories, as well as provides a framework for integrating the issues of organizational capacity that explains the variation in advocacy behavior undertaken by HSNPs. This theoretical framework also allows for a more precise bounding of the HSNP organizational universe to tease out variations in behaviors. HSNPs serving the homeless, given the less attractive nature of their work and the increased challenges of funding stability, may have both the most risk and highest need to engage in policy advocacy for their clients, especially in those tactics deemed less cooperative and more confrontational in nature. These organizations provide service to one of the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations of society. The core of their mission is to improve conditions and policies serving their constituents, and the political environment for improving these conditions is not often receptive.

On Coalitions

Coalitions are an additional mechanism through which HSNPs can engage in advocacy. In theory, coalitions can effectively respond to a number of the core barriers to advocacy highlighted in the literature discussed above (see Rees, 1999; Donaldson, 2008; LeRoux and Goerdel, 2009). As Fyall and McGuire (2015) point out in their recent work on nonprofit coalitions as a mode of advocating for policy change, working in coalitions can provide the political cover for organizations that deem advocacy a “risky” activity. Coalitions can also provide advocacy opportunities for organizations that face resource scarcity through the sharing of the costs. This sharing of advocacy work through coalitions can also respond to the barrier of the lack of specialized skills for many organizations. Perhaps the greatest value of coalitions for advocacy work, is quite simply the ability to express collective voice, which is more powerful than a single voice for policy change.

Summation of the Literature

The literature discussed here predicts a number of ways that organizations might engage in advocacy work. It predicts larger and older organizations will engage in more advocacy. It also predicts that organizations will openly express their fears or cautions about losing access to scarce resources, or losing tax-exempt status as reasons to avoid advocacy work. In addition, theory predicts that most advocacy behavior will be for increased funds as opposed to policy changes, and given the competitive funding climate, it also predicts that most organizations will advocate on their own, even if coalition work reduces the costs and risks of advocacy. Relatedly, since a majority of funds for HSNPs are generated at the national level (Berry and Arons, 2003), theory predicts less advocacy

at the local level. This is in spite of the fact that allocation decisions for homeless provision are increasingly made at the local level through local CoCs. The literature on political opportunity suggests that organizational perceptions of how open the “opportunity” is will determine the behaviors organizations use.

Homeless service nonprofit organizations are ideal for examining and testing the theories of advocacy behavior in the nonprofit sector. There are a multitude of barriers to advocacy highlighted above: whether due to confusion over the legality of certain behavior, fears of political or funder backlash, or a lack of financial or professional capacity. Homeless service organizations are especially vulnerable to these barriers. They tend to be smaller, highly resource-dependent, and operate in a tight budgetary environment. Additionally, homeless populations face the prospects of being viewed as a nuisance, rather than a sympathetic cause by the general public. Given the various barriers, it seems that we should see very little engagement in policy advocacy behavior by homeless service organizations, yet there are examples of organizations that break through these barriers to advocate on behalf of their clients in some extensive ways. Empirical studies attempting to measure nonprofit advocacy behavior particularly in HSNPs have been mixed, leading to some skepticism about what the literature will predict. Research on the advocacy behavior of HSNPs must attempt to tease out how to identify or predict why some organizations break through the multitude of barriers, and the ways that organizational perceptions of advocacy and political opportunity can impact the types of tactics HSNPs use at various geographic levels.

Advocacy Definition for this Study

To more precisely examine these dilemmas, I adopt Almog-Bar and Schmid's (2014) definition of advocacy, crafted specifically for application to human service nonprofit organizations; however, I have made one key addition to their definition that formulates the definition I have used throughout this research, and provided to participants in this study. Almog-Bar and Schmid define HSNP advocacy as: the representation of "disadvantaged, disenfranchised, excluded, and vulnerable populations, mediating between these groups of citizens and governmental agencies." With an understanding that advocacy can also significantly impact public discourse and perception, I have slightly altered the exact language, and added a piece about the general public to their definition. That revised definition reads as follows:

"Advocacy" is the representation of the interests of marginalized and vulnerable populations, and the mediation between these populations, governmental agencies, and the general public

Therefore, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

Research Questions

1. What determines the advocacy behavior of homeless service organizations?
2. How do leaders of homeless service providers perceive and develop their strategies and tactics for engaging in advocacy activities?

Based on the literature described in this chapter, I hypothesize that:

1. HSNP leaders will express confusion and fear about the rules regulating their advocacy behavior;

2. When engaging in advocacy activities, HSNP leaders will proceed with caution and focus advocacy behavior on organizational needs;
3. Political opportunity structures will shape the choices HSNP leaders make to advocate
4. Coalitions will minimize the risks of advocacy for HSNPs.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

To examine the research questions identified above, an exploratory comparative case study was undertaken. In theory, two organizations operating within the same context, with the same basic characteristics, should engage in advocacy behavior in the same ways. However, we know that there is significant variation between the ways that organizations actually engage in advocacy (Berry and Arons, 2003). A comparative case study of homeless service organizations across two geographic contexts allowed for a deeper analysis of the nuanced elements of why some homeless service organizations choose to engage in advocacy activities, while others do not (George & Bennett, 2004). Homeless service organizations were specifically selected for study here due to the severe disenfranchisement and marginalization their clients experience. This high level of disenfranchisement may exacerbate the need to advocate for their client populations and, in turn, speak specifically to how a client-serving approach may be more onerous in practice, than in theory. By exploring the differences in behavior by similar organizations within similar contexts, as well as comparing similarities of behavior of organizations across varying contexts, this analysis is able to explore the variations in behaviors and to theorize what the key variables appear to be in the decisions of homeless service providers to engage, or not engage, in advocacy activities. This comparative case study, exploring why some organizations engage in advocacy behavior while other similar organizations do not, is an essential next step for this field of research. Understanding the local context of organization decision-making and perceptions around advocacy activity will help to put recent research in this field into proper context and also create a clearer future agenda for both research and practice.

Key Variables

The principle focus of this dissertation is advocacy behavior by nonprofit human service providers. The definition of ‘advocacy’ is unclear in both the research literature and for nonprofit organizations as they try to comply with state and federal rules regulating their behavior. It is a severely misunderstood concept, which I argue has led to gaps in our understanding of the activity in academic literature, as well as inefficiencies in how organizations engage in the behavior at all. Exploring the nuance of advocacy behavior and activities is one of the most important elements this research has attempted to explore. A starting point has been laid out within recent literature that can be used to properly bound and define the advocacy behaviors and activities we seek to better understand.

Advocacy in the human service nonprofit literature is most commonly defined as the representation of or mediation between disadvantaged, disenfranchised or vulnerable populations and the government (Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2014; Berry, 2001; Reid, 2006; Salamon & Geller, 2008). This definition’s broad nature allows for the exploration of exactly what advocacy tactics human service nonprofits engage in: advocacy for whom, by whom, and for what.

The literature has thus far been quite inclusive of activities that fall within the bounds of advocacy, yet there appear to be wide variations in what types of activities nonprofit organizations employ, and in turn it is likely there are wide variations in their decision-making processes. One of the paramount purposes of this research is to dissect the types of advocacy activities that organizations employ, and develop a more precise understanding as to why. This will allow for the development of more precise definitions

and typologies of advocacy behavior by human service nonprofits, and more importantly to explore the validity of the theories about why some organizations engage in advocacy, while others do not.

It is important to point out that there have been a growing number of nonprofit organizations whose primary purpose is advocacy itself as opposed to the service provision, such as One Voice Texas and the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. While these organizations are interesting in their own right, they are outside the bounds of what this research hopes to explore. The missions of advocacy-first organizations may sometimes overlap with human service providers; however, the distinct difference in their primary purpose may lead to differences in the experience and expertise they bring into their advocacy tactics and messages. I have specifically selected only organizations whose primary purpose is service provision. These organizations have an essential expertise and hands-on connection to the constituents they work with, and I am particularly interested in how that direct expertise finds its way into the policy and advocacy arenas, particularly for a population that is severely unrepresented in the political process, such as the homeless.

In addition to advocacy behavior as the key dependent variable, there are a number of potential independent variables that this research must explore and assess within the case study. Extant literature points to the importance of key internal and external variables in determining organizational advocacy behavior. The age and size of an organization have often been highlighted as essential in this dynamic (Salamon, 2002). There is also a recent surge in literature attempting to examine how revenue sources play a role in decisions to engage in advocacy (Chaves et al., 2004; Mosley, 2010). In

addition, others have discussed the importance of organizational expenditure breakdowns and executive leadership (Heimovics, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993). Taking each of these variables into account in the case selection and analysis was essential.

Case Selection Process

This study examines the advocacy behavior of homeless service providers in two major cities: Philadelphia and Houston. In an attempt to better ascertain this behavior, the study sought to interview key informants, on the ground, within these two geographic contexts. Using extant literature as a way of understanding potential advocacy behaviors and activities, as well as the potential barriers and opportunities homeless service providers may face, this study used a two-step methodology. The first phase of the research was a survey of homeless service providers in each case city to create a baseline of the key homeless organizations in each city, as well as the baseline of exactly what types of advocacy activities each organization engages in, and how often. The second phase of this study consisted of field interviews of key informants, which consisted of both homeless service providers, as well as other stakeholders in each city, such as funders, coalition leaders, public officials, and other advocates.

In order for this research to effectively answer the research questions and test the hypotheses described at the end of Chapter 2, a comparative case study method was undertaken. A sturdy and well-designed comparative case study hinges almost entirely on the robustness of the case selection process to provide for the appropriate controls and variations needed to make assessments and develop apt theories (George and Bennett, 2004). Early in the process of case selection for this study, Philadelphia was chosen as a case city, largely due to proximity, costs associated with performing the fieldwork, and a

working knowledge of the organizations and contexts I intended to explore. Identifying the best comparative case city, and the organizations within each case city, required deliberate care and appropriate assessment.

City Case Selection

For the city case selection, I began by compiling a list of the top 50 US cities in terms of total population, and subsequently developed a case selection matrix that identified a host of demographic variables for each city that would allow for the examination of both similarities and variations in the local context that would allow for analysis of variations in advocacy behavior of organizations. It was important to determine the most appropriate city demographic variables to control for and which variables to allow for variance. Based on the theoretical framework of this study, and the related hypotheses, it was clear that the case cities needed to be similar in terms of size and relevant characteristics, as well as the scope of homelessness and the service provision ecology. Additionally, the theoretical framework I employ, particularly the ideas of political opportunity, required that the case cities vary considerably in terms of political context. This variable was tracked in the matrix as a “region” variable.

To expand the matrix, I collected information on population, population density, and racial make-up. These variables varied widely across cities. Total population on its own was not overly essential to selection, but seeing some variance in population density and racial make-up would allow for those factors to be assessed within the analysis. I also collected data on variables that might help explain the scope of the homeless population in each city, such as poverty rates, crime rates, homeownership rates, foreclosure rates, unemployment rates and homelessness rates. Each of these variables could be connected

with an understanding of the scope of the homeless issue in each city, and in turn how homeless service organizations respond, either programmatically, or through advocacy. High levels of poverty and crime are often correlated with homelessness (Byrne, et al., 2013). Controlling for poverty rate allowed me to identify cities with a similar rate of poverty as Philadelphia. Given the recent economic downturn, I chose to explore variables related to potential increases on types of homelessness, such as homeownership rates, foreclosure rates and unemployment rates. Homeownership and foreclosure rates varied widely across the cities, due in large part to significant variations in the housing stock available in cities. Unemployment rate could be a strong indicator of the homelessness scope in one sense, but a variation in unemployment rate between cities, coupled with a similar rate of poverty also could indicate a mismatch between types of employment opportunities available and the cost of living in that city. I chose to allow the unemployment rate to vary.

Homelessness rates are important figures for this study, although they are a challenging number to appropriately calculate. Currently, the best method of identifying how many homeless a city has is through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) annual Point-In-Time Count (PIT). The PIT is performed on one night each year across the country, designed to not just count homeless in shelters, but also to perform a large-scale outreach effort across jurisdictions to physically count every single homeless person found on that night. The process is managed by each local Continuum of Care (CoC), which could represent a city or county or region. This count is widely criticized as a flawed approach, but is also widely accepted as the best method we currently have for counting the homeless (Agans, et al., 2014). The PIT tallies are also

the numbers that are used to determine federal allocations to provide services to the homeless across the country, so the numbers have extreme importance, regardless of the flaws. To tally a rough homelessness rate, I collected the PIT calculations for 2013 for each city, and then divided those numbers by total population of each city. Controlling for a scope of homelessness is important to ensure that the case cities have reasonably similar homeless populations relative to their size.

Lastly, I collected and explored data related to the establishment of a solid base of service organizations that serve the homeless. To ascertain this, I collected data from the IRS Master Data File of charitable organizations. Designations of charitable organizations can vary considerably based on what organizations display as their primary function. To get an idea of the base and density of organizations serving the homeless in each city, I pulled all organizations falling under the designation of either “Human Service” organizations or “Housing and Shelter” organizations. This allowed me to look at the rough numbers of organizations doing relevant work and also to examine the density of those organization types by total city population. While these numbers also had wide variance, it was important to ensure two important factors: a) the organization base in these categories represent similar scale and networks of services to be compared across city, and b) the organization bases are sufficiently large enough to have options within the organization case selection process, but also to ensure some level of anonymity for case organizations, discussed in further detail below.

Philadelphia was selected as a case city based on a number of criteria. My experience and knowledge of Philadelphia in terms of its homeless services and organizational advocacy behaviors serves as a solid foundation for the research in this

dissertation. In addition, my relationships with Philadelphia homeless service providers allows for increased access to case organizations. Lastly, Philadelphia was an ideal base case city given my close proximity to help limit the expenses associated with extensive fieldwork. Philadelphia has a large homeless population, with an assortment of organizations that provide an array of housing and supportive services to the homeless. There is significant variation between organizations in terms of organization age, organization size, program expenditures, services offered, among many other variables.

To identify the most appropriate second case city for this study, I employed my city case selection matrix that allowed for the identification of cities that had similar control variables identified above, as well as the variance in political context. From the outset, it became clear that cities 26-50 on the list were not comparable due to significantly lower total populations. Additionally, New York City was identified as an outlier on the top end due to its significantly larger population (and a relatively similar political context to Philadelphia as a northeastern city). After controlling for racial make-up and home-ownership rates, and eliminating other cities in the northeast, I was able to narrow the case selection process down to 4 possible second case cities: Houston, Phoenix, Denver, and Milwaukee. To help make the final determination, I assessed the rate of homelessness in each city as well as the density of related service organizations.

Houston was identified as the most appropriate second case city for a number of specific reasons stemming from this case selection process. Houston is comparable in size to Philadelphia, both in total populations, as well as in the key indicator of the total homeless population. Philadelphia's HUD PIT Count for 2013 was 5,645, while Houston's was 6,359 for the same year, a rate per populations of 0.3635% and 0.2896%

respectively (Housing and Urban Development, 2013). In addition, Houston has a poverty rate (22.9%) fairly comparable to Philadelphia's (26.5%) (US Census, 2013). Houston's comparable total size in both total population and homeless count also leads to a comparably established network of homeless service providers, allowing for a wider selection of case organizations for this study. A quick look at the density of key organization types in each case city reinforces their selection as appropriate cities for examination. Through the Internal Revenue Service master data files of charitable organizations publicly available through the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute, Philadelphia shows 528 organizations with the NTEE designation of tax-exempt Human Service organizations, while Houston shows 896 organizations (National Center of Charitable Statistics, 2015). Additionally, Philadelphia shows 190 organizations with the NTEE designation of tax-exempt Housing and Shelter organizations, while Houston shows 298 organizations of that type (National Center of Charitable Statistics, 2015). While these totals are not exact in comparison, the volume of each category allows for a sufficient number of organizations to be selected from for this case study. Having similar rates of homelessness and poverty within the case cities allows me to control for a similar scope of problem across all case organizations. There are also similar rates in violent crime rate and a comparable homeownership rate in both Houston and Philadelphia, as well as comparable sizes in the number of human service and housing organizations serving these cities.

Houston and Philadelphia also vary in some key ways. The most obvious is a variance in region, which is also an indicator of variation within local and state policy, as well as potential variation in cultural or political context, which I hypothesize will play a

role in the decisions on if or how organizations engage in advocacy behavior. Various studies have examined the uniqueness of the Houston and Texas political context (Fisher, 1989; Vojnovic, 2003; Phelps, 2014) and differences in state and local political context across cities and regions (Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014). This regional variance can also indicate employment sector or job opportunity variances, which may impact the homeless population and how homeless service organizations advocate. For instance, while Houston has a much lower employment rate than Philadelphia (4.1% to 5.0%), the respective poverty rates are close to the same. Differences in types of employment opportunities might explain these discrepancies, but also might lead to different organizational approaches to advocacy.

The following Table is a summary of the two case cities and the key variables:

Table 1: City Case Selection									
City	Region	Total Population	Poverty Rate	Violent Crime Rate	Home-ownership Rate	Unemployment Rate	Homeless Rate	HSNP Density	Housing Org Density
Philadelphia	Northeast	1553165	26.5%	1160.1	53.3%	5.0%	0.3635%	0.000340	0.000122
Houston	Southwest	2195914	22.9%	992.5	45.4%	4.1%	0.2896%	0.000408	0.000136

Sources: US Census, FBI, National Center for Charitable Statistics, Department of Housing and Urban Development

To appropriately compile a list of organizations for the Phase 1 survey, and subsequent field interviews for the Phase 2 case study analysis, I sorted through the IRS master data file for 501c3 organizations that particularly identified as either “Human Service” organizations or “Housing and Shelter” organizations in each city, and then further trimmed that list based on localized research of which organizations primarily served the homeless. Through internet searches, organizational and government websites, and conversations with local stakeholders, a list of the key homeless service providers in each city (43 in total) was compiled for the purposes of the Phase 1 survey, which would

allow me to identify the most appropriate organizations for Phase 2 field research and interviews.

Survey and Organization Case Selection

A simple online survey to the compiled list of homeless services providers across both cities was then conducted via Qualtrics survey software. Preliminary research had identified 43 total homeless service providers. Invitations to participate were sent directly via email to the top executive of each organization, and when possible also often included another high-level staff person who was identified as the lead on advocacy functions within the organization. A second, follow-up email was sent to all non-respondents prior to initiating the survey. 26 organizations verbally agreed to participate in the survey. In the end, 19 organizations sufficiently completed the survey (ten in Philadelphia, and nine in Houston). While this did not allow for a deeper statistical analysis of the responses, it certainly provided a valuable distribution of baseline of activities in each city and provided an assessment of the overall climate for advocacy behavior by homeless service providers in each city. The 19 survey respondents satisfy a representative sample of the 43 homeless providers initially identified. Respondents vary significantly in terms of total budget size, employee size, and age of organization, providing perspective across a wide array of organizational capacities. The responding sample also contained a wide range of revenue sources, measured by the percentage of revenue from private and public sources, and also a representative number of founding executives. Survey responses also played a significant role in the development of the interview protocol used for Phase 2 interviews and case analysis.

This qualifying survey asked organizations to indicate both organizational demographic data, as well as responses to queries about whether or not they engaged in a host of the most common advocacy activities drawn from the literature (see Figure 1 below for a classification of these activities), how many times each year they engage in those identified activities, and if they designate specific financial or human resources to those activities.

Figure 1

<i>Selection of Common Advocacy Activities from the Literature</i>	
<i>Invite a Policy-Maker or Representative to Visit the Organization</i>	<i>Plan or Participate in Public Protests, Demonstrations or Strikes</i>
<i>Invite a Candidate Running for Office to Speak or Visit the Organization</i>	<i>Engage in Direct Issue Lobbying of Political Leaders, Committees or Lobby Groups</i>
<i>Organize Voter Registration Initiatives or Distribute Voter Guides to Clients</i>	<i>Raise the Profile of Policy Issues through Media and Public Relations Avenues</i>
<i>Solicit Feedback or Information from Government Agencies about Funding Opportunities</i>	<i>Take Legal Action through Court Cases and Appeals</i>
<i>Develop or Propose New Programs or Services to Policy-Makers</i>	<i>Solicit Community Engagement through Letter-Writing Campaigns and Petitions</i>
<i>Discuss Relevant Political Issues with Clients</i>	<i>Publish and Disseminate Research to Policy-Makers and the Public</i>
<i>Discuss Relevant Political Issues with Private Funders</i>	<i>Participate in a Coalition With Other Organizations Around a Common Goal</i>

Sources: Chaves et. al, 2004; Schmid et. al, 2008; Boris & Mosher-Williams, 2008; Mosley, 2011; Mosley, 2012

The survey produced a number of key findings. In Table 2 below, a few important organizational demographics are noted. First, it can be noted that none of these 19 organizations pay for a professional lobbyist, therefore they perform any and all of their advocacy activities themselves, or via coalitions (discussed shortly). While more than half of the organizations in this survey (11 of 19) indicate that a staff person within their organizations is dedicated to advocacy work, only 4 of these organizations have a staff person dedicated to advocacy work as their primary job function. Most organizations indicated that the CEO or COO takes the advocacy lead. While this is not uncommon, the work of advocacy is significantly diminished when the staff responsible for that work has other, more significant job functions to fulfill. Only four of the 19 responding organizations have a specific committee focused on “policy” within the Board of Directors, a potential indicator of the level of importance placed on this work by the leadership of the organization.

Table 2			
Organizational Descriptives			
Characteristic		Average	Range
<i>Full-Time Employees</i>		68.05	1 - 300
<i>Annual Operating Budget</i>		\$5,868,512	\$313,000 - \$25,000,000
<i>Organization Age</i>		1977	1889 - 2012
		Yes	No
<i>Founder Executive Director</i>		3	16
<i>Board Policy Committee</i>		4	15
<i>Staff Dedicated to Advocacy</i>		11	8
<i>Currently Pay for Lobbyist</i>		0	19
** Houston and Philadelphia Respondents Combined			(n=19)

Table 3 displays a number of key findings regarding organizational advocacy behavior based on the survey. Traditional “insider” behaviors such as inviting elected officials to visit your organization and soliciting government funds via grant opportunities are common in both cities. We also see similar behavior across cities, although to a more limited extent, in terms of the suggestion of new programs with government (mostly local level) and voter registration drives. However, we begin to see significant disparity in the more “outsider” types of advocacy behaviors by city. For instance, seven out of ten organizations in Philadelphia indicated an engagement in direct-issue lobbying, while no organizations in Houston claim to engage in that way. Similarly, eight out of ten organizations in Philadelphia indicated that they participate in protests or demonstrations, where only one Houston organization indicated engaging in that way. This begs the question of what perceived or real structures might cause such a significant disparity in the more “outsider” type of behaviors that needed to be explored much deeper via informant interviews in both cities. As an additional important note, every responding organization indicated participation in at least one local coalition, which may signal a significant space for advocacy behavior to be performed via collective mechanisms; however, an important subtext of this dynamic is that in Houston, all nine organizations indicated participation in the same coalition, whereas in Philadelphia, a wide variety of overlapping coalitions was identified.

Table 3			
Organizational Advocacy Behavior			
Advocacy Activity		Houston	Philadelphia
		<i>(n=9)</i>	<i>(n=10)</i>
<i>Invite Elected Officials</i>		8	9
<i>Initiate Voter Drives with Constituents</i>		4	5
<i>Solicit Government Funds</i>		6	8
<i>Suggest New Programs to Gov't</i>		4	6
<i>Ask Friends/Donors to Contact Gov't</i>		4	7
<i>Write/Distribute White Papers</i>		1	2
<i>Direct-Issue Lobbying</i>		0	7
<i>Participate in Protests or Demonstrations</i>		1	8
<i>Participate in Coalitions*</i>		9	10

Additionally, the survey asked participating organizations to qualify how important they perceived advocacy to be in their overall mission. Nearly half of all organization in the survey (nine) indicated that advocacy was an “essential” part of their mission, while four organizations indicated “very important” and four organizations indicated “important, but not as important as services” (two organizations declined to respond to this question, neither of which agreed to follow-up interviews in Phase 2).

Interview and Case Study Analysis

To more appropriately decipher the advocacy behavior of organizations in each of my case cities, and to better understand the disparities in behavior across cities that was identified in the survey analysis, a deeper case study of each city was needed. This research incorporated interviews with key informants in each city and an examination of

the overall context in each city that appeared to lead to significant differences in organizational behavior. Leaders of homeless service providers (and board members when possible), public officials, coalition leaders, funders, and other advocates were interviewed in this process, and a deep examination of public documents, organizational websites, and news reports was undertaken to better ascertain the advocacy behavior of homeless service organizations as well as the local and political context in each city.

An interview protocol was developed prior to the beginning of any fieldwork in the case cities. A base protocol was developed based largely on the line of questioning initiated in the Phase 1 survey, but was created as a semi-structured instrument to allow for the collection of rich details from the perspective of the interviewees. An identical interview protocol was used for all homeless service providers to allow for maximum consistency across the analysis. Slightly adapted interview protocols were used for interviews with public officials, funders, and other advocate groups, allowing for those respondents to focus on their interactions with homeless service providers and their perceptions of the advocacy activities the service organizations perform.

Identification of potential interviewees was a two-part process. First, homeless service organizations from the Phase 1 survey (who indicated a willingness to participate in follow-up interviews within the survey) were contacted. From there, a list of direct and indirect contacts was developed through a combination internet searches and a snowball sampling technique. Key officials, partners, funders, and organization were identified and then verified as important informants through both service organizations and local coalitions. In all, 15 interviews were recorded in each city, for a total of 30 interviews. Fieldwork interviews were conducted in person when possible, with three interviews

taking place via telephone. Interview sessions averaged approximately 75 minutes in length. All in-person interviews were digitally recorded, with permission of the interviewees. Phone interviews were not recorded. All Houston interviews were conducted in June 2016. Philadelphia interviews were conducted in July and August 2016. Handwritten field notes were also taken during all interviews and interactions in the field.

Each recorded interview was then transcribed into digital transcripts to be coded and analyzed alongside researcher field notes and supplemental data collected from organizational materials, news stories, and websites. A Fieldwork Pre-Code Guide was developed prior to the collection of data, based on the most common themes in the literature (see Appendix for Fieldwork Pre-Code Guide), and directly related to the line of questioning in the interview protocols. As interview transcripts were analyzed, concepts raised by interviewees were coded into the pre-codes to identify patterns and differences in responses across the case cities (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). This coding allowed for the formation of a set of narratives across and within the case cities to test the theoretical framework and the research questions raised at the outset of this study.

In a general sense, what became abundantly clear was that local context mattered significantly, in terms of local, political context, but also in the structural and funding contexts that govern local relationships and local decision-making. In essence, the theoretical concept of “political opportunity” discussed above played a significant role in the types of activities homeless service organizations engaged in; however, the ways in which organizations perceived and navigated these opportunities took slightly different

forms in each city. The following two chapters discuss the findings, in detail, of both the Houston and Philadelphia cases in turn.

Chapter 4 - Houston Case Study

Houston Overview

Houston is a fascinating city. In many ways it is a traditional American boomtown, with a story of massive and rapid expansion; however, as a western city, Houston's development began much later than the boomtowns of the northeastern United States. Its early growth is significantly attributed to the discovery of oil, the Texas Oil Boom of the early 1900s and the subsequent development of the petroleum industry, for which Houston became the unquestioned epicenter (Melosi & Pratt, 2014). As the petroleum industry (and Houston) continued to expand, older industrial cities in the rust belt were in decline as industry flocked to the south and west, and even out of the United States altogether, in search of more favorable and cheaper operational conditions. In the 1970s, Houston experienced high population growth as Americans in search of fresh opportunities for employment in the blossoming petroleum industry flooded the city (Katz and Bradley, 2013). Additionally, Houston became a beacon for the concept of the "free enterprise city"; a city that seemed to embody the fiscal conservative model of free enterprise and economic growth (Feagin, 1988). While Feagin's work attempted to challenge the notion of Houston as this conservative beacon, it is quite clear that Houston's commitment to free enterprise ideals has led to unfettered expansion and growth for the city, in spite of the issues like gentrification, segregation, and sprawl that could also be attributed to this growth model. Houston now ranks as the fourth most populous city in the United States with an approximate population of 2.3 million people (US Census, 2017), and boasts an incredibly low tax burden both for individuals and

especially for doing business, with no personal, state, or corporate income taxes (Greater Houston Partnership, 2019).

Houston is, somewhat surprisingly, a very diverse city. In fact, it ranks as one of the most diverse cities in the United States, according to the most recent Houston Area Survey conducted through the Kinder Institute for Urban Research out of Rice University (Kinder Institute, 2017). Houston's long history as the global capital of the petroleum industry has, for decades, drawn a global diversity, which has led to a more tolerant and welcoming city, according to several people interviewed for this research. One advocate stated, "Most people misunderstand Houston. It's way more diverse than you think. 'Big Oil' drew people from everywhere (homeless advocate, personal interview, 6/27/16). Additionally, the expanding city, apparently flush with employment opportunities, has minimized the economic and class conflict prevalent in cities struggling with unemployment and poverty. Houston boasts an unemployment rate of 4.1% (US Census, 2013), which is considerably lower than most major cities in the United States, and generally comparable to other Texas cities, such as Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin; all of which operate under much of the same free-enterprise approaches to growth and business development by the state.

From the outside, Houston is commonly assumed to be a conservative city, perhaps due in large part to its location in Texas. This perception proves itself to be incorrect in some key ways, and the research for this project further unpacks the complexity of the "liberal" vs "conservative" outlook on public policy and democracy in Texas. In certain respects, Houston is a politically "liberal" island in an otherwise politically "conservative" state, which poses some interesting challenges as it applies to

homelessness and advocacy for social and policy change, and how organizations perceive the openness to supporting homeless service provision.

However, it should not be ignored that many of the perceptions about a conservative political climate in the state of Texas overall, prove to be quite true, creating barriers to the advocacy potential of social issues such as homelessness. While Houston proves to be responsive to the needs of the homeless and related social challenges, the city itself sits within Harris County, and spans a number of wealthy suburban communities, creating both a spatial and political disconnect between Houston and its suburbs. While this urban-suburban disconnect is not unique to Houston, the power of county-level politics and the overlap of political boundaries create political and financial problems when city and county attitudes about social issues do not align. In addition, the conservatively leaning state political climate further exacerbates the challenges of Houston city and Houston service providers in terms of their desire for increased attention and resources for solving wicked social problems. Additionally, the Texas state legislature has a biennial meeting schedule (every other year!), and only meets for 140 days, leaving a very limited space and timeline to gain access to the agenda to advocate for new, or less popular, issues.

Houston's Homeless Response

Responses to homelessness are actually prevalent through Houston's recent history. The vast majority of the response to this epidemic began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as a more national spotlight began to shine on the extent of homelessness. Indeed, most of the HSNPs working with the homeless in Houston were founded during this period of time. The Houston Coalition for the Homeless (The Coalition) was formed

in 1982, as a collective of disparate organizations serving the homeless, realizing the potential of coordinating their efforts to better serve populations in need. Over time, the Coalition drew funding resources to buoy their efforts, developing into a strong force in Houston for homeless service coordination.

As in most cities in the United States, homelessness has been both significant and persistent in Houston since the early 1980s. The approaches to addressing this issue, and the subsequent funding attached to that work have waxed and waned over the last few decades, with new service models, new data, new funding, and cuts to funding creating a long trial-and-error process that has seen major fluctuations in interest from policymakers and the general public to find solutions. Houston's story, in that sense, is not unique. Houston's 2017 Point-in-Time (PIT) count declared that the city has 3,605 individuals experiencing homelessness. This is a significant reduction from the previous counts: 4,031 in 2016; 4,609 in 2015; 5,308 in 2014; and 6,359 in 2013 (Housing and Urban Development, 2017). This is evidence that recent trends in investment and new service models are making an impact. However, the problems persist, both in real numbers and in public perceptions of the problem ("Houston's Growth", 2018; "Tent City", 2018).

In 2009, Annise Parker was elected as the first openly gay mayor of a major city in the United States, eventually being elected for three consecutive two-year terms (ending in 2016), shattering some of the common perception about Texas' and Houston's political leanings. Moreover, Mayor Parker was the driving force behind major policy directives to curb homelessness in Houston, with the creation of a special office for Homeless Initiatives, and personal, vocal support for those efforts. Mayor Parker made ending homelessness a core issue of her administration, often single-handedly keeping

the issue high on the city's agenda. One city official remembered, "Having this push come from the mayor, that immediately got everyone on board" (city official, personal interview, 6/21/16). A service provider shared similar sentiment, adding, "This whole new response system was built because of the mayor's political will" (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Mayor Parker's championship of ending homelessness aligned perfectly with the passing of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act in 2009, under President Obama, which shifted the way HUD funding was allocated to local communities. Beginning in 2011-2012, local and regional Continuums of Care would serve not only as the joint funding applicants as they had in the past, but would also take on a significantly increased role as planners and coordinators of the homeless response systems in their jurisdictions. CoCs were now to develop the local priorities and evaluative tools necessary to report on progress toward ending homelessness (HEARTH Act, 2009; Berg, 2013), and to make allocative decisions for their jurisdictions. For each CoC, a lead agency would need to be named to coordinate these increased functions. In Houston, The Coalition for the Homeless became that lead agency. However, it is important to emphasize that the Coalition significantly pre-dated the new HUD consortium model now required under the HEARTH Act.

With Mayor Parker's personal pledge to focus on ending homelessness, the Coalition for the Homeless in Houston was further supported by the mayor's new Office of Homeless Initiatives; having the direct ear of the mayor. Through this, the Coalition, and its members (mostly homeless service providers) took advantage of being named a priority community by HUD in 2011, and its related funding opportunities. In response, a sophisticated model of "coordinated access" for the homeless was developed, intended to

carve out specific roles for each service provider that focused on each organization's strengths, eliminating unnecessary overlaps, and encouraging better communication between organizations within the homeless service "system" (Troisi et al, 2012).

Houston's coordinated access system has become a respected beacon of success for other cities looking to improve their homeless service provision, as evidenced by envoys from at least two other major US cities, just during my fieldwork. These envoys were visiting to examine the strengths and opportunities of the system Houston had created. At a glance Houston and its homeless service provision efforts, it appeared that the situation in Houston was quite strong, and that Houston may have created a fertile place to drive cooperation, advocacy, and collective voice around homelessness. Alas, there are pitfalls that emerge, as in most places.

Houston's Continuum of Care (CoC) structure is important to understand as it helps explain how much of the funding for homeless services is distributed to the field. As noted in previous chapters, there is considerable flexibility given to regional CoCs to develop their operational structures, and the CoC is the entity that serves as the pass-through for the vast majority of resources that fund homeless services. The requirements are that there must be a lead agency to serve as the point for the submission of coordinated grant submissions to HUD, and the governing structure must include a diversity of the partners within the system. Aside from this, the structures of CoCs vary considerably across the United States. The Houston CoC is actually officially the "Houston, Pasadena, Conroe/Harris, Ft. Bend, Montgomery, Counties CoC", meaning that it not only coordinates the efforts of Houston city, but also for the surrounding suburbs and counties. Houston's CoC is largely managed by the Houston Coalition for

the Homeless, serving as the CoCs lead agency. As a nonprofit organization themselves, and one with a mostly homeless service provider membership base, it could be assumed that this CoC structure has some ideal qualities. This coalition of service providers has direct access to the design and implementation of their grant requests, their system of coordinated entry, and hypothetically, to the funding that comes to the CoC through HUD. In 2018 alone, more than \$38 Million was dispersed in Houston via HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs, and through the Continuum of Care (led by the Houston Coalition for the Homeless). The majority of homeless service money comes from this mechanism. Each provider does their own private fundraising to further support their work to varying degrees.

In addition to the Coalition, and the service providers who are members of the coalition, there are a few other important figures in the homeless response system in Houston. While no longer in office herself, Mayor Parker's work to raise homeless as one of her core issues saw the development of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives (MOHI), which has had a profound coordinating impact on the city's work to end homelessness. The staff tasked to manage this new office were given considerable support and created deep connections with the Coalition, often providing support to the efforts of the Coalition. The MOHI staff also has direct connections with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) in Washington, DC; a national body often viewed as the developer of most of the service models enacted across the United States, including being the driver of the "coordinated access" system. Based on the results of the Phase 1 Survey in this study, the Houston CoC, and by extension the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, has a number of positive features: they are the only significant coalition of

homeless organizations in Houston; almost every homeless service provider in the Houston area is a participating member; they have the attention and support of the Mayor's office, they have direct access to the essential funds from HUD used to provide homeless services; and direct links to national bodies who are leading much of the discussion about where homeless and housing services is going next. This structure seems to have the makings for a robust response to homelessness, as well as the ability to serve as core advocates on policy issues related to homelessness.

To get a better sense of this homeless response environment and its relation to advocacy, I conducted a broad survey of housing and homelessness service providers and spent three weeks in Houston meeting with various organization leaders, the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, staff from the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives, funders, and other advocate organizations involved in homelessness.

Houston's Homeless Providers and Advocacy Behavior

Survey

In the spring of 2016 I conducted a survey of homeless service providers. As noted in Chapter 3, this survey produced nineteen (19) responses across the two case cities. This pre-fieldwork survey provided the foundational depth needed to understand the local system of homeless response, and their base understanding and engagement in advocacy. The world of organizations providing homeless services in each city is not large, and many of the key organizations did respond to the survey. The results of this survey shined the first light onto a number of key issues at play in each city, painting an image of the extent of the work happening, some of the important structures, and the areas that would require a deeper understanding during the fieldwork portion of this

research. Indeed, the survey provided the groundwork knowledge that allowed for the development of a focused interview protocol.

Nine homeless service providers in Houston responded to this survey. While some of these results have been highlighted in Chapter 3, there is a wealth of additional information that helps set the table for what is happening in Houston. The average founding year of responding organizations was 1967, although one major outlier which was founded in 1889 impacted this average greatly. Only one responding organization still has its founding director in place. Respondents self-reported their operating budgets ranging from \$313,000 - \$10,200,000, and an average operating budget size of \$4,586,419. Respondents also reported full-time staff sizes ranging from 1-148, for an average full-time staff of 54. Table 4 below provides an overview of the organizational descriptives of Houston survey respondents.

Table 4			
Houston Survey Resondents - Organizational Descriptives			
Characteristic	Average	Range	
<i>Full-Time Employees</i>	54.11	1 - 148	
<i>Annual Operating Budget</i>	\$4,586,419	\$313,000 - \$10,200,000	
<i>Organization Age</i>	1967	1889 - 1993	
	Yes	No	
<i>Founder Executive Director</i>	1	8	
<i>Board Policy Committee</i>	3	6	
<i>Staff Dedicated to Advocacy</i>	6	3	
<i>Currently Pay for Lobbyist</i>	0	9	
		(n=9)	

Specifically related to advocacy work, organizations were asked if they have a staff person assigned to advocacy work; six out of nine organizations responded that they did, and all of these staff assigned to advocacy work were indicated as full-time employees. However, it is important to note here that when asked for the title of that staff person, all but one of these organizations indicated that this employee has a primary function beyond advocacy work (Ex: Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Marketing Director, etc.). Organizations were also asked for their overall impression of the importance of advocacy to the success of their work with the homeless; four respondents indicated advocacy was “essential” to their work, three indicated it was “very important”, and two indicated it was “important, but not as important as our services”.

The majority of the survey focused on the specific advocacy activities that organizations engaged in. The results of this series of questions are reported in Chapter 3, but there are some key details that help identify some of the emerging story of how organizations perceive and engage in advocacy work in Houston. Respondents clearly identify engaging in a range of “insider” advocacy activities; eight out of nine respondents invite elected officials to their facilities, six out of nine respondents directly solicit the government for funds, four out of nine respondents ask friends and donors to contact government on their behalf, and four out of nine respondents state they the suggest new programs to the government. However, when we look at the more “outsider” types of advocacy activities, as identified in Mosley (2011), we see a different story in Houston; one out of nine respondents writes or distributes policy white papers, one out of

nine respondents reported engaging in protest or demonstrations, and no organizations in Houston report engagement in direct-issue lobbying.

Coalition engagement is another essential dynamic to understand, given that extant literature, such as Fyall and McGuire (2015), will predict that coalitions are likely to be a valuable mechanism for risk-averse HSNPs to engage in advocacy work. This survey explored the variety of ways that organizations engage with coalitions at various geographic levels. Every responding organization in Houston reported engagement in coalition work. Of note, every respondent is a member of the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, and given the opportunity to provide other coalitions they are engaged in, only one other local group was mentioned by one respondent. Even nationally, only two respondents indicated that they engage with coalitions at the national level. None of the responding organizations reported any state level coalitions they engage with (it is worth noting that one state level coalition was mentioned in Phase 2 fieldwork and interviewed for this study; however, no HSNPs in this study work with this coalition).

There is no doubt that this survey in Phase 1 of this research highlighted a number of key issues to explore during the case study fieldwork phase of this research. With a single coalition that all organizations seem engaged in, it would appear that the opportunity for collective voice around homelessness in Houston may be possible, lending power to the advocacy work on the issue. At the same time, there is some essential understanding needed as to why respondents engage almost exclusively in “insider” types of advocacy activity. Is this explained by the political opportunity literature discussed above?

Fieldwork

The survey described above served as the springboard for the interview protocol that was subsequently developed and used for the fieldwork portion of this case study. Given the oft individual and nuanced nature of advocacy work, and the varying degrees of power and resource dependence that can be at play in the HSNP environment, it is essential to find out exactly how organizations themselves perceive and navigate advocacy activities. What kinds of actual advocacy work do they do? How do they perceive the barriers to engaging in advocacy work, and their ability to navigate through those barriers? How do they perceive their access to, or responsiveness of, local, state, and national policymakers? Is this apparently unified coalition the most ideal space for the advocacy work to take place? Allowing for organizations to tell their own stories and perceptions of advocacy work, in their own words, provides the ability to tease out the nuances at play.

The fieldwork interviews with service providers allowed for the compilation of a number of key challenges organizations expressed in regards to engaging in advocacy work. In total, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Houston, including 3 service providers with staff at multiple levels, the leadership at the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, lead staff from the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives, funders, and an additional advocacy organization that engages on homeless issues.

Barriers to Advocacy in Houston

Many of the barriers to advocacy highlighted in the literature become apparent for Houston homeless service providers, citing confusion and risk, limited resources and

capacity to engage in advocacy work, the political nature of the work, and even uncertainty of whose role advocacy should be.

One service provider CEO raised the issues of fear and riskiness when imagining how to engage in advocacy, stating “Ok, is what I am doing illegal? By the IRS or whatever?” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another provider reflected on the lack of clarity of the IRS code that dictates lobbying behavior of 501c3s, saying, “when you try to read the actual words from the IRS, you interpret it as, oh, yeah, you can’t really tell” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). Another service provider added an additional layer to the riskiness that service providers experienced within their own organization, expressing the challenges in getting the organization’s Board of Directors to understand and support any type of advocacy, stating that the two biggest challenges had to do with “the whole 501C3 anxiety and then the anxiety about politics, people's politics” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). The same provider added that the “owning of these issues by the board gives the staff more freedom to speak in public forums without wondering whether or not the board will be angry”, and added, “I work really hard at avoiding some conversations with board members. I don’t want to say it is a 50/50 split, but it would be pretty close between blue and red. Some just don’t want to talk about the transgender clients we serve” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

Issues of organizational capacity also came up as a barrier to advocacy. As indicated in the survey responses, only one of the service providers surveyed indicated that they have a full-time staff person dedicated to advocacy as their primary function. The service providers interviewed experience this capacity dilemma. Each provider’s

advocacy work is overseen by an executive staff person whose primary function is something other than advocacy (namely Chief Executive Officers, Chief Operating Officers). While each also indicated that they perceived this as normal or just the reality, their responses about the extent of their job functions highlighted the extent of the dilemma around the capacity to do advocacy. One Chief Operating Officer tasked with advocacy described their position as,

I am the chief operating officer which means I'm responsible for insuring that all of our facilities are in good condition and pass all their inspections and all their cuts and because of our housing stuff, because of having HUD and home funds, we're inspected... We get inspected by everybody. The files get inspected. The property gets inspected. By the city, by the county, by HUD. Then our regular audit. I have at least four inspections that occur every year. I have that responsibility. I'm responsible for working with the architect and general contractors and the project manager that we've hired to make sure all that happens on budget. (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16)

Another Chief Operating Officer tasked with advocacy as part of their function said,

I'm in charge of facilities, I'm in charge of IT. I am in charge of all of our housing services. I am in charge of training. For me I see myself as a thought leader for the agency. I think about our programming; the way we do things; the way we think about moving forward. It hopefully comes from me. Not completely. But I see that as my role. (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16)

Each of the service providers interviewed displayed some savvy and sophistication with which they understood and tried to engage with advocacy, but each also clearly is faced with these issues of capacity, as top executives are tasked with massive workloads, often with organizational responsibilities that take precedence over their advocacy activity.

When asked if they would like to find ways to increase their advocacy work, every provider interviewed indicated that they would like it to be a priority. When asked what that would look like, two of the providers called attention to an organization in San Antonio that hired a lobbyist, who was perceived as highly effective in fighting for increased funds, particularly at the state level. One service provider said,

they have a lobbyist in Austin who is ferocious and vicious, and she will cut your legs off to get all of the money that the state gives to give it to San Antonio's (Organization X). But I tell you she's the one that has really gotten more money. She's amazing. Tough call sometimes. We should hire her. (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16)

Another provider said of the same lobbyist, “we’d love to hire her. Have her part of our team too. But that takes money. I don’t have that money” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). When pushed on whether this CEO had fears about the IRS guidelines on lobbying, they stated, “Look, we watched them closely. We used to laugh saying they are going to get shut down. But they weren’t. In fact, they have had great success, bringing in big dollars” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16).

There was also a good deal of consternation regarding who should be most responsible for doing advocacy, and whether that work should be at the individual organization level, or as a collective with the coalition. It became clear that much of the advocacy that providers engage in is done at the individual organization level, with some exceptions. One service provider, when talking about whether their agency or the coalition, or someone else should take the lead on advocacy, lamented, “I feel like I have a role in it. I want to have a role in it, but should I be driving this? It's like, who else is doing this? That's my frustration” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16).

The Texas political climate was raised by everyone who was interviewed. One service provider described the situation as “Houston is blue and Austin is blue, San Antonio is blue, Dallas is red and the rest of Texas is red. I mean seriously” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Another advocate described the dilemma for social issues as a situation where “conservative Republicans dominate the legislature mathematically to the point that Democratic representatives almost lack the ability to even slow down legislation” (service provider, personal interview, 6/23/16). One even

posited why most organizations do not engage in much advocacy at the state level, stating that colleagues often discuss how the Texas legislature is “pretty conservative, so people figure why would I bother?” (homeless advocate, personal interview, 6/27/16). Another CEO stated simply, “that’s the thing, we don’t really know anything about the state advocacy. We’ve focused our energy elsewhere” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). When asked if this political climate dictates the ways in which they choose to engage in policy discussions, the responses were a resounding yes, with a consistent perception to be quite cautious about how issues were raised publicly.

Engaging in Advocacy Anyway

Despite the barriers described, and their consistency with the common barriers to advocacy highlighted in extant literature, I also found that most service providers continue to find at least some ways to engage in advocacy. They aren’t totally avoiding this work. One service provider said, “We don’t feel we have a choice. Our clients face too many obstacles to survive. Their needs are too great” (service provider, personal interview, 6/23/16). Another provider connected the dots a little more clearly,

It's a combination of what are we trying to achieve? We are trying to get people off the street, so what are the challenges we're facing? Landlords are not leasing to our clients because of their criminal history, because of XYZ, so then we break it down to see, okay, who's interested in the ex-offender issue? Let's go talk to them. It's that kind of advocacy, because at the end of the day, it helps us with our ability to reach our goals, money or not, the big picture is still that. (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16)

One provider expressed an additional need to engage in response to their organization’s particular focus on the LGBTQ community, saying, “We have to be at the table. No one else is going to bring up issues on behalf of the gay community. Yeah, they might talk about homelessness, but if we aren’t there to always ask ‘what about LGBTQ?’, no one else will. Plain and simple” (service provider, personal interview, 6/20/16).

However, it was also clear from each service provider interviewed that the greatest reason for engaging in advocacy was for increasing their own funding streams. One said, “Our advocacy is mostly for our own benefit... for our own goals and our own funds” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another said, “We're geared towards what we are trying to do and the funds that we're trying to obtain” (service provider, personal interview, 6/23/16). Another said, “well the solution to most of the problems we are talking about is money” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Yet another provider said, “You really have to go in wise and just kind of figure out, ok, how much can we get out of them this year, settle for what they give, and feel good about it” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). Despite attempts to transition the advocacy conversation with interviewees to issues other than funding, the service providers consistently brought the need for funding back into their responses. In fact, the desire for increased funding dominated the conversations about advocacy, with very few mentions of advocacy for system or policy change, despite numerous complaints about the policy barriers faced by those experiencing homelessness in Houston. One provider shared frustration that the federal definitions and policy of homelessness may actually be causing further barriers,

We have people that have been sofa surfing and they want to come into our program and in order to come into our treatment program they have to go spend a night in a shelter. Sometimes they won't do it. They have to go stay in a shelter to meet the definition. Let's not go in the room and pretend that the definitions that we have aren't creating these artificial barriers. We talk about reducing and eliminating barriers, but we keep by the definitions and the unintended consequences of them (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16)

However, when asked if they see this as a prime policy issue on which to advocate, the provider said, “That’s above my pay-grade. I think the National Alliance (to End Homelessness) deals with stuff like that” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

Service providers certainly showed concern about advocacy activities that might be seen as too political, showing some savvy in navigating that system, but with considerable caution. One said, “We see advocacy as being a gray area. We are cautious about stepping into those gray areas” (service provider, personal interview, 6/23/16). Another said, “You have to pick the big ones (battles). You have to know what are the ones that really are gonna have the potential greatest impact for both our clients and the tenants that we work with at our apartments and figuring out what those are” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Yet another provider discussed the caution in relation to their own Board of Directors, saying, “I think that we do have permission here to push back some as long as we are extra careful, but I also think that there is an awareness that at a certain level some of these decisions are made and they're made” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). This caution that was expressed by almost all respondents appear to play a key role in why organizations avoid “outsider” approaches to advocacy in Houston such as engaging in direct-issue lobbying, or protests and demonstrations; and rely heavily on “insider” tactics, such as inviting policymakers for tours, public awareness campaigns, and social media campaigns. One provider said, “We do all of the things everyone else does: make the rounds with city council, do a Facebook campaign, try to get in the papers. Mostly to make sure people see us, and know who we are” (service provider, personal interview, 6/20/16). When asked if they ever engage in protests or demonstrations to raise awareness, one provider said, “Are you kidding me?” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another laughed and said, “Maybe when I first got started in this work. I’m a product of the sixties. Not any more” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

In response to either real or perceived barriers at the state level, almost all advocacy tends to be at either the local or the national level, and this is often directly tied to where they understand the best access to financial resources to continue their work.

One service provider described their advocacy work as,

Either at the national level when you can engage with that larger piece (national policy issues), to affect from that end. And then locally, because this is where the money then spits back out, and where we can best access the money. But the state almost just gets bypassed totally in that. (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16)

Another service provider said, “Our advocacy... is geared towards what we are trying to do, and the funds we are trying to obtain. It’s been, for the most part, local advocacy” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). When asked why this provider didn’t engage at the national level very much, they responded, “Let’s see... I think because we feel like they’re kind of far removed” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Yet another provider stated, “We work hard to build relationships at the local level... with people who have been around; people who know us” (service provider, personal interview, 6/23/16). Each interviewee reiterated their perception that the state level is closed. One said, “Then at the state level, it just seems like we’re so, I don’t know, we’re so in our little world here. We don’t even know who sits on the committees” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). Another stated, “When you start going to state, it just gets really wacky” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). One of the other advocacy organizations stated, “these state meetings, really nothing comes from them and they have no greater purpose, but whatever, I’m supposed to start developing those relationships” (advocacy organization, personal interview, 6/27/16).

Coalitions as the Advocacy Mechanism

As a whole, the homeless services structure in Houston seems to have strong potential for developing a collective voice, having a singular, long-standing coalition in place. If the literature is correct that coalitions provide the mechanism for engaging more extensively in advocacy work, providing the political cover, and opportunity, to risk-averse organizations, and the ability for a stronger, more unified voice, then Houston appeared at first glance to be an ideal space to see this enhanced advocacy. But that is not how the situation has played out to this point. The Houston Coalition for the Homeless itself acknowledges that they have done nearly no advocacy work to this point, with almost all attention paid to setting up service coordination with providers. They freely expressed that in terms of “a more traditional legislative advocacy, we’ve not even scratched the surface” (coalition leader, personal interview, 6/22/16). Service Providers in Houston see this as a mixed bag. On one hand, many of the providers shared the perspective that there is certainly value in the Coalition taking the lead on advocacy work. One said, “Their structure seems ideal with both providers and public officials at the table” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Another said, “Whether it's the Coalition or the steering committee, but I think at least to coordinate that advocacy, because I feel like it's not just my job alone” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). However, on the other hand, all of the providers interviewed expressed that envisioning the Coalition as the coordinator of the advocacy effort was a questionable idea. One provider responded, “I feel like a lot of the time I wish they'd just get out of the way. Cause that's how I feel about them these days, is that, I understand what they're trying to do but they're being heavy handed in it. Sometimes I feel like they don't know

enough to be doing advocacy” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). Another said, “I think they keep wanting to say oh we're all in this together. Well yeah we are. We're all in this together, but you're in it in one way and we're in it in another way” (service provider, personal interview, 6/20/16).

Given this ideal structure, why do we see such a significantly negative view about the potential for this collective voice and collective advocacy? What is the literature not predicting in Houston? The simple answer to this may be the proverbial “devil is in the details”. While certainly the structure of having a singular coalition, in which all of the key providers are members, is ideal; leadership structure matters, funding structure matters, and a sense of shared vision matters as well. None of these appear to be particularly functional in this case.

Leadership and trust are essential for expressing collective voice, particularly for a group of resource-competitive service providers; and to this point, trust in leadership and the collective structure is clearly lacking. When providers were asked about their thoughts on the Coalition leading the advocacy efforts, one provider said, “There is still some question about whether the coalition can handle this (leading the advocacy efforts) and do it successfully. They may need a different leader” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another respondent said simply, “There is constant tension. We don’t trust the coalition to speak for us or our clients” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). When asked what might help the Coalition become the vehicle for collective advocacy work, another respondent said, “The CEO would need to go. I would say that some of their key staff listen, but their CEO does not. She has an agenda that's

been given to her. That's okay. I understand that. She looks at you and nods, but she doesn't listen" (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

In addition, throughout the fieldwork process it became clear that the Coalition has been significantly buoyed by a very strong presence of key figures in the mayor's administration and the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives. In fact, the Coalition went through a major reorganization in direct relation to the prompts from Mayor Parker, the HEARTH Act, and their own history as a "floundering organization, unsure of the best role to play" (coalition leader, personal interview, 6/22/16). The HEARTH Act was calling for changes in the CoC structure, and required the CoC to name a lead agency to coordinate the homeless response, the joint funding application to HUD, and the allocation of those federal dollars to the homeless system in Houston. As the Coalition recalled, "this gave the coalition something for us to put our stake in the ground" (coalition leader, personal interview, 6/22/16). The mayor and her staff, however seem to have been in the lead on this from the beginning. They had learned recent lessons from Denver about a deep coordinated response and knew that they needed two valuable pieces. First, Houston needed an organization that could function as this lead agency. The Coalition became an opportune organization. An official with the Office of Homeless Initiatives described how their office helped put this structure in place, "There was a sense of us helping facilitate. The tightrope we always did was that we did not want to own it. We did not want the mayor to own it" (city official, personal interview, 6/21/16). The lead agency needed to be seen as able to stand on its own. Second, it needed an expert directly linked to the heft of the mayor that could command the attention and respect of the various local and national stakeholders. They found this person from one of

the major national homeless advocacy organizations, and she was the expert they had hoped for, carrying a strong, evidence-based vision, and the respect of both service providers and funders. The same official with the Office of Homeless Initiatives described her as the “24/7 expert who knew how to pitch to different types of entities... Whether people like it or not, they are investing in (her). They feel confident as long as (she) is there, and I think that was good at the beginning; very good at the beginning” (city official, personal interview, 6/21/16). This expert also brought a full vision for how to reinvent the homeless response system based on new national models. These aligned nicely with the new changes under the HEARTH Act, and the Coalition became the ideal vehicle for carrying out a dramatic change in approach as an entire homeless response system. This disparate group of providers needed some coordinated leadership to make system-wide changes to better address homelessness. The Coalition became the organization tasked to do this, but the vast majority of their heft and vision was being carried by the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, not the Coalition in its own right. One service provider, recognizing this fact, said,

The fact is that at the outset the only motivation for doing any of this was HUD telling the city of Houston we’re gonna pull all of your money if you don’t fix this (homelessness) mess. And the real power has always been the city. The whole thing is a quasi-political entity and as such, it has its own agenda (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

With major shifts in personnel in these key support areas at the Office of Homeless Initiatives (namely the initial expert driving these changes) expected, and the ever-growing concern of changing priorities with new mayoral administrations, there was express uncertainty from interviewees that the Coalition is able to successfully stand on its own and carry the mantle. Even a key official from the city expressed, simply, “It’s a bit wobbly” (city official, personal interview, 6/21/16).

Perhaps the most powerful dilemma with the coalition, and certainly its ability to garner a collective voice for advocacy, is the limited trust from the service providers themselves. In its current structure, the Coalition is a stand-alone nonprofit organization, governed by its own board of directors (not HSNP agencies). In its role as the lead agency of the CoC, it is additionally amenable to a steering committee made up primarily of government officials and a few funders. Member service providers only have direct input through “workgroups” pre-determined by the steering committee. None of the providers interviewed for this project expressed more than very tepid confidence that the Coalition could garner a collective voice for homelessness. Many said they felt there was no chance for that. Even leadership at the Coalition recognized that developing and retaining trust is an ongoing challenge. They stated, “at times we have forgotten that some of the folks in this group didn’t grow up with us, so we made some assumptions that there was trust there that we had to go back and earn” (coalition leader, personal interview, 6/22/16). However, even this admission may be understating the lack of trust between the provider field and the Coalition. One provider said, “oh Lord, I have no idea what the mission and vision of the Coalition is anymore” (service provider, personal interview, 6/18/16). Another said, “They refuse to acknowledge that the emperor has no clothes” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Yet another stated, “I don’t view the Coalition for the Homeless as “us” at all” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). When pressed for what may change the prospects of that collective advocacy voice, multiple service providers simply stated that a change of executive leadership at the Coalition would be necessary. One said, “I can see the potential for us to work together like this, but what’s that going to take? Perhaps a different leader” (service

provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). It can be noted that as of February 2019, a new, interim CEO for the Houston Coalition for the Homeless has been hired.

In addition, funding structure matters immensely; and while Houston has the longevity of a singular coalition to address homelessness, there is a financial structure in place that has created opportunity in certain aspects, and significant challenges in others. Certainly it appears that the Coalition serving as the lead agency for dispersing the majority of federal funding to serve the homeless in Houston has brought almost every service provider to the table together; however, that financial structure also has created a power dynamic that seems to impede the development of trust to advocate and speak as a strong, unified voice to address homelessness. One city official from the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives described the heavy-handed approach taken at getting service providers to agree to be at the table,

What do we offer organizations? We offer organizations funding. It might have been the same fund they were receiving before, but it won't be cut... We aren't investing any dollars if you're not part of the team. Organizations have been warned and organizations have been encouraged (city official, personal interview, 6/21/16)

The Coalition expressed the same, if not a bit softer, sentiment, "We have carrot and stick approach to getting the providers on board with our role as the lead agency. They are averse to change. But if you don't act this way, then you can't have the funding anymore. That's the reality" (coalition leader, personal interview, 6/22/16). Service providers recognize and express this power dilemma quite clearly. One said, "Yes, we are at every (Coalition) meeting, but not because I think it has any real value. I have to show up if I have any desire to get access to the federal funds they disperse" (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another said, "the agencies (service providers) will just... participate at the minimum level required to keep dollars coming. Other than that... I

mean, we are members, and we are active. We do our dues, but we rarely work all that closely with the coalition or the city” (service provider, personal interview, 6/20/16). One other provider stated, “as long as the purse strings aren’t shared, as long as the decision-making is not a shared decision-making process about how funds are done... I don’t even know if they can legally go there... we just aren’t going to see real cooperation (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16).

A sense of shared vision and shared identity is also important in coalition work. Given a long history of HSNPs working in silos and competing for funding, developing this sense of trust and mutuality is extremely challenging! The providers interviewed in this study clearly do their own advocacy with limitations and barriers largely predicted by the literature on nonprofit advocacy, and the bulk of this advocacy is for their own benefit. Similar to the mistrust between providers and the Coalition, there is competition and resentment between the providers that leads to this individualized behavior. One respondent, when asked about the value of working across organizations, stated that while they see the merits, “we all have different cultures, different ways that we operate, and our own nuances... it’s tough.” (service provider, personal interview, 6/17/16). Another provider described it as “a situation of ‘watch cautiously; what’s happening’ on those discussions and continue to do your own advocacy wherever you are” (service provider, personal interview, 6/24/16). Yet another provider, when asked about resentment between the providers, said, “Ohh yeah. There’s resentment. Why do they get this money? We are doing the same thing, so why are you giving it to them? They didn’t have squat experience in doing street outreach, and we are using evidence-based practices. Seems like lots of ‘playing favorites’” (service provider, personal interview,

6/18/16). This competition and animosity is likely in a resource-poor environment, and the homeless service system is no different. Any effective coalition body needs to functionally bridge these divides between the various partners. To date, the Houston Coalition does not seem to be bringing these disparate voices together under a shared vision.

Summary of the Findings in Houston

The case of Houston's homeless response, and the ways that homeless service providers engage in their work of both service provision, and advocacy, shines a light on a number of important issues. While Houston has shown over the last 10 years that there are some hopeful trends in terms of homeless response and reductions in the overall experiences of homelessness, the crisis remains, with over 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night. In response, homeless service providers in Houston see an importance and value in their ability to engage in advocacy activities to help address this problem and further their missions, and an oft-challenging environment to engaging in that work.

Service provider organizations express many of the commonly cited barriers to advocacy from the literature: fear about complex lobbying rules, fears of funder or political backlash, and a general lack of "extra" resources for this work. However, each provider also does seem to find ways to engage anyway, to varying degrees. They do so with quite a bit of caution, and the larger and older organizations do report engaging in more advocacy work, but almost all organizations admit that most of their advocacy work is centered around access to increased funds for the organization, not policy change or system improvement overall.

Additionally, in Houston, almost all of the advocacy activities that providers find ways to engage in are “insider” in nature. They indicate that this is largely due to the sense of caution they carry when engaging in activities that might be perceived as too political. Service providers also indicate that they engage in advocacy work on two geographic fronts that appear tied to their understanding about which political opportunities are open to them. They advocate at the local level, where the recent trend from the mayor’s office has been a relationship of support and opportunity for increased funds. Additionally, they advocate to a smaller extent at the national level (through national advocacy bodies), as that is where most sources of funds for their work are generated. There is virtually no advocacy occurring at the state level on homelessness, due to two resounding factors: the conservative political nature of the state legislature, and the unique biennial legislative calendar that makes getting an issue like homelessness on the agenda near impossible.

In terms of the potential for harnessing a collective, underrepresented voice on homelessness via advocacy, a significant opportunity appears to go untapped. While Houston has a structure in place to pursue collaborative voice through the long-standing Houston Coalition for the Homeless, there are significant flaws that have so far hindered the potential for policy impact. Leadership is not trusted. Advocacy has not been a priority for the Coalition. The Coalition’s role as lead agency of the CoC creates a power imbalance between the members that exacerbates discord between members, instead of bringing them together under a shared vision and a sense of mutuality. This power imbalance is especially noteworthy given HUD’s desire to induce cooperation through

this consortium model. Ironically, HUD's chosen model generates further competition for scarce resources between the homeless service providers in the consortium.

Chapter 5 - Philadelphia Case Study

Philadelphia Overview

Philadelphia might be considered the birthplace of America, having been the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the United States Constitution in 1787. The city holds a profoundly historic space in American history. Throughout its history, Philadelphia's economic narrative has waxed and waned, at times boasting a thriving economy, and at times representing the common post-industrial tale of urban decay (Adams, et al, 1991). As Adams and her co-authors describe, the complex and ever-changing story of Philadelphia is difficult to pin down, and while it may include everything from the public images of "political graft and police payoffs, to bombed-out neighborhoods, to a gentrified phoenix-like creature rising from the ashes of its past", it also includes a rich history of links between private industry and public policy. In total, Philadelphia can assuredly be described as a place of debate and conflict, essentially since its inception.

Wrapped up in this story of the constant remaking of Philadelphia is a past that is tied to racial and ethnic conflict. Not unlike other post-industrial cities, Philadelphia's (and America's) swiftly shifting economy led to the erosion of economic opportunity, and in turn furthered the divisions between groups of people (see also Sugrue, 1996). Philadelphia's population declined as it watched its manufacturing-based economy collapse. As a result, Philadelphia saw its jobs and the majority of its tax-base leave, as those with means, predominantly whites, fled the conflicts of the city (Adams et al, 1991). Philadelphia rapidly become poorer, and less white, and highly segregated by race.

Further connected to these dynamic shifts in the economy of the city is the history of how housing in Philadelphia was impacted as well. Much of the housing stock in this historic city was developed in response to the booming industries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rowhouses for workers, clustered around factories, were the norm, forming a densely packed city (Ames, 1968). However, as many of Philadelphia's industries closed their doors, and decline took hold in 1970s, large portions of this old housing stock became vacant and went into disrepair, particularly in communities largely made up of blacks and latinos, creating a rising housing crisis, despite a declining population (Hillier and Culhane, 2003).

In his edited volume highlighting the nature of social capital in Philadelphia, Richardson Dilworth III discusses how Philadelphia has a long history and identity in open dialogue, debate, and conflict over differences (Dilworth, 2006), and rightly connects this with Iris Marion Young's idea of the city as a romanticized site of conflict "where differences are affirmed in openness" (Young, 1990). Within Dilworth's volume, Brewin (2006) describes the city-wide political conflicts and vibrant debates that took place in the streets on election days as national election results were announced over public address in the late 1800s, and how that public conflict served as the site of discourse. In the same volume, Goode and O'Brien (2006) describe the activism efforts taken by the Kensington neighborhood community in response to significant disinvestment, formulating protests and demonstrations to decry the city's neglect of their neighborhood.

Philadelphia has a history of direct engagement, of protest, and of vibrant and sometimes intense conflict in public space. It would appear to be tied into the identity of

the city. Like many other cities experiencing decline in the face of deindustrialization, Philadelphia's decline is deeply enmeshed in its history of racial segregation and inequality. With this long history of debate, protest, and the airing of differences publicly, it could be surmised that the political opportunity for direct engagement in advocacy work on social issues may be perceived as potentially more open.

The Philadelphia of today is just under 1.6 million people and the sixth largest city in the United States by population (U.S. Census, 2017). Philadelphia's days of a declining population appear to finally be in the past, as the city has remade itself economically, largely by latching on to the rapid growth of the "Big Pharma" industry (mostly in the suburbs) and the strong, young workforce that its many universities can provide (Adams, 2014). However, Philadelphia is widely known for its structure that is not always business friendly, with both a city wage tax for workers, and a Business Income and Receipts Tax, previously known as the "Business Privilege Tax", that taxes businesses in line with the nomenclature; both a percent of a business' income and its gross receipts (Philadelphia, 2019). This is an oft-cited reason for Philadelphia's challenge of attracting businesses to come to the city, and in stark contrast to the "free enterprise" approach.

Politically, Philadelphia remains a focal point of discourse, both locally and at the state level. Philadelphia City and Philadelphia County are identical geographies. While this can dampen its relationships with surrounding suburban counties, under this structure Philadelphia's local politics are generally self-led, and the lines to local and county governance may be more streamlined for advocates hoping to impact local policy. At the state level, Philadelphia has long dominated the political discussion in Pennsylvania. Its

voter base is larger in scale, its economic production is larger in scale, and its challenges are larger in scale. Philadelphia's eminence within the state is certainly not without conflict, as Philadelphia's needs and politics are often misaligned with large portions of Pennsylvania, creating an often dichotomous state that consists of the "liberal" bastion of Philadelphia in the east, the liberal bastion of Pittsburgh in the west, and what Garcia (2013) and many others have come to describe as "Pennsylvtucky" in between" – an imagery of the center of the state being a cross between Pennsylvania and Kentucky, or generally a socially conservative state at odds politically with its population centers.

Despite this apparent dichotomous political existence, Philadelphia's issues continue to receive significant access, if not contentiously, to state government and state budgets, providing the potential for a reasonably "open" opportunity space politically for nonprofit advocates to engage in.

Philadelphia's Homeless Response

As rapid deindustrialization of Philadelphia (and other northern rust belt cities) and the severe declines in employment opportunities were gripping the city, almost simultaneously national awareness was growing, to recognize a severe homelessness epidemic across the country. Mainstream media began to call attention to the severity of this problem, and nonprofit organizations were often first to heed the call to serve (Wolch and Dear, 1993). Philadelphia was not different. Much of the original call to serve the homeless was taken up by religious-based organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s providing food, shelter and outreach services to those living roughly or on the street. One of these early leaders in Philadelphia was a young "Sisters of Mercy" nun, drawn by the work to serve the homeless, who founded several nonprofit organizations to provide these

services, specifically the powerhouse Project HOME that was established in 1989 with Joan Dawson McConnon, and continues to be one of the largest homeless service providers in the city. However, importantly, Sister Mary's (as she is colloquially known) work was far from simply service provision (Culhane, 1992). Sister Mary is even more widely known for her legendary status as an unabashed and aggressive advocate for the homeless in public space. In interview after interview, her leadership on advocacy was discussed. Former Mayor Ed Rendell, who was often the recipient of Sister Mary's direct advocacy once referred to her as "Philadelphia's Joan of Arc, because so many people want to burn her at the stake" (McGuinness, 2013). One interviewee for this research described Sister Mary's loud and direct advocacy as:

...what started it all. She was at every press conference, and at every public City meeting. Like clockwork she would stand and demand that the City do more to help the homeless. She was so notorious, that the mayor always knew it was coming and would thank her for her enthusiasm. She taught all of us how to engage, just by her drive. (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16).

Over the years, many other organizations were established to serve a variety of particular populations of the homeless in Philadelphia. The current world of homeless service providers in Philadelphia consists of a range of organizations providing services to adults, to families, to vets, to youth, to unaccompanied children, etc. In addition, there is a wide variety of coalitions working on issues relating to homelessness that will be described in detail in the next section.

Philadelphia's homeless population is largely consistent with other major U.S. cities (Culhane, Lee & Wachter, 1996): significant and persistent. Philadelphia's 2017 Point-in-Time (PIT) count declared that the city has 5,693 individuals experiencing homelessness. This is relatively consistent with the most recent previous counts: 6,112 in 2016; 5,998 in 2015; 5,738 in 2014; and 5,645 in 2013 (Housing and Urban

Development, 2017). In comparison to some other major cities, some of whom have seen some incredibly positive trends in reducing the number of homeless, Philadelphia's PIT numbers remain incredibly consistent. Despite following the lead of both HUD and national service model trends toward coordinated entry and housing first service models, the problems persist in Philadelphia. This could be the result of a multitude of factors: economic and poverty conditions, unemployment, the opioid epidemic, etc. (see discourse in "Philadelphia's Annual", 2019; "As Philly tallies", 2019).

As mandated by HUD, the Continuum of Care (CoC) in Philadelphia is the main body that distributes the bulk of homeless resources into the service providers of the city. However, CoC structures are not required to be uniform; they are only required to have an identified lead agency that coordinates the joint application for funding to HUD and manages the allocation of those resources. Importantly, the lead agency of the Philadelphia CoC is the Office of Homeless Services, a city government agency. While the consortium model for the CoC is being implemented, a key decision-making power is retained by the city as lead agency. As we unpack the structures of power inherent in both resource dependence and political opportunity theories, having this coordination led by a city agency proves an important backdrop for advocacy and decision-making that requires noting and further exploration in the Philadelphia case. Nonprofit homeless service providers serve as key members of committees within the CoC, but the question remains whether a government-led structure of coordination would be perceived as more or less open to the advocacy efforts of service providers.

Philadelphia's Homeless Providers and Advocacy Behavior

The homeless service provider landscape, and the local context, has some unique features that emerged from this research. The Philadelphia homeless service providers show an array of engagement in advocacy activities, a willingness to discuss and enter political environments to varying degrees, and a propensity for systems conversations that appears to lead to interesting behavior.

Survey

The same survey that was described in Chapters 3 and 4 above also included responses for homeless service providers in Philadelphia that produced an invaluable first look into some of the advocacy activities, barriers and structures that might help explain the work that these organizations are doing, how they view this work, and how local context may impact this advocacy activity. The results of this survey provide some initial case analysis and also informed the direction and specific lines of questioning that would take place in the fieldwork portion of this research.

Ten homeless service providers in Philadelphia responded to the survey. Some highlights of these responses have already been highlighted in Chapter 3; however, there is a wealth of additional information that can be gleaned from these survey responses that can set the foundation for what is happening in Philadelphia around homeless services. The average founding year of the Philadelphia respondents was 1985, and a range of 1942-2012; so a strong variance in both old and new organizations. Two out of the ten respondents still had their founding director in place. Philadelphia respondents self-reported their operating budgets in a range of \$2,700,000 – \$25,000,000 and an average operating budget size of \$7,000,396. Respondents also reported full-time staff sizes

ranging from 21-300, for an average full-time staff size of 81 (the outlier organization with 300 full-time staff is clearly drawing up the average, which would have otherwise been 56 when the outlier is excluded). Table 5 below provides an overview of the organizational descriptives of Philadelphia survey respondents.

Table 5			
Philadelphia Survey Resondents - Organizational Descriptives			
Characteristic		Average	Range
<i>Full-Time Employees</i>		80.6	21 - 300
<i>Annual Operating Budget</i>		\$7,022,396	\$2,700,000 - \$25,000,000
<i>Organization Age</i>		1985	1959 - 2012
		Yes	No
<i>Founder Executive Director</i>		2	8
<i>Board Policy Committee</i>		1	9
<i>Staff Dedicated to Advocacy</i>		5	5
<i>Currently Pay for Lobbyist</i>		0	10
<i>(n=10)</i>			

Related to their advocacy work, Philadelphia service providers appear to engage in a wide range of advocacy activities. In response to the question about whether organizations have a staff person specifically to advocacy work, five out of ten respondents indicated that they did; however, a number of these were staff whose primary job function was something other than advocacy. Only three of the ten organizations have a staff person assigned to advocacy as their primary job function, and one of them is a part-time employee. Additionally, only one of the ten respondents report that the organization has a board-level committee focused on advocacy work.

Organizations were asked for their overall impression of the importance of advocacy to the success of their work with the homeless; six respondents indicated advocacy was “essential” to their work, one indicated it was “very important”, and three indicated it was “important, but not as important as our services”.

A significant portion of the survey focused on the specific advocacy activities that organizations engaged in, and there are some key details that emerge from Philadelphia respondents based on the results of this series of questions. Philadelphia providers show a propensity for engaging in a range of “insider” advocacy activities; nine out of ten respondents invite elected officials to their facilities, eight out of ten respondents directly solicit the government for funds, seven out of ten respondents ask friends and donors to contact government on their behalf, and six out of ten respondents state they suggest new programs to the government. However, when we look at the more “outsider” types of advocacy activities from the literature, Philadelphia service providers indicate a willingness to engage in the behaviors often perceived as riskier in both theory and practice; eight out of ten respondents reported engaging in protest or demonstrations, and seven out of ten organizations in Philadelphia report engagement in direct-issue lobbying. Given the literature’s prediction that outsider activities will be perceived as risky, what explains this willingness of Philadelphia homeless service providers to engage in these types of advocacy? Would the theories on political opportunity predict this behavior? At first glance, it appears possible, and will be further explored in fieldwork analysis subsection below.

The coalition environment in Philadelphia is another crucial dynamic to understand. As explored previously, the literature on nonprofit advocacy has predicted

that coalitions will be one of the most effective mechanisms for risk-averse HSNPs. In response to a series of questions that explore the ways that organizations engage in coalition work at a variety of geographic levels, every responding organization in Philadelphia reported engagement in coalition work. However, instead of a singular coalition that every responding organization was a member of, Philadelphia's responses consisted of 13 different coalitions that providers reportedly engaged in, at the local level alone. The specific foci of these coalitions range from mental health, to adult homelessness, to youth homelessness, to family homelessness, to youth education, to affordable housing, and so on. Nationally, five out of ten Philadelphia respondents reported that they engage with coalitions at the national level, with a total of eight different national coalitions. Three respondents reported engagement with one state level coalition. While all ten responding service providers indicated that they felt that these local coalitions are an "important outlet" for their local advocacy work, and reported attending an average of ten local coalitions meetings over previous 12 months, this hectic coalition environment merits some deliberate explorations.

There is no doubt that these survey responses were essential to the development of some of the key lines of inquiry to explore during the case study fieldwork phase of this research. With no less than thirteen different coalitions across just these ten respondents, how does this environment help or hurt the advocacy work on issues related to homelessness. Does this breadth of coalition work provide for a breadth in advocacy activity? Or does it further depress the unity needed across organizations to establish collective voice on key issues? In addition, what explains the willingness of Philadelphia

homeless service providers to engage in the more “outsider” types of advocacy, despite the perceived risks associated with this type of engagement?

Fieldwork

While the survey results identify some key environmental and behavioral factors in Philadelphia, a true understanding of the nuances of this environment require a deeper dive through a more intense case study. Not just what kinds of advocacy activities they engage in, but how they perceive this work, how they view the barriers to advocacy, and the potential opportunities to access policymakers and funding agencies at various geographic levels. Additionally, how would they, in their own words, describe their work in what the literature would describe as more “outsider” types of advocacy? And what are the impacts and perceptions of the coalition environment in Philadelphia?

To analyze these questions, fieldwork interviews were conducted in Philadelphia in July and August 2016. In total, 15 semi-structured in Philadelphia, including 4 service providers with staff at multiple levels (and included access to one board member), leaders of three of the major coalitions, lead staff from the City’s Office of Homeless Services (also the lead agency of the Philadelphia CoC), funders, and one other advocate that is prominent in legal advocacy for the homeless in Philadelphia.

Barriers to Advocacy in Philadelphia

Without a doubt, many of the barriers to advocacy that are highlighted in the literature are at play in Philadelphia. Almost all service providers interviewed for this research expressed a caution about their advocacy work, with concerns over being perceived by funders and supporters, the government, and even their own Boards as

behaving too politically. One service provider lamented that the previous leaders of the organization expressed no interest, indicating that the sentiment had long been, “I don’t understand policy. I don’t think anyone’s interested in us doing advocacy. We’re not going to talk about it” (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16). Another expressed a long-time desire to let the work speak for itself, saying “we’re just going to be like a good kept secret.... I’m not going to put anything out there. We’re just going to do this (their services)” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). A relatively new CEO of another service provider expressed that the lack of understanding from both the Board and the staff has been a long-time barrier to doing advocacy, stating,

I don’t think it’s existed. I don’t think they understand. I don’t even think we as staff members really understand. I don’t think that I understand the full potential that exists out there. There are discussions about what is the appropriate amount of time that can be spent on lobbying before you lose some tax exempt status. (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16).

Yet another service provider shared that their organization’s Board and previous leadership had been the most significant reason they haven’t done advocacy, saying,

the history with formal advocacy for the first 37 years of the agency’s existence was very stymied. We were not allowed to engage in some of those advocacy efforts, especially when it came to legislation or ruffling the feathers of the local community. The Board was very risk averse. They were not willing to jeopardize funding in those ways. They were always fearful it would damage relationships. (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16).

This same service provider added that during a change in leadership of the organization, staff began to explore new advocacy work. This provider shared, “It was a void in leadership. We took advantage of that. There was nobody there to tell us we couldn’t, so we decide to go forward and try some things” (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16).

Another common theme about the barriers to advocacy work had to do with having limited resources and limited organizational capacity. Issues of capacity were a common refrain for the Philadelphia homeless service providers. One service provider said simply, “I’d love for us to do more advocacy. I’ve got to find the money” (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16). Of note, this same provider’s annual operating budget exceeds \$20,000,000. Another service provider who expressed a desire to do more advocacy, shared:

We are planning to do more advocacy. Our Board tends to be very conservative, and has told us for years that they don’t want us to get involved in politics. So we have to try to pull them along slowly, and can’t push it (the subject of advocacy) too much. (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16)

Yet another service provider leader expressed that the determining factor was whether they “can find a way to do it that doesn’t cost a lot of money” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). Another provider expressed that they are mostly focused on “trying to keep it all internally together, and dealing with all of this internal stuff that’s going on to really solidify and make sure that we have quality programs, because ultimately, that’s what I want first” (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16).

Other service providers described their lack of capacity in terms of which staff person they could assign the work to, and rarely feeling that they could afford a dedicated staff person. One service provider with a dedicated staff person shared,

It's challenging to have somebody dedicated to thinking about legislation and looking at all of that. I don't feel like we're doing it well at all right now and we don't have somebody who's on top of what's happening with all of the laws. What's going on at city council? We need to be at hearings. Part of that just comes down to the staffing resources. (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16)

Another service provider with a dedicated staff person shared, “There are only three of us in the city; only three homeless organizations with a dedicated advocacy person. The others can’t, or won’t” (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16).

Engaging in Advocacy Anyway

Despite many of these barriers being in line with much of the literature, there is strong evidence that service providers in Philadelphia are finding ways to engage in a diverse array of advocacy activities. As can be commonly seen, most service providers expressed figuring out how to engage in some advocacy work out of a sense of duty or mission. One provider simply said, “We see advocacy as a responsibility. We need more responsive policies out there” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). Similarly, another provider said that advocacy is necessary because “we can’t solve big problems on our own. The policymakers and the folks who determine budget priorities for the local county, state, and federal budgets need to understand the impact that their decisions make on the kids and families that we serve” (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16). Even the board member interviewed for this research expressed that their organization’s board has a policy committee, largely because of their internal agreement that pushing for better policy is essential for not just the organization’s fiscal opportunities, but for furthering the field overall (board member, personal interview, 7/30/16).

For the most part, the larger service providers seem to have taken the lead on most of the advocacy work. A common refrain was expressed by one provider who said, “(Organization X) has all of the resources. We let them lead the advocacy work... we’ll help if we can” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). One of the largest organizations interviewed expressed that they take the lead largely because they have the

capacity and seemed to understand that, “It’s probably challenging to work with us. We have a big budget. Most of these activities just become our projects. Figuring out how to share power is really challenging” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). This same provider described attempts to get smaller organizations on board with their efforts, highlighting specific requests to partner on events and receiving “nope, you got this” from the smaller providers in response (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16).

Philadelphia service providers consistently indicate that they see a considerable range of political opportunities to engage in advocacy, even at the state level. Despite expressed frustrations with the never-ending lack of funds, these Philadelphia service providers conveyed a general feeling that City officials were open to discussions about what was needed to address homelessness. One service provided their insight, expressing, “I think every administration is like a new opportunity. Kenny's actually taking on quite a bit. They're rolling out these waves of... starting with this 100-day push around street homelessness and then moving towards... families will be the next horizon” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). In relation, when the City’s Office of Homeless Services was asked about how they perceived the advocacy of homeless service providers, one of the leaders stated, “Oh, I actually wish they would advocate *more* (interviewee’s emphasis). They probably help us make our case for more funds across the board” (city official, personal interview, 7/28/16). Another city official described their willingness to discuss policies and programs with service providers as,

We've opened the door. We're asking people to work together with us and we're asking, I'm asking the staff here to work with the providers. To listen to them and help them accomplish what they want to and figure out how we can make our systems as user-friendly as possible. That's the goal (city official, personal interview, 7/29/16)

However, this same official followed up by saying, “I think that the homeless providers aren't organized and I don't think that they have as big a voice or as big a role as they could. Particularly in money decisions” (city official, personal interview, 7/29/16).

At the same time, while service providers perceive some open political opportunities, they also express considerable savvy in how to choose which opportunities are more open than others, particularly in relation to their limited time and resources. One provider shared, “We have to see it as an investment in our time and resources. For example, we don't spend time on the school district, because they show no interest whatsoever in real conversations” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). Another expressed, “It goes back to the whole environment thing; understanding changes to the environment and being able to adapt to that” (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16).

Despite the lamentation regarding a lack of resources from the state, advocacy at the state level feels expressly open to service providers in Philadelphia. A number of providers were observed engaging in “lobbying days” at the state level several times per year, and often in coordination with other providers and advocates. When pressed for the value of doing advocacy at the state level, one advocate shared, “Oh there is no money at the state level. Haha. But the state sets the tone for how we talk about these issues. So we want them on board” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). Another provider shared frustrations about the state, saying, “We've gotta be there. But Pennsylvania is one of those kinda funny places where sometimes there's resources and sometimes there's not” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). A Philadelphia city official shared that the issue of homelessness “really kind of falls between the cracks at the state level.

The bigger issue at the state is that nobody's in charge" (city official, personal interview, 7/29/16). It is worth mentioning that during the fieldwork phase of this research, Pennsylvania had recently ended a nine-month budget impasse (Langley, 2016) that had a significant impact on how service providers described their efforts to advocate at the state-level. All of the service providers shared their frustration with the state's budget woes and the negative impact on homelessness as an issue. One provider shared, "with the budget impasses going on for as long as they have, and just these big revenue fights, it's really been hard to know how to engage" (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16).

From the survey, Philadelphia homeless service providers seem to be willing to engage in more "outsider" types of advocacy, such as engaging in public protests and demonstrations, as well as direct-issue lobbying. What is the impetus of the willingness of homeless service providers to engage in this kind of way? It would appear that part of the answer is tied to a few of the older, larger service providers in Philadelphia who had a long history of vocalizing dissatisfaction with government responses to a growing homeless epidemic. As highlighted previously of the work of Sister Mary, leaders from a number of smaller service providers indicated that having a few vocal leaders engaging directly with local government seemed to "normalize" these approaches, and paved the way for the smaller providers to follow suit. One service provider added, "I remember it clear as day. Sister Mary was arrested outside the mayor's office... on a Thursday before Easter. Maybe '94? You've got a nun in the slammer right before Easter, you get a lot of attention" (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). Another provider remembered, "it was a time when we felt like we could get into the mix; get bold; like, we could say

publicly, ‘don’t mess with us’” (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16). This behavior by organizations is expressly in line with the theoretical predictions of institutional isomorphism, in which organizations will look to the behavior of the field, and generally will behave in line with the customs or norms they observe.

The service providers interviewed for this research also indicate that as they enter into their advocacy work, they do so with considerable caution, largely in relation to the barriers they expressed. One expressed they need to be cautious politically, saying, “It’s hard even for us old, big advocates, to go to council and demand something. We have to pick our battles. Like, is that the battle that we want from them, while we are also asking for funding for new housing for young adults?” (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16). Another service provider stated, “How you advocate is important too because you have to be careful and you have to be mindful who your funders are and not alienating them, but kind of trying to bring them into the cause” (service provider, personal interview, 8/5/16). Yet another service provider expressed the caution in relation to a new source of funding: “I really have to be on my best behavior, because I hit it big with this one (grant). You know what I mean?” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16).

Advocacy from the Philadelphia homeless service providers is occurring, but this has not translated well into much collective or sustained voice. One provider described the often reactionary situation this way: “It has been very hard to get the providers at the table together. When we do, it’s usually for one narrow focus and then we go back to our own work” (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16). Another expressed, “I get it, I

hear it all the time: ‘Get together, talk as one voice’, and like of course. But it’s not that simple” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16).

Throughout the fieldwork process, it became clear that service providers in Philadelphia engage in advocacy almost completely on their own. Most of the common barriers to collective or coalition forms of advocacy were expressed: lots of mistrust between providers, and bad history based largely on significant competition for the same scarce resources. One provider provided a common refrain, saying, “The one reason that I think continues to hamper any real trust being built is funding. It’s the deep intense competition because we’re getting even less money than everybody else. That happens among us” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). Another leader expressed the attempt to “walk in the room with the other providers and be genuine and authentic about what my intentions are. But because our agency applied for the same grant and got it, when their agency didn’t, we are already starting a step apart” (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16). Another CEO expressed, “I look at this, and say to myself ‘what could I have to give up? What might I lose if I jump in with these other people’” (service provider, personal interview, 8/5/16).

Even when service providers in Philadelphia engage in advocacy in collaborative forms, poor communication and a lack of mutual support may be significantly inhibiting the potential of a powerful message. For example, during field research in Philadelphia, two separate service providers organized advocacy campaigns in front of City Hall to raise awareness about homelessness on separate days, about a week apart. Neither organization solicited the partnership of the other (nor any other partners) to coordinate the campaigns. Separate, individual advocacy campaigns, while potentially valuable and

effective, may fall short of their collective potential, and run the risk of being self-serving, as opposed to challenging systems that don't work to end homelessness.

However, despite this fractured dynamic, an additional, interesting theme emerged from the interviews with Philadelphia homeless service providers. The concept of “system change” as a major goal of advocacy work, or having a sense of seeing the local field as a system, was raised by a number of the service providers interviewed. One provider shared further depth on this concept, stating,

The importance of advocacy is looking at the big picture of how are we going to shape the future of solving these problems. We want to have an impact on the systems that allows us to operate better, but also allows other organizations to operate better. (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16).

Another stated that the true value of advocacy is based on the “desperate need for system change” (board member, personal interview, 7/30/16). Yet another described this need for a “system” understanding as,

Not just about 'us'. The system is not just 'us'. Let's understand that we work and live in an environment and there are many actors in that environment that affect how the health of that environment is. And so, our perspective is that if you don't address the environmental situation, we'll be less effective (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16).

While certainly some of the expressed value of doing advocacy had to do with increasing the organization's own funding, sentiment around seeing shared value of collaborating on advocacy was not uncommon across the Philadelphia fieldwork. Perhaps this is just a difference in the language used by organizations, but it would seem that an articulated goal of system change could be the place for common ground between service providers that have difficulty working together.

Coalitions as the Advocacy Mechanism

One of the most unanticipated elements that emerged out of the survey is the multitude of coalition groups that most Philadelphia service providers expressed involvement in, especially given that many of the same organizations portray frustration and distrust between each other, and the previously noted lack of coordinated voice on issues of homelessness. What would explain this apparent disconnect? With so many coalitions, we might imagine increased potential to leverage a collective voice, or perhaps a growing sense of trust between service providers given their extensive connectedness through various coalitions. Upon closer examination, it is clear that over time, narrowly-focused coalitions have popped up in Philadelphia to address specific issues of collective interest, thus culminating in a long list of specific coalitions: The Vote4Homes coalition dealing with the chronic adult homeless population, the Family Service Provider Network dealing with family homelessness, multiple versions of coalitions dealing with issues of youth homelessness and youth in/exiting foster care, and many more. While these coalitions, may be able to leverage their specific issues better with a narrow focus, this multi-coalition context appears to simply create more meetings that leadership must attend, and little coordination between these various coalitions appears to create a more fractured world of providers. One common refrain was expressed by a provider as,

It takes a lot of time. You have to be at the table. You've got to go to weekly meetings or conference calls, or what starts out as the five CEOs around a table then becomes the five executive VPs, that becomes the five program directors, and then becomes the five interns, and then next thing you know things aren't really happening. (service provider, personal interview, 7/27/16)

Another shared,

Everybody's thin right now, and thinner than ... I'm okay at operating on the very edge of people's limits, but I also know when my people are at the ... 'If you put me in one more thing right now I'm going to' ... I think that's where it is right now (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16)

Yet another expressed a near constant stream of meetings when recalling how often they or their team is participating in coalition meetings, stated,

Me and my team? Key people? Minimally I would say two a week, at least. If you take across ... because we're in child welfare, we're in housing, some of the prevention pieces, the street outreach, the collaborative groups that are going on... (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16)

In addition, the individual service providers indicated a significant degree of skepticism of the value and potential of coalitions. When asked if coalitions are an effective way to express collective voice on issues of homelessness, one service provider stated, “They don’t work very well. I like it in theory. I have been in coalitions and what happens is people just always fall back on their own interests. When that happens, it's over” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). This same provider self-identified as representing her/his organization on at least three different coalitions focused on homelessness, and when asked if there were any examples of effective coalitions in Philadelphia, stated, “Absolutely not. Absolutely not” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). When pressed on why they continue to attend despite this lack of effectiveness, this provider said simply, “I feel like we have to. Yeah, I feel like we have to. You know what I mean? I don’t see an alternative” (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16).

The larger service providers, with dedicated resources and staff for advocacy take the lead in various coalitions, and are reported to be the most vocal about the strategy and direction of the coalition. As highlighted above, the smaller service providers expressed a tendency to rely on those larger organizations for leadership. Only 2 or 3 of the homeless service providers within Philadelphia have at least one full-time staff person dedicated to

advocacy work as their core job function, leaving only a few dominant voices to lead these efforts for collective voice.

If some of the key goals and values of coalitions are to create partnership, cooperation, and collective voice among disconnected service providers, Philadelphia's context displays limited success. However, upon closer examination, some coalitions may be more successful than others at developing that sense of mutuality and trust. One major coalition, led by one of the larger and well-resourced providers, is widely expressed as feeling top-down. Coalition members expressed a sense of value and accomplishment of the coalition, but also indicated, "We don't feel we have much voice there. We are mostly told what to do, and I rarely feel heard" (service provider, personal interview, 8/3/16). Another provider and member of that coalition expressed frustration that, "(Organization X) mostly just advocates for themselves. We feel more like we are just tacked onto a list to look like we are all talking as one" (service provider, personal interview, 8/5/16). Yet another provider, and member of this coalition stated, "When you show up at the meeting, you'll see an agenda created by them. Nobody around the table had anything to do with developing that agenda" (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16).

Conversely, another large homeless coalition in Philadelphia received a considerably more positive assessment from member organizations. One provider and member of the coalition expressed that the meetings felt more welcoming and worth the time, adding, "you have more executive directors that are talking to each other" there (service provider, personal interview, 7/14/16). Another provider and member of the

coalition shared, “It’s the only one (coalition) I’ve seen work. No messing around. We get things done” (service provider, personal interview, 8/2/16).

So, if coalitions are the mechanism by which collective voice can be leveraged, as much of the coalition literature predicts, what is the difference between these two coalitions and their perceptions of value and effectiveness from the member organizations? One answer may lie in the approach to leadership within coalitions. Of the two coalitions described above, the first relies on a more sophisticated, well-resourced advocacy capacity of the lead service provider to direct the coalition efforts. There are well-established successes from this coalition and a long history that lends the coalition some heft, but the members of the coalition interviewed for this study feel little involvement aside from attending a meeting.

The second coalition discussed above, on the other hand, has taken a very different strategy to gathering the necessary leaders. The individual in charge of leading the coalition is classically trained as a community organizer, and expresses that training in describing the way to gather a diverse group of people to think collectively:

I use a community organizing model, bring in leadership together from the non-profit community, and to some extent the public sector, to address issues and concerns... developing a consensus... it's almost by nature an entirely collaborative process (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16)

This leader went on to describe the specific approach they take: “create opportunities for small wins to build momentum, give manageable and easily deliverable action items to the key leaders to build mutual accountability, and consistently communicate the efforts, wins, and opportunities” (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16). Members of this coalition consistently reported feeling empowered, respected and heard in this coalition. The leader of this coalition added,

It's a development process. It's the timing of all of it. It could move a lot quicker without a coalition. It could move a lot quicker if it was just me, and maybe a few other agencies, and that's it. But without those groups involved, my effectiveness reaching out to policymakers would be diminished considerably, so that's why we do it (service provider, personal interview, 7/25/16)

Coalition members of this second coalition also expressed always leaving coalition meetings with action steps for each provider to be responsible for, making it feel more like a collective effort. This begs the question whether these lessons and approaches associated within community organizing, particularly in communities and settings that exist in a disadvantaged power framework, can be the necessary structure to achieve the kind of collective voice that can have an impact on the direction of homeless policy; a question that will be taken up in more detail in the next chapter.

Summary of the Findings in Philadelphia

The case of Philadelphia's homeless response and particularly the variety of ways that homeless service providers engage in advocacy, provides some interesting nuance into the discussion about advocacy by human service providers. One important structural distinction of note in Philadelphia is that the lead agency of the Continuum of Care, which manages the application and dispersing of key federal resources from HUD, is a city government agency. While seemingly a negative point for many providers on the surface (to have the government determining allocation of scarce resources), this perhaps provides a structure that can ironically serve as a unifier for many of the providers looking to find common ground on which to advocate for better policies and allocations.

Certainly, a number of common themes emerge, which are consistent with much of the literature. For instance, overall, most of the service providers in Philadelphia do find ways to engage in advocacy work, but do so with levels of caution about that work.

The larger and older organizations do more advocacy, and appear more vocal than smaller and younger organizations. The smaller organizations have conflicted emotions about this lack of voice in the agenda-setting. All of the service providers surveyed and interviewed expressed that doing advocacy was essential, even though most of them seemed to tiptoe around much of their work. Much of the advocacy work being done is fractured, with most organizations engaging in advocacy on behalf of their own organization, and largely for increases in funding. However, one key emergence from the interviews in Philadelphia was around the use of “system change” as an express value of advocacy. None of the service providers interviewed expressed explicit “system change” activities, but a few used this terminology and stated that they felt that advocacy is good for the entire system, not just one organization.

While many of the advocacy activities that Philadelphia service providers admit engaging in are “insider” by nature, they also seem to be more likely to engage in a more diverse set of advocacy activities, particularly in some of the “outsider” types of activities. This may be due, in part, to differences in the perceptions of political opportunity, whereby a normalization over time of outsider types of behavior in Philadelphia is conveying to service providers that engaging in activities such as protests, demonstration, and direct-issue lobbying is less risky than it is commonly perceived. Examples of previous “wins” at the state level, and the perception of Philadelphia’s favored political position within the state, seem to convey a strong message of political opportunity for advocacy to providers in Philadelphia. While organizations in Philadelphia admit that the state has limited funds to support homeless services, they express that Pennsylvania state government seems responsive to the conversations.

Additionally, Philadelphia homeless service providers seem to have a deeper connection to national advocacy efforts, which makes sense given the relative proximity to Washington, DC and the ability engage in meetings and coordinated lobbying days there.

Despite this potential in the perceptions of political opportunity in Philadelphia, and despite a host of coalitions to serve as a possible unifier of collective voice, service providers remain significantly fractured in Philadelphia. Most providers continue to advocate on their own. The concerns about too many narrow, fractured interests across too many coalitions ring true in Philadelphia. The issues become compartmentalized, dominated by the loudest stakeholders, and even duplicated across these multiple coalitions. Perhaps even more important is the effect of “meeting fatigue” that likely depresses the effectiveness of all of the coalitions. Most respondents talked openly about the problems of mistrust due to competition over resources, and most also expressed a lack of faith in the value of coalitions, despite their constant participation.

If coalitions are indeed the most appropriate mechanism for garnering an underrepresented knowledge and voice on homelessness, and working toward those necessary system changes, there may be some foundational knowledge from at least one coalition as to effective approaches of breaking through the barriers of individuality and create a powerful collective voice. What can be gleaned from community organizing to better frame the best approaches to developing collective voice in complicated settings such as resource-competitive service providers trying to develop shared accountability and shared voice toward a common cause?

Chapter 6 - Synthesis and Discussion

Key Findings and Emerging Themes

There are four common themes that emerge from this research that provide insight into the barriers and challenges that HSNPs face when deciding if, how, and when to engage in advocacy on behalf of their client populations. The findings, displayed in Table 6 and described in detail below are lessons from ground-level experiences of these organizations and their local contexts, and are additionally examined through a case comparison across Houston and Philadelphia.

The narratives throughout these case studies describe the opportunities that exist to give voice to an unheard and underrepresented population, and break through the barriers for real solutions that work to eliminate some of society's most wicked problems, like homelessness. The aim of this research was to employ a multi-dimensional theoretical framework, that includes Resource Dependence Theory, Neo-Institutional Theory, Organizational Capacity Theory, and Political Opportunity Theory to more precisely understand the advocacy behavior of homeless service providers. Each of these theories described in Chapter 2, when taken alone, fails to adequately predict the advocacy behavior of these organizations. This research examines the organizational behaviors and perceptions of homeless service providers through a theoretical framework that employs these various theories together to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation: What determines the advocacy behavior of homeless service organizations? How do leaders of homeless service providers perceive and develop their strategies and tactics for engaging in advocacy activities?

Table 6				
Key Case Study Findings				
Emerging Themes	Literature Predicts	Houston	Philadelphia	Finding
Barriers to Advocacy	fear or confusion about the rules, lack of capacity or specialized skills, perceived risks to scarce	orgs express fear or confusion about advocacy rules, fears about the risks of losing scarce resources, and express and display a lack of financial and skills capacity	orgs express fear or confusion about advocacy rules, fears about the risks of losing scarce resources, and express and display a lack of financial and skills capacity	literature is confirmed, orgs express fear or confusion of rules, fear about associated risks, and lack of capacity for advocacy
Breaking Through the Barriers	some organizations will break through, larger/older orgs will advocate more, orgs will proceed cautiously, advocacy will be for increased funding	orgs find ways to engage in advocacy, cautiously, largely for increased funding, and use primarily "insider" advocacy tactics	orgs find ways to engage in advocacy, cautiously, largely for increased funding, and use a mix of "insider" and "outsider" advocacy tactics	literature is largely confirmed, organizations find ways to engage, albeit with caution, largely for increased funding
Political Opportunity Structure	clues and signals in the environment will indicate how open or closed the political opportunity is for advocacy, affecting the advocacy choices of organizations	state-level opportunities seen as closed, local-level opportunities seen as recently open, advocacy opportunities all perceived as only responsive to "insider" activities	both state-level, and local, opportunities seen as open for advocacy engagement, history of "outsider" tactics by key peers has signaled that those tactics are less risky than perceived	literature is confirmed, with nuance, orgs examine the political opportunity, perceptions of the openness/closedness affect both their decision to engage, and the tactics they employ
Coalitions	minimized risk for advocacy, stronger advocacy as a group, better access to policy discussions	single coalition, all homeless service providers are members, coalition controls allocation of key funds, no coalition advocacy occurring, deep lack of trust between providers and coalition	13 distinct local coalitions, providers participate in multiple coalitions, minimal belief that coalitions work, deep lack of trust between providers, one outlier coalition finding success	literature is contested, governing structure matters, makeup of funding milieu matters, trust and shared vision matters, community organizing is a useful model

Barriers to Advocacy

The first theme that emerged from this research is that the most common barriers to advocacy identified in the literature do exist, either in reality or in perception for these organizations. The findings of this research indicate that homeless service providers operate in an atmosphere of scarce resources and fierce competition with would-be allies, and that this environment of scarcity impacts the advocacy behaviors of service providers. Both Organizational Capacity and Resource Dependence Theory literature appropriately predict this result. The homeless service providers in this study consistently lament their limited capacity, both in terms of financial resources for supporting the work of advocacy, but also in terms of their professional capacity to know the specific rules, regulations, and strategies of effective advocacy. Across the board, homeless service providers discussed that finding and retaining financial resources is their most crucial task, and that they exercise considerable caution when they see advocacy work risking their access to funding. Their dependence on scarce resources at least impacts how homeless service providers navigate their decision-making around advocacy activities, and for most service providers in this study, this dependence does negatively impact their advocacy work. These findings confirm previous scholarship on how dependence on scarce resources can impact the advocacy behavior of human service nonprofits, namely Schmid et al. (2008) and Mosley (2011).

Additionally, limited professional capacity and understanding of the rules and norms associated with engaging in advocacy is a significant barrier as organizational capacity theory would predict. The service providers in this study express uncertainty about their ability to engage in behaviors that may be deemed too political in the eyes of

fundings, supporters, and even their organizations' own boards, perceived as mounting political risks for engaging in advocacy. As evidenced by organizational makeup of most of the service providers in this study, limited capacity for advocacy also appears in the form of who is tasked to do the work. Only a handful of service providers across both case cities have a dedicated staff person whose primary role is to work on advocacy or public policy. In fact, most of the organizations in this study rely on top leadership (Chief Executive Officers or Chief Program Officers) to manage this work. These are almost always positions whose job responsibilities are substantial in other areas of the organization. Additionally, most of the service providers do not have board committees assigned to work on advocacy or public policy. For the homeless service providers in this study, these issues of scarcity of funds, the perceived risk to those funds that advocacy might pose, and limitations in organizational capacity are leading to anemic levels of advocacy activity overall. These findings also confirm previous scholarship on how limited organizational capacity shape the advocacy behavior of human service nonprofits, particularly the work of Gronbjerg and Smith (1999) and Salamon (2002).

Houston service providers face a particularly direct barrier, often describing the conservative political nature and unique legislative calendar of the state legislature as a powerful barrier at the state level. This political barrier can also be seen in at least some local decision-making. While the city of Houston could be described as quite liberal and supportive of comprehensive solutions to the issue of homelessness, the surrounding suburbs tend to have less supportive views around the issue. Harris County encompasses both Houston city and some surrounding suburbs, therefore county-level governance is

often described by service providers and advocates as a contested political arena; one that would cautiously, and rarely, be a focus of any advocacy work.

In addition, advocacy activity by homeless service providers in Houston at any geo-political level has been rare historically, which also serves as a barrier to their current, perhaps burgeoning, efforts to engage. These service providers simply have little context for the legality, the true risk, or the possibilities of engaging in advocacy work. They have little frame of reference to look to. Neo-institutional theory provides explanation for this. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) work described how organizations would conform to their perceptions of the institutionalized environment they operate in to gain legitimacy. In the absence of examples of human service providers engaging in advocacy, these perceived norms or rules of behavior have become institutionalized throughout the entire field. In Houston, the fact that service providers were not engaging in advocacy served to enforce a perception that it was not allowed.

Philadelphia homeless service providers, in contrast to Houston, have a more extensive history doing advocacy at the local level, particularly by some key leaders in the past, which seems to have signaled some degree of political openness to the work. Service providers in Philadelphia often mentioned how the work of Sister Mary Scullion in the 1980s inspired their role as advocates for the homeless. This early engagement in advocacy work set the tone for how organizations understood the legality, or the riskiness of doing advocacy. In fact, as service providers saw that this direct-issue approach to advocacy by Sister Mary not only didn't result in being shut down, but often led to more access to policy discussions, Philadelphia homeless service providers seem to have learned valuable lessons about their ability to engage in advocacy. In terms of DiMaggio

and Powell's theory, these providers essentially learned a different set of norms of the institutionalized environment around them. However, this reduction the perceived risks is not universal. Many of the resource scarcity, resource dependence and limited organizational capacity barriers still hold true in Philadelphia. All of the Philadelphia service providers in this study convey a level of caution related to what they perceive might be "risky" behavior. Additionally, they share similar laments about a lack of resources to dedicate to advocacy work. In comparison to Houston, Philadelphia service providers have more staff primarily assigned to advocacy work, but this group is still relatively small. Issues of limited capacity, both in terms of financial capacity and specialized skill capacity, persist for most providers.

One additional factor that emerged from the survey associated with the confusion around advocacy is providers' knowledge of an oft-hidden option within the IRS Code called the "501 H-election". This election option has been officially part of the code since 1976, and allows any charitable organization to file the option through a simple form. Doing so clears up much of the gray area surrounding the lobbying guidelines traditionally (mis)understood by charitable organizations. The H-Election allows for a significant increase in allowable lobbying expenditures, for most service providers up to and beyond \$500,000 annually. The dilemma with the H-Election is that amazingly the vast majority of nonprofits have never heard of it. Berry and Arons' (2003) extensive survey of nonprofits found that only 2.5% of all 501c3 nonprofits surveyed have selected the H-Election option. None of the organizations in this study had previously heard of this option.

Breaking through the Barriers

Despite these barriers and challenges, a number of organizations in this study do break through, and find ways to engage in advocacy activity. Most organizations described this activity as a sense of duty or responsibility to their mission. Size of the organization plays a significant role. As expected, and predicted in the literature, service providers with larger budgets, longer history, dedicated staff working on advocacy (more capacity), and support from executive leadership and board of directors engage in more advocacy activity than smaller service providers with less capacity. This is in line with Salamon's (2008) work. However, in both case cities, it is clear that the driving force for these organizations engaging in advocacy is for increased access to funding. Nearly every interviewee in Houston expressed funding as the core reason to engage in advocacy. In Philadelphia, while there was a strain of language about desiring "system change", almost all advocacy activity witnessed and described in this study were clearly tied, at least in large part, to organizational self-preservation or self-promotion. This is an important notion to illuminate from these findings. The self-preserving and self-promoting nature of homeless service providers has been highlighted in previous scholarship. Mosley's (2012) study on the need for homeless service providers to "keep the lights on" highlights this quandary for these organizations. For the most part, the stated mission of homeless service providers in this study (and in general) is the provision of services. Therefore, it makes intuitive sense that efforts by these organizations will largely hinge on their ability to find funds to achieve that mission. The quandary occurs when the self-preserving pursuit of funds is in conflict with the broader needs of the constituents who are

experiencing homelessness, or in conflict with the rest of the field of service providers who are often in competitions for these same resources.

As an example, during fieldwork in Philadelphia, the City Council held a public hearing to discuss the growing issue of youth homelessness (Philadelphia City Council, 2016). Various city leaders and service providers were invited to give testimony about the issue, in a session designed to better illuminate the scope of an issue that by all accounts has been misunderstood and underserved. In each testimony, both written and oral versions, the scripts centered on the individual accomplishments of each service provider, and the highlights of their important work. These testimonies struggled to display links to the larger issues facing youth homelessness, and instead served as a loose collection of individual reactions to the problems at hand. In this invited and rare space to provide expertise and insight in the policy arena, service providers are understandably prone to self-promotional action and singular voice. The problematic result of this lack of a coordinated, larger-picture solution became painfully clear at the conclusion of the hearing, when a councilperson asked the group of providers how much it would cost to end youth homelessness in Philadelphia. Taken aback by this unexpected question, one provider, stated in response “\$3.5 million would be a good start” (Philadelphia City Council, 2016). In hindsight, several providers expressed wishing they had expressed a higher number, and admitted they weren’t prepared for such an essential question (service providers, personal interviews, 7/14/16 & 7/25/16). This fractured, individually-focused group of providers didn’t have a clear vision for what the field needed, and a potentially valuable opportunity may have been lost. Given the scarcity of funds, the

fierce competition with other organizations, and a long history of operating in silos, it's easy to see how this fractured environment persists.

Regardless of the specific type of advocacy activities service providers choose to engage in, they clearly do so with caution. While some describe a much more sophisticated understanding of the regulatory environment around advocacy and lobbying than others, all service providers express the so-called “gray area” of the work, and either real and perceived risks of advocacy work. However, across both case cities, the types of advocacy activities homeless service providers engage in shines a light on an essential finding in this study.

Understanding the Opportunity Structure

Understanding the ways in which HSNPs assess political opportunity can help explain why we might see stark variation in the types of advocacy activities service providers engage in across cities. Of particular note in these cases is the reported higher level of more “outsider” types of advocacy activities in Philadelphia, as compared to Houston. In both case cities, service providers were able to describe their perceptions about navigating the barriers to advocacy, and in particular about how they viewed what kinds of opportunities seemed available, and what the perceived risks were. This is not an ignorant group. How these providers express their understanding of their opportunity structure is an important predictor of their advocacy behavior.

The political opportunity theory discussed in this study was pulled largely from social movement literature, but has direct application to how we understand the advocacy behavior and decision-making by homeless service providers. This is largely because these providers, through an expressed sense of responsibility to speak for their

underrepresented constituents, are attempting to minimize the risks associated with engaging in political discussion. They recognize the barriers that often block them from engaging in advocacy, and in turn they are trying to identify the opportunities that might allow them to safely navigate those barriers. Tarrow's definition of political opportunity discussed in Chapter 2 describes an environment that provides "incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success or failure" (Tarrow, 1994). The narratives of the service providers in this study indicate this exact behavior; a desire to engage in more advocacy, a caution about the associated risks, and an assessment of the potential success in relation to the risk. Service providers are making a calculation, and the clues they receive from their environment about how open or closed their political opportunity is will dictate their advocacy engagement. Service providers in Houston have both experienced, and discussed among themselves, the closed nature of Texas state politics in relation to responses and funding to address homelessness. This real or perceived closed political opportunity has clearly led to minimal attempts to engage in state-level advocacy. Similarly, in a historical sense, homeless service providers in Houston engaged in minimal advocacy activity at the local level, until a confluence of events opened the door. The election of Annise Parker in 2009, who openly championed finding solutions to the growing homelessness crisis in the city, coupled with Houston being named a priority city by HUD in 2011 were clear signs to the service provider community that the local political opportunity was open. From this point, the local advocacy of service providers increased.

In Philadelphia, service providers have a different environment, and a different set of clues about their political opportunity at local and state levels. Sister Mary's early,

direct approaches to advocating for the homeless in the 1980s served as a strong political opportunity clue for the provider community at large. Many of these providers watched as Sister Mary interrupted council sessions and was arrested in front of the mayor's office. Perhaps unknowingly, Sister Mary displayed for the service provider community that the opportunity to engage directly in advocacy work was open, and that many of the associated risks of that engagement were not happening. As a result, Philadelphia's service providers have had a sustained practice of engaging in advocacy at the local level. At the state level, the Philadelphia providers have also showed a sustained, if less vibrant, level of advocacy. The findings of this study indicate that providers see a willingness for state policymakers to listen to their needs, and that those relationships have value, even if they don't produce much in direct funding. The signals about political opportunity at both the local and state level are perceived as relatively open, and despite clear limitations in capacity, the Philadelphia service providers are trying to engage.

More importantly, how homeless service providers understand or perceive their political opportunity structure dictates the types of advocacy activities they are willing to engage in. The work of Mosley (2011), Onyx et al. (2010), and Donaldson (2007) has attempted to differentiate between different types of advocacy activities, largely categorized by their nature of being either "insider" or "outsider". This distinction is important to the understanding of how the theoretical framework employed by this study can predict the behavior seen from the homeless service providers in Houston and Philadelphia. In the Phase 1 survey conducted for this research, it is clear that Houston service providers show a propensity toward the advocacy activities most often associated as "insider". Philadelphia service providers also show a propensity toward "insider"

activities; however, they also indicated engagement in advocacy activities that would be decidedly associated as “outsider”. Of particular interest is the stark contrast between the reported engagement in direct-issue lobbying and participation in protests and demonstrations across these two case cities. While Houston respondents reported no engagement in direct-issue lobbying, and only one Houston service provider reported participation in protests or demonstrations, the number of Philadelphia service providers reporting engagement in both of these “outsider” activities were considerably higher. 7 out of 10 reported engagement in direct-issue lobbying in the past year, while 8 out of 10 reported participation in protests or demonstrations in the past year. The theory on political opportunity helps us predict this stark contrast as well. Houston service providers perceive their political environment to be closed to these behaviors, either because “lobbying” feels off limits, or because protests will not be an effective way to gain leverage in their local context. Philadelphia providers, on the other hand, have this history of protests and demonstrations as a clue that this type of activity is not only accepted politically, but may even provide the sort of political leverage desired to give voice to the cause of homelessness. Additionally, having a few of the larger service providers often taking the lead on these “outsider” approaches seems to further signal to smaller organizations that this political opportunity is open. This does not mean that Philadelphia homeless service providers enter into disruptive or “outsider” advocacy with total confidence. Every service provider in this study expressed calculations of caution and risk in this work, regardless of their level of advocacy overall.

The importance of how the political opportunity structure dictates the types of advocacy that providers engage in speaks to the kinds of impact these ground-level

experts can have on the homeless field as a whole, and the policies that dictate much of the work and the funding to serve these populations. If “insider” activities lend themselves mostly to organizational maintenance to “keep the lights on”, “outsider” activities are likely necessary to challenge the status quo, or at least participate in the policy dialogue that so deeply impacts the work to curb homelessness. A political opportunity structure that signals its openness to only insider types of advocacy will miss the ground-level expertise that service providers have from the work directly with this population.

Coalitions and “Collective Voice”

The fourth theme emerging from this research is that coalitions are not necessarily the obvious, valuable mechanism to achieve collaboration and collective voice. This finding is in conflict with much of the literature that describes the value of coalition work for nonprofits looking to gain access to policy discussions. For example, Fyall and McGuire (2015) recently found that these coalitions or “policy networks” have enhanced ability to access policy discussions, more so than the individual member organizations felt possible on their own. These kind of collective structures for advocacy can minimize the perceived risks of engaging in political activity, can help overcome the capacity barriers by sharing resources with peer organizations, and develop partnerships in competitive environments (see also Bass et al., 2007; Donaldson, 2008; LeRoux & Goerdel, 2009; Rees, 1999). If coalition work is the obvious answer to significant barriers to advocacy highlighted above, why does this obvious answer not ring true in either of these case cities?

As the variety of coalition narratives in both Houston and Philadelphia illustrated, governing structures of coalitions seem to matter immensely. Additionally, funding structures within the coalition or the local context certainly matter. Leadership within the coalition certainly matters. A sense of shared vision and shared responsibility certainly matters as well. Mosley and Jarpe (2019) recently confirmed this exact challenge when exploring how structural elements within collaborative networks impact advocacy involvement and outcomes. They found that the levels of participant and provider engagement in the planning and execution of advocacy activities significantly predicted the types of advocacy the coalition engaged in, and the policy impacts it could attain.

It is worth noting that one of the primary intentions of HUD's new consortium-style of CoC under the HEARTH Act was to generate cooperative decision-making at the local level. In some ways, in each city, coordination of services has been happening, albeit slowly. Duplication of services appears to be diminishing, which is a positive development. The lead agency of each CoC serves to manage this coordination. However, ironically this coordination is rife with power dynamics related to the access of scarce resources, leading to further competition between these partners. CoCs have the potential to be access points to decision-making for providers; however, they are functionally not the same as coalitions as discussed in this section.

The comparative elements of this research were able to shine a light on these challenges in a few key ways, and particularly highlight that the "obvious" answer of "coalitions" as the solution to this advocacy dilemma is undoubtedly not so simple. The governing structure of how decisions and agendas will be established within the coalition are important. The specific arrangements of the related funding environment are equally

important. In Houston, while there is only one coalition, potentially allowing for the ability to truly leverage the collective voice on homelessness, this coalition simultaneously serves as the financial agent for the local Continuum of Care (CoC). Effectively, they control the purse-strings of the largest portion of funding that service providers are vying for. This fiscal responsibility, and the associated power of allocation decisions, runs the risk of alienating members of the coalition; members who, like in most service provider networks, have a long history of fierce competition for resources, and the developed behavior of working (and advocating) in isolation. In Philadelphia, the financial agent of the CoC is the city itself, which eliminates a challenging power dynamic from the homeless provider network's structure that could usurp the potential for collective voice.

Trust between members is essential for coalitions to achieve a sense of shared vision and shared responsibility (LeRoux & Goerdel, 2009), and the chips are clearly stacked against this. As this research highlights, competition for scarce funds creates divides among service providers and their leaders, making it quite difficult to share anything at all. These divisions between service providers have been developed over a long period of time, often through decades of competition to survive. These relationships are understandably strained. Challenging relationships require cultivation over time, with a focus on developing common purpose and common strength, while encouraging that each partner has value in that commonality. The extensive literature on community organizing illuminates this work (see Alinsky, 1971; Warren, 2001; Ganz, 2002, Fisher and Tamarkin, 2009), which will be discussed further below. While there is a developing sense of shared vision and common purpose in Houston around the new coordinated

access system, much of that shared purpose is mandated by the structure that has been dictated to the city as opposed to a shared decision to move in that direction. It is also clear that trust in leadership, especially the leadership of the coalition, is very low, leaving the door open for the traditional tendencies of service providers to operate and advocate unilaterally. In Philadelphia, the multitude of narrowly-focused coalitions may have less leverage, and while the trust in the coalitions does not appear to be as contentious as in Houston, the providers in Philadelphia themselves indicated that most collective activity is based on a singular issue that arises, and then when the crisis is sufficiently or reasonably resolved, they go back to their own work. Narrow, reactionary approaches can die off quickly. To truly cultivate these challenging relationships, a consistent approach is necessary. So if coalitions are indeed the answer to this dilemma as much of the literature predicts, we have to understand the crucial elements that can impede their work, as they have in these case cities. From there we can highlight how networks and coalitions can make the best possible use of the efforts and time required to develop this mutuality.

To make the best use of this coalition mechanism, an emerging framework has been revealed in this research; one promising model for cultivating this common purpose and common strength among competing service providers into a sense of seeing themselves as part of the same eco-system. One coalition in Philadelphia garnered more positive reaction than the others during interviews. This coalition is coordinated by an individual who has extensive training as a community organizer, and expressed a need for a framework for success when working with populations who may struggle to think and act collectively. This coordinator, who works for one of the member organizations,

deliberately organizes the coalition's activities around "winnable" issues, and consistent communication. There are clear action steps for everyone involved, which has slowly built the sense of accountability needed to see consistent progress, trust, and member engagement. The skepticism remains between the partners, but the positive feedback from partner providers in this research seems to indicate that this slow cultivation of the relationship is moving in a positive direction. Training coalition leaders in the models of community organizing can enhance their ability to develop these difficult partnerships and enhance collective voice.

The lessons emerging from this coalition narrative call attention to the need to connect the complex work of coalitions and collaborations among human service nonprofits more to community organizing literature than to the literature governing nonprofit management. The local contexts and competitive environments within which these service providers exist can be characterized as communities that have histories of discord, have limited access to political space, and significantly limited resources. This is not unlike poor communities that are at the heart of community organizing practice and literature (Orr, 2007; Ganz, 2002). The literature (as well as the long-established practice) on community organizing highlights the particular challenges of organizing disparate stakeholders. Fisher et al. (2007) and Christens & Speer (2015) discuss the historical significance of the practice of organizing, and while their work focuses on the neighborhood or community level, what they describe as the challenging conditions for this work, are also at play within the "community", or eco-system, of nonprofit service providers examined in this research. There is a need for developing shared interests and shared accountability for effectively leveraging collective power, particularly in

communities that have been fractured over time. This body of literature calls attention to the practice of developing small “winnable” goals to develop momentum (Walls, 2015; Warren, 2001), efforts to attract the attention of those in power (Alinsky, 1971), and that these efforts must also have collaborative or shared governance structures to be effective (Dodge, 2009; Rich & Stoker, 2014). Nicole Marwell’s (2007) work in Brooklyn indicates the impact that community organizations, including service providers, can have within this community organizing framework. Marwell highlights the ways that CBOs in Brooklyn shaped the outcomes and opportunities of the poor communities they worked with, largely through the cultivation of participation and organizing the community to gain leverage in policy decision-making (Marwell, 2007). Our highlighted coalition within the Philadelphia case in this research is embodying this approach, with a framework and language that matches the call from community organizing. This coalition is signaling a need to reconnect community organizing literature to research on human service nonprofits, and perhaps coalitions of these nonprofits in particular.

A related point coming from interviews in the Philadelphia case is the language around the importance of advocacy for “system change”. While not necessarily a prominent element of this narrative (especially given the propensity of organizations to concede that most of their advocacy is done for organizational funding), it is important to note and discuss its arrival in this research. Highlighting goals such as “system change”, “policy change”, or “collective voice” were unique to Philadelphia interviewees. This language did not emerge in the Houston case. But what does this actually mean? Why is this language of collectivity and system change coming up, and is this truly the ideal? The answers to these questions are limited within the data of this research, but it is worth

mentioning that all interviewees using that language are connected to or participating in the coalition highlighted above that is founded on a community organizing framework, so there may be a connection. More importantly, it raises for this research an ongoing dilemma about whether professionalized (and resource dependent) organizations are the ideal vehicle for speaking on behalf of marginalized populations at all. This dilemma harkens back to the concerns raised of Michels (1949) discussed in Chapter 2. How do we wrestle with this body of literature that follows the frame that the issues of the co-optation of nonprofit organizations make them defective voices of the communities they purport to speak for? Is there a best-case narrative for how this advocacy work can look within the human service nonprofit field?

The Mockingbird Society

There do appear to be examples that help us navigate this potentially problematic space. One such example is an organization called The Mockingbird Society. Its model may illustrate a pathway for combining professionalized policy access, collaboration, and self-advocacy in a meaningful way that can address the concerns raised above. The Mockingbird Society was founded in Seattle, Washington in 2000 by Jim Theofelis, as an advocacy-based organization specifically working on improving the foster care system (Mockingbird, 2019). In an interview, Theofelis (Theofelis, phone interview, March 4, 2015) indicated his core reasons for leaving service work to create The Mockingbird Society: fill an advocacy void related to youth that he couldn't accomplish as a traditional service provider given the financial constraints, specifically create the space for young people with lived experience to be the advocates for change, and to partner alongside the

service providers to help incorporate their service experience and expertise into meaningful policy conversations.

The foundation of their programming was based on these principles. Mockingbird invites young people with lived experience in the foster care and homeless systems to attend agenda-setting sessions. These sessions are fully youth-led, and young people have remained consistently involved in the development, planning and advocacy work of the organization, and they are paid as organizers. These sessions are where the policy discussions and agendas are hashed out. Mockingbird's role is to provide stability, communication, and connection into the political space. Theofelis described the early days where Mockingbird staff would lead the discussions with policymakers, but with a deliberate push, they soon developed the capacity in their youth leaders where the staff stopped going into meetings with them altogether.

However, Theofelis was quick to point out that while The Mockingbird Society solicits ideas, perspectives, and data from the service providers in the Seattle area, and across the state, they are expressly not a coalition. This fact, and their original emergence as a new stakeholder in Seattle, did not come without consternation in the field. Theofelis recalled that most providers, whom he had been colleagues with for two decades, were initially angered by his new venture, feeling that he would make an already competitive funding environment even worse. Theofelis countered this with a promise to all of the concerned nonprofits that we would commit to not applying to any government sources of funds that funded much of the work, and that he would fund all of his efforts privately to avoid that competition for scarce, publicly-funded resources. Even with this commitment, skepticism remained from the service providers. Theofelis surmised during

his interview that it would take about 8 years after the founding of Mockingbird for the majority of the service providers to come around in seeing them as an asset to the overall system. Mockingbird is a service provider as well, but their service work was developed as a companion to many of the existing providers. Their niche service provision focuses on leadership development of young people with current or former lived experience in foster care or homelessness. They exist in the Seattle service provider eco-system, and have developed a model that allows them to collect expertise and needs from the other service providers, but have decidedly given the agenda-setting for its advocacy work to the youth themselves.

Jim Theofelis has since retired and The Mockingbird Society has new leadership, which always carries the potential for a shift in approach and priorities. However, much of their organization's logic model and work appears to continue as it was designed. While not a democracy of nonprofits, as most coalitions attempt to be, Mockingbird attempts to serve as a democratic agenda-setting platform for young people to be the voice in their own self-advocacy. This organization is unique in its design, and may serve as a model worthy of replication within the human service provider fields. While it certainly isn't without the potential for falling into organizational self-preservation typical among resource-scarce human service providers, it would appear that the foundational framework of The Mockingbird Society may at least provide protection from the trappings of mission drift.

Summation of the Findings

Four common themes emerge from this study that provide insight into how homeless service providers navigate the barriers and challenges of deciding if, how, and

when to engage in advocacy on behalf of their client populations. First, the common barriers to advocacy highlighted throughout the literature hold true for the HSNPs in this study. The homeless service providers in this research remark on fears and confusion about the rules governing their advocacy activity and the related risks to funding, and they lack the financial and staff capacity to engage in advocacy work. Second, HSNPs do find ways to break through these barriers. They do so with caution, and primarily for access to increased funds. Third, perceptions of the political opportunity structure impact the decision to engage in advocacy, the advocacy tactics HSNPs employ, and at what levels of government they direct their advocacy activity. Fourth, coalitions may not be the collaborative panacea that the literature predicts. Governing structures of coalitions matter, as does the funding landscape that often fosters fierce competition between would-be partners. Trust and mutuality are important factors for collaboration, and histories of competition for resources hinder the development of these factors. Additionally, a unique narrative emerges from this research in the use of community organizing models to create more effective coalitions that merits additional analysis.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Conclusion

The research undertaken in this dissertation attempts to unpack the local context and organizational experiences of homeless service providers as they negotiate the road of advocacy; how they understand the barriers to this work, and how and why they find ways to engage in advocacy, despite the barriers. Highlighting these challenges directly through the voices of these participants helps to illuminate the nuanced and complex environment that these organizations face, and provides us with some new directions forward, both in research and in practice. This study asked the following two research questions:

1. *What determines the advocacy behavior of homeless service organizations?*
2. *How do leaders of homeless service providers perceive and develop their strategies and tactics for engaging in advocacy activities?*

To appropriately answer these questions, it is essential to engage directly with service providers to examine and analyze both their actions and their stated perceptions about their advocacy activity. This research engaged the homeless service fields in two case cities (Houston and Philadelphia) to ascertain what determines their advocacy behavior, through both a survey of their activity and in-depth case studies in each city.

Additionally, extant literature must be tested against this analysis to determine what nuances can better inform our understanding of the advocacy behavior of homeless service providers, and human service nonprofits, in general.

The service providers in both case cities face all of the common barriers highlighted in the research on nonprofit advocacy, and they express these barriers clearly:

fears of political and funder backlash, resource scarcity, lack of organizational capacity, and confusion about exact rules or norms. There is little doubt that these barriers inhibit advocacy in a variety of ways. However, some organizations do break through these barriers, either because they feel a sense of duty, or because they feel that advocating is too important not to do at all. But advocacy within our research is shown to be almost exclusively for increased funding and organizational maintenance and survival. While this aim is understandable given the scope of homelessness and the desperate need for more services, it comes in conflict with the notion that service providers are advocating on behalf of this population; a population widely accepted as a politically disenfranchised and marginalized group

The homeless service providers here also describe sophisticated perceptions about the access to political opportunities. Houston providers recognize that their local city government is open and supportive of their work, and thus focus much of their advocacy work at the local level. Their perceptions of a conservative and unresponsive state government mean that they do no advocacy at the state level. Additionally, Houston providers engage in “insider” advocacy behaviors almost exclusively. “Outsider” behaviors are deemed ineffective in Houston. In contrast, Philadelphia providers seem to generally advocate at local, state, and even federal levels to varying degrees.

Philadelphia’s more advanced history of homeless service providers engaging in advocacy activity, in general, seems to indicate to smaller and newer organizations that the work is both possible and less risky. At the same time, due to this history of direct engagement in both “insider” and “outsider” tactics by older homeless service providers, and ongoing perceptions of open political opportunity, Philadelphia providers engage in a

mix of advocacy activities, that includes engagement in direct-issue lobbying, and protests and demonstrations; activity that we do not see in Houston.

Perhaps the most intriguing emergent area of this research is related to the usefulness and quandary surrounding coalitions as the mechanism for advocacy. Coalitions do seem to provide some inherent potential as raised by the literature; however, as these cases suggest, structure matters. Leadership, funding structure, trust and mutuality, and style are all important factors to attain the perceived value in coalition work. Houston appears to have an ideal setup on the surface, but it turns out to be deeply problematic in action, owing mostly to the Coalition's status as the lead agency of the Continuum of Care, and to untrusted leadership. Philadelphia on the other hand has no less than 13 different coalitions relating to homelessness. In one sense, this could allow for a breadth of advocacy across a diverse variety of issues. In another sense, having so many coalitions seems to extinguish the potential depth necessary to make an impact, creates duplicated efforts, and creates meeting fatigue. Taken together, these cases help explain both the challenges and the opportunities that may exist for coalition work, but what becomes clear from both cases, regardless of the number of coalitions, is that trust, leadership, funding structure, and network history all matter. Relationships that are challenged due to competition over resources and long-standing discord require cultivation, and that cultivation takes time and deliberate effort.

Additionally, this research lays the first stages for making sense of how a variety of local contexts can impact advocacy, particularly that certain types of "insider" and outsider" behaviors can be directly influenced by perceptions about the local context. Further examination of these influences should continue through the addition of other

cities and local contexts into this research. With a wider range of experiences, a typology of nonprofit advocacy behaviors can be developed, which would allow for an account of the variety of ways that local, contextual barriers impact certain types of advocacy behaviors more than others. Further, this would allow for more precise and predictive responses to remaining questions in the field. For example, this research suggests that the presence of government funds, and particularly how that funding is dispersed, can have an impact on the advocacy tactics employed by homeless service providers. As these case studies show, homeless service providers are examining and perceiving their political opportunity, largely for access to increased funding. Their perceptions about the types of activities deemed acceptable by the stakeholders holding the resources will impact the types of tactics they employ. The Houston case study in particular indicates that those perceptions are leading to minimal outsider tactics being employed, even while their engagement in insider advocacy seems to have increased overall.

Additionally, this research can suggest early answers to questions about how local and state government structure can impact the choices homeless service providers make in relation to the advocacy tactics they employ. The Houston case study illuminates this relationship, especially when compared to the Philadelphia case. Houston service providers are responding to a biennial legislative structure they perceive to be inaccessible, and therefore make decisions to rarely, if ever, engage in advocacy activity at the state level. Philadelphia, on the other hand, shares a critique of the lack of funds at the state level; however, identifies the state legislature as accessible and receptive, at least in part due to the full-time nature of the structure. Once again, perceptions of the open or

closed nature of the political opportunities dictates whether and how organizations engage.

Finally, ongoing questions regarding the value of coalitions are apparent in the literature. Do coalitions allow for the engagement in different advocacy behaviors than would otherwise be done at the organizational level alone? This research suggests that while this may be theoretically true, there are nuanced details that matter immensely when attempting to answer this question thoroughly.

Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This research is limited in a number of ways that can be taken up in future research. First, this study employs in-depth case studies into only two case cities, and while illuminating in their own right to help establish some of the key ways these organizations navigate this work, the generalizability of these findings is limited. This work could be continued through the examination of additional case cities, from a variety of local and political contexts, to both ensure that these elements and perceptions of political opportunity hold true, and to add new layers of local context not experienced in Houston and Philadelphia. The range of experiences and perceptions of these political opportunity spaces could be wide.

Additionally, while this research explores the behaviors of organization leaders when navigating local political contexts and their perceptions of how open or closed the political opportunities might be for them to engage in advocacy activity, a question remains about whether these political opportunities turn on the actions of entrepreneurial leaders. Several narratives in this research indicate the possibility for this. Mayor Parker in Houston is a driver for a changing perception of local political opportunity. Sister

Mary's aggressive behavior signals to other providers a local context seemingly open to direct forms of political activity. These narratives beg the question of whether enhanced advocacy behavior is dependent on individuals willing to buck trends and barriers in new ways. That question of individual organizational leadership was not explored as part of this study, but merits exploration in future research.

While this research cannot, and does not explicitly attempt to, address the efficacy of advocacy work for human service nonprofits, the findings can offer some evidence into this ongoing question. Understandably, this is one of the most important and yet unanswered questions in the field of nonprofit advocacy research for providers who aim to know the most effective ways to use their scarce time and resources to achieve the most impact. This study suggests that homeless service providers may not be utilizing the full range of advocacy tactics legally allowable. This is due to lack of understanding, a weighing of perceived risks, and sometimes just a lack of capacity. In Houston, only insider tactics are perceived as safe, and even these tactics are only recently employed. Philadelphia, on the other hand, has a longer history of both insider and outsider tactics, many making their own assessments of the efficacy of these activities, which has led to a more advanced advocacy engagement, even if it is still generally fractured.

Future research in the field must address this efficacy question. This research helps to highlight how local context will likely impact that efficacy in different ways for each city, as some political spaces will be inherently more closed at certain levels, shifting the efficacy of certain types of behaviors. This is a helpful addition to the debate, but is not predictive enough for the practitioner looking to make important decisions. More work is needed in this area.

Furthermore, a more extensive discussion with key funders is necessary to understand the full impact of the funding structure on the advocacy work of human service nonprofits. The service providers in this study remain highly responsive to funder expectations and their own perceptions of what behaviors funders will see as acceptable or unacceptable, just as the resource dependence literature would predict. While a significant source of funds for the providers in this study come from the government, there is increasing pressure to establish other streams of funding from private sources. These funders will in turn carry a set of behavioral expectations for service providers that may or may not be different from the expectations and norms laid out from the government. These expectations are likely to further impact how service providers understand and navigate their political opportunities for advocacy. An in-depth examination of this environment was outside the scope of this particular research project, but could play an increasing role for human service nonprofits, particularly in fields that do not receive the majority of their funds from the government. There is strong literature that both critiques the powerful role of private philanthropy on the behavior of advocacy work (Kohl-Arenas, 2015) and suggests its value is as the convener of nonprofit organizations toward positive social change (Anheier and Leat, 2006).

Lastly, future research can seek to further explore the space for community organizing training and literature as a framework to improve the work of coalitions as they navigate the contentious relationships of resource-competitive organizations. The same challenges that often exist in poor communities, where most community organizing work is employed, seem to exist in these organizational fields. There is merit to the idea that community organizing models can significantly improve the functionality of

coalitions of nonprofits. Our case in Philadelphia along with the example of The Mockingbird Society set the table for a deeper look into the potential for this new approach.

Homelessness remains a persistent problem, despite decades of efforts from government and HSNPs to curb, or at least reverse, this wicked problem. The most recent data from the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) counts show a promising recent trend, with a 15% decline in homelessness since 2007 (Housing and Urban Development, 2016). While advocates are encouraged by these data, there remain flaws in the PIT approach that may still be undercounting the homeless, a concern that needs continual assessment. These counts are likely to lack adequate uniformity across different geographic spaces leading to incomparable measures. However, more importantly, a significant undercounting of the homeless overall greatly impacts the true scope of the problem, and leads to under-resourcing of proposed solutions.

While individual HSNPs may or may not be the ideal voice for the homeless, given their challenges and tendency toward self-preserving action, these service providers may still be a valuable and even necessary mechanism within discussions on ending homelessness. Service providers have a direct, street-level connection to the stories and issues faced by the homeless they serve. This is a voice that has sorely limited capacity to find its way onto political or policy agendas. Despite the concerns of organization self-preservation, service providers working with the homeless (and other wicked problems) have the potential to foster a more democratic voice on the issues of homelessness, and leading discussions on finding new solutions to solve the problem. With the level of expertise and direct link to those experiencing homelessness that these service providers

have, their lack of voice within policy discussions may significantly hamper the potential for comprehensive solutions.

Appendices

Appendix A: Homeless Service Organization - Advocacy Activity Survey

Appendix B: Homeless Service Organization - Informant Interview Protocol

Appendix C: External Experts - Informant Interview Protocol

Appendix D: Fieldwork Interviews – Code List

Appendix A

Homeless Service Organization Advocacy Activity Survey

Thank you for choosing to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to stop completing the survey at any time.

Please complete the following questionnaire to the best of your ability:

1. What is the name of your organization? _____
2. What is the current annual operating budget of your organization? _____
3. How many Full-Time staff does your organization employ? _____
4. Does your organization have a staff person specifically designated to do advocacy?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know

If yes, what is that person's job title: _____

If yes, is this position:

- a) Part time
- b) Full time
- c) Don't know

5. Does your organization ever invite elected officials (or their staff) to visit your facility to learn more about your work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

6. Does your organization ever invite *candidates* running for elected office to visit your organization?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

7. Does your organization ever organize voter registration drives for your clients/participants?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

8. Does your organization ever solicit information from government agencies about funding opportunities?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

9. Does your organization ever propose new service programs to government agencies?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

10. Does your organization ever discuss legislative challenges concerning homelessness with your clients/participants?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

11. Does your organization ever discuss legislative challenges concerning homelessness with your private (non-government) funders?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know
- d. Not Applicable

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

12. Does your organization ever participate in public protests or demonstrations concerning issues of homelessness?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

13. Does your organization ever engage in direct issue lobbying of political leaders?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, what government level(s) did this occur (choose all that apply)?

a) **Local** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

b) **State** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

c) **Federal** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

14. Does your organization ever discuss policy issues through public relations avenues?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, what media platform(s) have you used to discuss policy issues (choose all that apply)?

a) **Print Media** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

b) **Television** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

c) **Social Media** - Over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

15. Does your organization ever initiate litigation on issues of homelessness through the judicial system?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

16. Does your organization ever request that friends/supporters contact their elected officials concerning issues of homelessness?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

17. Does your organization ever publish research or white papers on homelessness for dissemination to policy-makers?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

18. Does your organization ever publish research or white papers on homelessness for dissemination to the general public?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often did this occur?

19. Does your organization participate in a local coalition with other homeless organizations around common goals or themes?

- a. Yes
- b. No (*Skip to Question 24*)
- c. Don't Know (*Skip to Question 24*)

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often have they met?

20. Do you consider this local coalition an important outlet for your organization to engage in advocacy?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

21. Do you feel this local coalition adequately represents your advocacy needs?

22. In your opinion, is this local coalition productive and valuable?

23. What do you feel is the most important value you receive from participation in this local coalition?

24. Is your organization part of a national membership coalition of homeless organizations?

- a. Yes
- b. No (*Skip to Question 29*)
- c. Don't Know (*Skip to Question 29*)

If yes, over the last 12 months, how often have you had direct communication with the coalition? _____

25. Do you consider this national coalition an important outlet for your organization to engage in advocacy?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

26. Do you feel this national coalition adequately represents your advocacy needs?

27. In your opinion, is this national coalition productive and valuable?

28. What do you feel is the most important value you receive from participation in this national coalition?

29. In your estimation, what advocacy activity does your organization engage in most frequently? _____

30. In thinking about the kinds of advocacy activities your organization does **not** engage in, which one would you most like your organization to adopt?

31. How important do you feel advocacy is to the success of your work with the homeless?

- a. Essential
- b. Very important
- c. Important, but not as important as our services
- d. Not very important
- e. Unnecessary

32. In the coming months, would you be willing to give a tour of your facility and participate in a follow-up interview that seeks to gain further insight into the work of your organization and how the organization engages in advocacy activities?

- a. Yes, we would be glad to
- b. No, thank you
- c. Possibly

If you are willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview, please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Appendix B

Homeless Service Provider - Informant Interview Protocol

Thank you for choosing to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to stop the interview at any time.

Please respond to the following questions to the best of your ability:

For the purposes of recording/transcription/coding:

1. What is your name?
2. What is the name of your organization?
3. What is your title within the organization?

I have your survey results regarding which activities you engage in and how often (specific to org):

"Advocacy" is defined here as the representation of the interests of marginalized and vulnerable populations, and the mediation between these populations, governmental agencies, and the general public

4. Does your organization engage in advocacy work (see table of common advocacy activities)?
5. In your opinion, how often does your organization engage in advocacy activities overall?

The following questions are specific to your organization's involvement in advocacy activities:

6. Are there advocacy activities that your organization engages in that are not on this list?
7. Which advocacy activities does your organization engage in most frequently?
 - a. Why were these specific activities chosen?
8. What is your main goal when engaging in these advocacy activities?

9. Does your organization have a specific staff person or committee assigned to do advocacy work? *The survey mentioned “NO”, but is there someone who would typically work on these activities?*
10. Do you wish your organization would engage more in advocacy activities?
 - a. Are there specific activities you wish the organization would engage in?
11. *Finish this sentence:* “This organization would engage in advocacy activity more if _____”
12. Does your organization encourage clients to self-advocate?
 - a. In what ways do you encourage this?
13. How open do you feel your city government is to discussions about homeless issues and policies? What about State government?
 - a. Do you find it challenging in any way to engage with local and state government? How?
14. What is your understanding of the advocacy work you are allowed to do under the IRS guidelines?
15. What are the most important factors for your organization when deciding whether to engage in advocacy activities? What do you most commonly hope to achieve?
16. Do you see any specific challenges or barriers to engaging in advocacy?
17. Can you describe a time when you feel that your advocacy efforts were effective? What was the result?
18. Can you describe a time when you feel that your advocacy efforts were NOT effective? What was the result?
19. How important do you feel advocacy work is in your organization’s overall mission?
20. Do you participate in the Houston Coalition for the Homeless? Any other coalitions?
 - a. What do you see as the purpose or mission of the coalition?
 - b. Is this coalition where most of your advocacy activity takes place?
 - c. Do you feel that the coalition is effective at raising issues around homelessness?

- i. And effectively communicating your/clients voice?
- d. What are the main challenges you see when working with the coalition?

21. Do you feel that homeless service providers in general should engage in more advocacy work?

Appendix C

External Experts - Informant Interview Protocol

Thank you for choosing to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to stop the interview at any time.

Please respond to the following questions to the best of your ability:

The following questions relate to general demographic information about you and your organization:

1. What is your name?
2. What is the name of your organization?
3. What is your title within the organization?

The following questions are specific to your understanding of advocacy work by homeless service providers in your city and region:

4. How much advocacy work do you see from homeless service providers in your city (see table of common advocacy activities)?
5. Which advocacy activities do you most often observe by these providers?
6. Are there one or two homeless service provider organizations that seem to take the lead in terms of advocacy work in the city?
7. Do you feel that advocacy by service providers is an appropriate way of raising policy issues?
 - a. Are there more appropriate ways?

For public officials only:

8. How open do you feel your city government is to discussions about homeless issues and policies with providers? State government?
 - a. What are the best means for providers to engage in those discussions
9. Do you feel that homeless service providers in general should engage in more advocacy work?

For Funders only:

10. Does your organization have a stance on whether the organizations you fund may engage in advocacy work?
11. Do you allow any of your funding to be used for advocacy activities?
12. Who are the leaders on raising homeless issues in your city?
13. How open do you feel your city government is to discussions about homeless issues and policies with providers? State government?
 - a. What are the best means for providers to engage in those discussions
14. Do you feel that homeless service providers in general should engage in more advocacy work?

For Other Advocates only:

15. Do you see any specific challenges or barriers to engaging in advocacy?
16. Is there a coalition of homeless service providers in your city? What is the name?
17. What do you see as the purpose or mission of the coalition?
18. Do you feel that the coalition is effective at raising issues around homelessness?
19. How open do you feel your city government is to discussions about homeless issues and policies with providers? State government?
 - a. Do you find it challenging in any way to engage with local and state government? How?

Appendix D

Fieldwork Interviews – Code List

- Specific advocacy activity performed
 - Solicit funds, host policymaker, direct issue lobbying, public demonstration, white papers, publish research, op-eds, public awareness campaign
- Advocacy activity NOT performed
 - Solicit funds, host policymaker, direct issue lobbying, public demonstration, white papers, publish research, op-eds, public awareness campaign
- Barriers to advocacy
 - Lack of capacity
 - Lack of skill set
 - Resource dependence
- Value of advocacy
 - Shared voice is stronger
 - Voice to disenfranchised population
 - Access to funds
 - Public awareness
- Collaboration with multiple agencies
 - Informal partnerships
 - Program-related partnerships (non-coalition)
- Participation in coalitions
 - NO coalition participation
 - Participate in one coalition
 - Participate in multiple coalitions
- Benefits of coalitions
 - Networking
 - Shared voice
 - Risk-minimizing
 - Access to funds
- Challenges of coalitions
 - Ineffective
 - Bad/wrong leadership
 - Lack of trust
 - Waste of time
 - Competition of funds with other members

- Relationship with private funders
 - Funders encourage advocacy
 - Funders discourage advocacy
 - Funders encourage collaboration
 - Funders demand collaboration
- Political opportunity with govt
 - Local govt is open to homeless advocacy
 - State govt is open to homeless advocacy
 - Fed govt is open to homeless advocacy
- NO political opportunity with govt (local, state, fed)
 - Local govt is NOT open to homeless advocacy
 - State govt is NOT open to homeless advocacy
 - Fed govt is NOT open to homeless advocacy

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- Young, I. M. (2011). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

ZACHARY DAVID WOOD

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Audubon, NJ 08106

EDUCATION

- PhD Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey – Camden**
Public Affairs (specialization in Community Development) May 2019
 Research Interests: Non-Profit Policy Advocacy
 Urban Social Policy
 Community Development
 Dissertation Advisor: Lorraine Minnite, PhD
- MA Temple University**
Urban Studies May 2010
 Thesis: “Imagining the Appropriate Scale of Public Policy
 Interventions to Combat Youth Homelessness”
 Advisor: Gerald Stahler, PhD
- BA Temple University**
Political Science August 2004
 Minor in Comparative Religion

TEACHING AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Assistant Teaching Professor, Public Policy and Administration
Program Director, Urban Studies September 2016 to Present
 Rutgers University, Camden, NJ

- Teach courses in both undergraduate Urban Studies and graduate Public Administration
- Direct and manage the Urban Studies Program and its strategic assessment and planning
- Advise and mentor undergraduate Urban Studies majors and minors
- Sample of courses taught:
 - Power and Decision-Making in Urban Communities (*undergraduate*)
 - Urban and Regional Revitalization (*undergraduate*)
 - Research Workshop – MPA Capstone (*graduate*)

Part Time Lecturer January 2012 to June 2016
 Rutgers University and West Chester University

- Taught courses in both undergraduate Urban Studies and graduate Public Administration

Graduate Assistant, Public Policy and Administration August 2011 to June 2016
 Rutgers University, Camden, NJ

- Worked under Paul Jargowsky, Michael J. Fortner, and Lori Minnite
- Contributed to and edited various research projects, served as graduate teaching assistant

Project Consultant

May 2014 to February 2015

Borough of Collingswood, NJ

- Created a unique pilot program to address abandoned properties across Camden County
- Developed prevention programs to better inform citizens facing foreclosure of their rights

PUBLICATIONS/WORKING PAPERS

- Nickels, Ashley E., Amanda Clark, and **Zachary D. Wood**. (2019). How Municipal Takeovers Reshape Urban Democracy: Comparing the Experiences of Camden, New Jersey and Flint, Michigan. *Urban Affairs Review*. (In Print).
- **Wood, Zachary D.** (2018). "Advocating Against the Grain: Nonprofit Advocacy and Human Services" in Community Development and Public Administration Theory: Promoting Democratic Principles to Improve Communities. Eds. Jason D. Rivera and Ashley E. Nickels. Routledge.
- Jargowsky, Paul A., **Zachary D. Wood**, J. Cameron Anglum, and David N. Karp. (2016). "Expanding Educational Opportunity in Urban School Districts" in Shared Prosperity in America's Communities. Eds. Susan Wachter and Lei Ding. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rivera, Jason D. and **Zachary D. Wood**. (2016). Disaster Relief Volunteerism: Evaluating Cities' Planning for the Usage and Management of Spontaneous Volunteers. *Journal of Emergency Management*. 14:2, 127-138.
- **Wood, Zachary D.**, Ashley E. Nickels, and Michael D'Italia. "Participatory Philanthropy as a Springboard: Examining the Merits of Grassroots Giving to Enhance Civic Participation". (working paper)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder and CEO

November 2014 – Present

Groundwork Partners

- Affect community transformation through strategic partnership
- Create strategies for our partners to better understand and address the root causes of our social crises
- Consult on fundraising, strategic management, advocacy, and vision-casting

Director of Development

August 2009 – July 2011

Covenant House Pennsylvania

- Managed the entire \$5MM annual fundraising portfolio
- Led the agency's development, communications and public affairs functions
- Directed a successful \$3.5MM capital campaign
- Managed the development and construction of a new 20-unit housing facility

Director of Advocacy and Public Policy

April 2008 – August 2009

Covenant House Pennsylvania

- Analyzed policy issues regarding homeless youth
- Created policy papers for agency leadership
- Led the advocacy efforts at local, state, and national levels

Development Associate

August 2006 – April 2008

Covenant House Pennsylvania

- Managed a portfolio of donors ranging from \$500-\$10,000
- Oversaw the development and efforts of the CH Young Professionals

Manager of Membership

July 2005 – August 2006

The Franklin Institute Science Museum

- Responsible for revenue forecasting and maintaining all expense, labor and revenue budgets
- Managed recruiting and retaining of members, generating in excess of \$1.4MM in annual revenue

Executive Director (Interim)

April 2005 – July 2005

Habitat for Humanity, Dacotah Tipis

- Managed the day-to-day administrative operations of the affiliate
- Designed and implemented a 3-year strategic plan, drastically re-organizing the affiliate's operations

AWARDS AND HONORS

- **Civic Engagement Faculty Fellow** - 2017
Rutgers University, Camden – Office of Civic Engagement
- **Digital Teaching Faculty Fellow** - 2017
Rutgers University, Camden – Office of Instructional Design and Technology
- **Course Development Grant** - 2017
Rutgers University, Camden – Learning Abroad Office
“Urban Navigation and Global Citizenship” (Germany)
- **Graduate Assistant Professional Development Fund Award** – 2015-2016
Rutgers University, Camden – Graduate School
3-time Awardee – **Total Awards: \$3,117**

PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED LECTURES

- 2019** **Invited Lecture**, “Advocating Against the Grain: Examining the Importance of Local Contexts to Advocacy Behavior Among Homeless Service Organizations”
CURE Seminar Series, Rutgers University - Camden, May 3, 2019.
- 2018** **Paper Presentation**, “Participatory Philanthropy as a Springboard: Examining the Merits of Grassroots Giving to Enhance Civic Participation”
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 15-17, 2018.

Invited Panel Discussion, “Social Movements in the Era of Trump”
Rutgers University – Political Science Society, Apr 26, 2018.

Keynote Speaker, Youth Advocacy for Action Summit
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates – The National Press Club, Jan 17, 2018.

2017 **Invited Lecture**, “Philanthropy: Charity or Social Change?”
Rutgers University – Camden Honors College Seminar Series, Dec 12, 2017.

Invited Lecture, “Nonprofits United?: Critically and Structurally Assessing Nonprofit Coalitions as the Vehicle for Advocacy”
Rutgers University – Camden Brown Bag Scholar Series, Dec 7, 2017.

Paper Presentation, “Nonprofits United? : Critically and Structurally Assessing Nonprofit Coalitions as the Vehicle for Advocacy”
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 16-18, 2017.

2016 **Paper Presentation**, “Advocating Against the Grain: Toward a New Typology of Nonprofit Advocacy Behavior to Enhance Democracy”
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 18-20, 2016.

2015 **Paper Presentation**, “Getting to the Roots of Homelessness: Breaking Through to a More Holistic, Client-Focused Advocacy Agenda”
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 19-21, 2015.

Invited Lecture, “What Power Could We Have: A discussion on the potential voting power in Camden, social activism, and slacktivism.”
TED Tuesdays – Rutgers Civic Scholars, Oct 13, 2015

Invited Lecture, “Dreaming Big, Being Bold, Taking the Lead: Advocacy and Partnership Strategies for Youth Service Providers in a Complicated Environment”

Connection 2015 - Mid-Atlantic Network for Youth Annual Conference, Sept 2, 2015 (link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fKRZ2mwvk4>)

Paper Presentation, “Getting to the Roots of Homelessness: Breaking Through to a More Holistic, Client-Focused Advocacy Agenda”
Urban Affairs Association Annual Conference, Apr 8-11, 2015.

2014 **Paper Presentation**, “Putting the Compassion to Work: Strategies for Comprehensively Incorporating Disaster Relief Volunteerism Directly into Disaster Planning” with Jason D. Rivera

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 20-22, 2014.

Paper Presentation, “Putting the Compassion to Work: Strategies for Comprehensively Incorporating Disaster Relief Volunteerism Directly into Disaster Planning” with Jason D. Rivera
Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology Annual Conference, Oct 9-11, 2014.

Paper Presentation, “Toward a New Typology of Nonprofit Political Behavior: A New Level of Precision” (*also panel moderator*).
Urban Affairs Association Annual Conference, Mar 19-22, 2014

Paper Presentation, “Putting the Compassion to Work: Strategies for Comprehensively Incorporating Disaster Relief Volunteerism Directly into Disaster Planning” with Jason D. Rivera
Urban Affairs Association Annual Conference, Mar 19-22, 2014.

2013 **Paper Presentation**, “Toward a New Typology of Nonprofit Political Behavior: A New Level of Precision”
Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Nov 21-24, 2013.

Paper Presentation, “Money and Management: Impact of Foundation Funding on CDC Capacity” with Kirk A. leach and Ashley E. Nickels
Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action Annual Conference, Nov 21-23, 2013.

UNPUBLISHED PROFESSIONAL PAPERS/REPORTS

- Wood, Zachary D., Michael O’Bryan, and Mr. Pearson. “Testimony on Ending Youth Homelessness: Resolution Number 160235.” Submitted to Philadelphia City Council. May 6, 2016
- Wood, Zachary D. and Prentiss Dantzler. “Foreclosures and Abandoned Homes: Strategies and Opportunities for Strategic Partnership of Small Municipalities.” Produced for the Borough of Collingswood and its Mayoral Partners. February, 2015.
- Wood, Zachary D. and Paul A. Jargowsky. “Eds and Meds Employment and City Resident Flight in Camden, New Jersey” Produced for the Eds and Meds Taskforce of Camden, New Jersey. January, 2015.
- Wood, Zachary D. “Imagining the Appropriate Scale of Public Policy Interventions to Combat Youth Homelessness.” April, 2010. (unpublished MA thesis)
- Wood, Zachary D. and Jerome Kilbane. Testimony for the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Hearing: “Living on the Street: Finding Solutions to Protect Runaway and Homeless Youth.” April 29, 2008.

UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Rutgers – Camden, Civic Engagement and Social Change Certificate Committee
Advisory Committee September 2018 - Present

Journal of Applied Social Sciences
Peer Reviewer September 2017 - Present

Rutgers – Camden, Urban Studies Program
Advisory Committee (Chair, beginning September 2016) January 2014 - Present

Rutgers – Camden, Dept. of Public Policy and Administration
Budget Committee September 2016 - Present
Awards Committee September 2016 - Present

Youth Collaboratory (formerly MANY)
Member, Board of Directors January 2017 – Present

Valley Youth House – Advocacy Committee
Consultant Member January 2017 - Present

People’s Emergency Center – Research Advisory Council
Visiting Scholar August 2017 – Present

Primary Campaign, Kevin Ressler for Mayor of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Policy Advisor January 2017 – May 2017

100-Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness, City of Philadelphia
Advisory Committee July 2016 – December 2016

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action
Leadership Collaborative Member, Community and Grassroots Association Section

Youth Collaboratory (formerly Mid-Atlantic Network for Youth)
Consultant Member, Board of Directors

Urban Affairs Association