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### Homelessness: No Cookie-Cutter Solution

Education, affordable housing, jobs... the list goes on and on about ways to solve homelessness. Before examining the possible solutions, let's zoom out and define the crisis of homelessness. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, at the start of 2020, there were over 580,000 people experienced in the United States (2021). Homelessness can take a variety of forms, from going in and out of homeless shelters, living in a tent community, to couch surfing. There is no cookie-cutter version of homelessness, and there are no cookie-cutter solutions. While the causes of homelessness over years have been narrowed down, solutions to homelessness are broad and heavily debated.

Years of research, articles, and documentaries have offered a variety of ways to brainstorm, prove and inform a wide array of audiences who have shared the information. Each provides various techniques through *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* to utilize their genre to inform and persuade their intended audience effectively.

In particular, three sources highlight possible solutions for homelessness. First, the academic genre in an article by Patrick Fowler called "Solving Homelessness from a Complex Systems Perspective: Insights for Prevention Responses" highlights the complex systems approach and how the need for policies could be effective in preventing homelessness. Next, from the mainstream news genre, Ella Howard in *The Washington Post*, "Solving Homelessness Requires Getting the Problem Right," describes different attempts from political initiatives to solve

the problem. Finally, a documentary made by Bloomberg Quicktake focuses on defining homelessness while bringing in experts to talk about what can be done to solve the issue.

Each source and the intended audience are influenced by *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Each is used as a persuasion appeal. Patrick Fowler examined the different possible solutions for other experts in studying the broad topic of homelessness. Throughout the article, the main persuasive appeal that is used is *logos*. Several pieces of *logos* can be found. One example is how Fowler sets the article up by introducing the implementation of *logos*, “Well-designed studies subsequently tested the implementation and impact of housing first models with different homeless populations” (Patrick 471). It ultimately sets the article’s tone and gives the reader a taste that more *logos* will be present, and that is how Patrick will get the intended audience persuaded. As another piece of evidence of *logos*, the article uses of explanation of figures and statics that shows the fluctuation in the homelessness issue:

“Crises in affordable housing throughout the United States and globally suggest widespread unmet demand. Figure 3, for instance, presents an indicator of housing insecurity in the United States. The figure plots the annual number of renting households paying more than 50% of income toward rent, referred to as severe rent-burdened (111). A spike of 10 million households in 2012 has declined in recent years, and the trend line of severely burdened as a proportion of all renting households suggests some relief for the lowest-income households (473-474).

The article goes deeper into the *logos* by providing figures that show the trends and statistics into homelessness and establishing the problem to the audience logically. Finally, the article uses computers simulations to provide numbers and statics of how the solution would help solve the homeless issue, Fowler states:

Computer simulations test a series of policy experiments for solving homelessness. The first experiment tests efforts to improve housing first by decreasing time spent in homeless assistance before exiting to stability. The second experiment expands universal, selective, and indicated prevention by reducing each inflow into homelessness assistance. The third experiment tests combined housing first and prevention strategies. Each experiment improves performance by 50%, and combined interventions do not exceed 50% effects (478).

Studies, models, and proof are the foundation of *logos*. Using simulations and statistics of the proposed solutions and homelessness provides a clear linkage of how the change would have a positive effect on homelessness giving the readers little reason to doubt the facts. The article examining the implementation of the simulation supports the reader's logical understanding of the solution and how it would be beneficial. Without the simulations, Folwer would be stating this solution because of the principles of reasons x, y, and z that have never been tested with no concrete evidence.

In contrast to Patrick Fowler's journal article Ella Howard's mainstream article focuses on the persuasive appeals of primary *pathos* with a sprinkle of *ethos*. The article's word choice especially draws out using emotions to persuade the readers:

Politicians turned to harsher policing to discipline homeless people and displace them from city streets. Perhaps most memorably, New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani used aggressive policing tactics against the city's homeless population, even going so far as to deny churches the right to allow homeless people to sleep on their steps (Howard)

Using the words "harsher" "discipline" and "displace" gives off a negative connotation regarding the solutions that city officials came up with. The word choices also identify an enemy and give

the reader someone to blame for those actions. Another way Howard utilizes *pathos* is through using more descriptive in terms of specific individuals affected by homelessness:

In the late 19th century, transient workers uprooted by industrialization gathered in cities near job opportunities. The shabby districts they occupied came to be known as skid rows, a name they kept for more than 100 years. Skid rows were primarily home to single men and contained inexpensive lodging, restaurants, and bars (Howard).

Using the terms single men and transient workers puts more personality and humanity on those affected by skid row and homelessness. It provides more opportunity for a personal connection between the reader and the article. For example, they may know of a transient worker or single male. It provides more opportunity for the emotional impact, which will lead the article to be more effective and impactful. In addition to the *pathos*, Howard sprinkles in *ethos* to help establish credibility with the reader, by stating, for example, “Tactics have begun to change over the past 15 years, as public officials adopted a Housing First strategy, which promoted housing as the solution to homelessness. Clients living in a stable housing environment, many experts believe, are better equipped to embark on sobriety, education, career-preparation, and other self-improvement projects.” Stating that experts have examined the strategies discussed in the article shows the audience that the writer consulted others in the process, which establishes credibility—strengthening the article since it is not a solution that Howard created out of the blue but consulted more knowledge.

Similar to Howard’s mainstream article, the Bloomberg Quicktake documentary utilizes *pathos* and *ethos* to inform their intended audience about the homeless crisis and portray the impact the issue has on the community. In addition, Bloomberg Quicktake can sprinkle in *logos* to reinforce the *ethos* and *pathos with logic*. First using *pathos*, Bloomberg Quicktake is able to

put visuals of streets lined with trash and individuals in tents sleeping while the information is being shared in the audio. As a result, it pulls on the reader's heartstrings and makes more of an emotional connection to the issue with the audience. Seeing photos of individuals sleeping in elements on unclean streets may make the audience feel guilty or uncomfortable as they watch the video in a climate-controlled environment. *Ethos* is presented in the documentary through the three CEOs of different homeless-related organizations discussing elements of homelessness and effective solutions. The organizations that represented were the National Low Income Coalition, a homeless nonprofit called Invisible People, and National Alliance to End Homelessness. Ultimately, Bloomberg could have just had the author discuss all of the information by consulting with homelessness experts, resulting in credibility. Each organization has expertise through research and personal experience with the topic and has relevant and credible data. *Logos* is presented in the statics shared throughout the documentary. At the start of the video, the statistics of 567,715 are shown, and then immediately go into a map breaking down the number and explaining the problem in terms of the US. This gives the audience background into the statistics of homelessness and provides them logic and numbers first and then going into seeing the faces of those involved are classified as homeless.

The patterns and the abilities of how each source was able to effectively use *ethos*, *pathos*, *logos* are based on each of their specific genres. Genre is defined by Merriam Webster as, "a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content." Ultimately having a set of standards and patterns the writing can follow to be classified as. First, examining Patrick's academic essay, research papers have a certain level of data needed to prove the credibility of the results to effectively influence the audience who are

most likely using the data to make decisions. As a result, the source needed to focus on the *logos* aspect because of the influence of other research papers' genre.

In contrast, Howard's article was for the public. In the genre of a news article, the focus was to hook readers through emotions. As the readers got further into the article, credibility needed to be established to validate the credibility of the article. Because of the intended audience, the purpose of the article and genre were different for each source, which ultimately affected how the rhetorical devices were used. At the same time, Howard's article was on a different scope than Patrick's; it was similar to Bloomberg Quicktake's documentary. Since Bloomberg's documentary had a similar purpose that affected identical rhetorical devices, the ways the devices were implemented were different due to genre. Instead of written expression of *ethos* and *pathos*, the documentary, in contrast to the newspaper article, used *ethos* and *pathos* in the form of visuals and invited other experts to express their thoughts and opinions through spoken word. Each source represents a different genre from an academic paper that is expected to use *logos* to prove the argument to a documentary that needs to inform while also entertaining. While these particular sources influenced the way *ethos*, *pathos*, *logos* were used to inform and persuade about effective solutions towards homelessness, the concept of genre is much more influential to how readers evaluate any piece of information.

As mentioned above the definition of the genre is "a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content." Ultimately readers should be able to use rhetorical devices based on the patterns of the particular genre to identify reliable and accurate information and relieve information that is hidden in plain sight. Therefore, genre and the patterns give readers a way to effectively analyze information associated with any genre.

## Works Cited

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