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Brion Inness Phipps
Nowhere to Nap: How Service
Providers and Homeless Adult
Males View the Influence
Criminalizing Survival Activities
Has on Support Service Use, an
Exploratory Study

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores how service providers and homeless adult males view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use. Six homeless adult males and five service providers were interviewed for the study. Participant narratives revealed the complexity and uniqueness of homeless experiences.

The major findings revealed that homeless individuals do not directly acknowledge the impact criminalizing homeless survival activities has on support service use. On the other hand, service providers were not in agreement about the impact of criminalizing survival activities. While some providers felt the impact was severe, others felt it had no affect on homeless use of support services. Additionally several homeless participants said criminalizing survival activities had no impact on their use of services, but it was clear that these laws had affected other aspects of their life; particularly their mental state. A few service providers acknowledged the subtle and indirect ways criminalization has impacted their clients' use of support services. The findings implied that homeless use of support services may be indirectly, via decreased self-esteem, decreased quality of support services, and decreased ability to access familiar services, impacted by the criminalization of survival activities.

NOWHERE TO NAP: HOW SERVICE PROVIDERS AND HOMELESS ADULT
MALES VIEW THE INFLUENCE CRIMINALIZING SURVIVAL ACTIVITIES HAS
ON SUPPORT SERVICE USE, AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A project based upon an independent
investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Social Work.

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2007

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to assess how service providers and homeless adult males view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use. This topic of study was chosen after a review of available literature revealed two concerns about homeless research: (a) little research explores the influence criminalizing human survival activities has on support service use and (b) even less research assesses to what degree service providers understand their homeless clients. A worthy review of literature was attempted for this study; however, due to the overwhelming volume of homeless-related research, accurately determining current research discrepancies was difficult. It appeared that a fair amount of relevant research was devoted to the legal construction of crime and homeless individuals' experiences with the legal system.

This study was designed in contrast with traditional homeless treatment and research, which has, according to many authors (e.g., Acosta & Toro, 2000), determined homeless clients' basic needs and excluded them from participating in relevant research. Additionally, recent research has generally failed to address how reemerging perceptions of homeless-as-criminals directly influences service use. To expand our understanding of homeless issues and give the homeless a voice in their treatment, qualitative data – in the form of personal interviews – was collected directly from homeless individuals and providers. The results and analysis of the data can be found in the Findings and Discussion and Conclusions chapters of this paper.

In order to gather as much direct information from the participants of this study, a qualitative, exploratory design with flexible methods and narrative data collection was used. Semi-structured interviews of homeless individuals and homeless service providers served as the primary source of data. This study was designed from a critical theory perspective, incorporating concepts of social justice, construction of normality, and cultural determinates of social value as guiding principles. The use of a mixed sample with thick narrative data, helped increase the validity and reliability of the study's data. To ensure accurate integration of individual experiences into a social justice framework, all participants met the criteria outlined in the Methodology chapter.

Survival Activities

This study differs from most other homeless research because of its focus on the criminalization of *survival activities*. Certainly many of the activities homeless individuals engage in are considered crimes by our legal system. Of particular concern to this researcher was the increase in the number of laws criminalizing activities homeless people engage in for survival purposes. For this study, survival activities are defined as those private activities in public spaces, such as, using the bathroom, eating, sleeping, and sitting, that the human body can not survive without (Smith, 1996). In an increasing number of communities, laws targeting the homeless convert these survival activities into criminal acts (Kress, 1994; The National Coalition for the Homeless & The National Law Center of Homelessness and Poverty [NCH & NLCHP], 2006; Smith). Of course, any laws targeting homeless individuals are a source of concern, but only laws targeting unavoidable survival activities were considered for this study. For example, while it is difficult for a homeless person to survive without panhandling, it is virtually impossible

for them to avoid sleeping in public spaces. This example presumes that local shelters are either full or unsafe, which is quite common (NCH & NLCHP, p. 8).

Homeless as Criminals

In 1981, a small group of activists applied the term *homeless* to describe the growing community of people who relied on and utilized the streets to meet their private housing needs (Smith, 1996). Though the use of the word homeless to describe the living conditions of over two million Americans a year is relatively new, the reality of living without stable housing is not (Lyderson, 2000). To some, homelessness represents Western Eurocentric society's failure to adequately deal with the extreme consequences of poverty (Wachholz, 2005). Since the 1980s, factors such as rising housing costs, increased cost of living, and lower wages, have caused America's homeless population to grow, "to crisis proportions" (Smith, ¶ 11).

Since becoming a national crisis in the 1980s, societal response to the "homeless problem" has been quite varied depending on geographic location. Recent trends, however, indicate that policies criminalizing the homeless and specific homeless activities are on the rise (Amster, 2003; NCH & NLCHP, 2006; Oehl, 2000; Smith, 1996). Due to difficulty gathering statistical data on this reclusive community, definitive statistics are unavailable (Barak, 1992). Researchers typically agree that a high percentage of homeless individuals are disaffiliated and alienated from social support networks (e.g., Barak; Baum & Burnes, 1993; Toth, 1993). For a striking example of how disaffiliation affects some homeless individuals, see Toth's remarkable exploration of the isolated lives of underground homeless in New York City tunnels. Although Toth's example of alienation and isolation may seem extreme to some, to individuals

living on the streets, the tunnels offered safety, anonymity, and support that that our current social support networks do not.

Though there is a good deal of quality research about laws criminalizing homeless survival activities, most research has failed to evaluate their influence on support service use. Since this information is unavailable, clearly studies of the service providers' perception of this problem is likewise absent. Instead, most studies (Brown, 1999; Oehl, 2000; Smith, 1996) have discussed the legal construction and social implications of criminalizing homeless survival activities. Some studies (e.g., Gowan, 2002; Kennedy, 2004; Kress, 1994) used a macro perspective to comment on the legal precedents contextualizing the plethora of local ordinances that criminalize these activities. Still other studies (Amster, 2003; Barak & Bohm, 1989; Wachholz, 2005) focused on the influences of racism, dehumanization, marginalization, and sanitization of public spaces that contribute to the exclusion of homeless. Conversely, few studies examine the causes of homelessness resulting from psychological factors (O'Connor, 2003).

To summarize, the majority of research has focused on the causes of homelessness, incorporating aspects of social injustice, mental illness, personal trauma, dehumanization, marginalization, racism, and substance abuse. While all of these considerations are important for the creation of effective treatment strategies, it is important to include the perspective of those most impacted by homeless policies, namely the homeless themselves (Applewhite, 1997; Benda, 1993). With a few notable exceptions aside (e.g., Applewhite; Toth, 1993; VanderStaay, 1992), recent research lacks studies integrating homeless individuals' personal narratives with the social context of their daily experiences.

Contributions to the Practice of Social Work

It is difficult to think of many social issues that encompass the myriad and depth of individual and systemic factors as homelessness does. In many ways, the causes of homelessness are an amplification of the social and cultural failures of Western-Capitalist society. Systemic social issues such as racism, marginalization, stigmatization, and oppression define the homeless experience; as a majority of homeless face multiple forms of oppression. This study's attempt to connect the consequences of punitive homeless policies, service use, and providers' understanding of homelessness is invaluable to the field of social work. Therefore, an additional objective of this study is to increase homeless service providers' understanding of the complex variables influencing service use.

As privileged members of society – those who are benefactors of oppressive social policies – we bear culpability for allowing and maintaining homelessness in our society. Credible studies (e.g., Barak, 1992; Baum & Burnes, 1993) have shown that for the majority of homeless adults, mental illness, trauma, abuse, neglect, dual diagnosis, substance abuse, social oppression, and racism are causal factors. When viewed in this way, homelessness is not the result of personal “failures,” but is a confluence of contributing factors and social expectations of normalcy and value.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This subsequent literature review presents research related to the question: How do service providers and homeless adult males view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use?

To assist the reader in their understanding of what is meant by the criminalization of homeless survival activities, the first section of this literature review defines the key terms of the research question. Due to the overwhelming amount of literature about criminalizing homelessness, the second section briefly reviews some individual and systemic causes of homelessness – including factors that may contribute to homelessness – and briefly explores the legal construction of criminal activities. The third section reviews and analyzes literature regarding barriers of service use by exploring both the individual and systemic obstacles homeless face. The fourth section reviews available literature about the service providers’ understanding of their homeless clients. This chapter concludes with a justification for the research question for this study in the context of available literature.

Definition of Terms Used in this Study

The following section defines and clarifies the meaning of several key terms that are integral to this study. These terms are *critical social justice theory, social constructivism, homelessness, criminalization, homeless survival activities, and service providers.*

Theoretically informing this study are two related theories, *critical social justice theory* and *social constructivism*. The concept of a critical social justice theory arose out of critical theory; as such, a comprehensive explanation is well beyond the scope of this paper. A brief explanation of the concepts influencing this study follows. For a more in-depth discussion of critical social justice theory and its application in social work practice see Finn & Jacobson (2003). Keenan (2004) provided a clear explanation of these concepts, commenting how, “critical theories examine the patterns and meanings enacted within and between people in specific social locations at specific points in history which express particular relations of culture, power, and identity” (p. 5). Keenan elaborated, adding that, “when operating from a critical theory perspective one does not separate culture, power, identity, and social structure, but rather seeks to describe the everyday practices operating in multiple locations that enact relations of culture, power, identity, and social structure” (p. 6). Applying these concepts to this study, critical social justice theory informs the researcher of the complex influences in participants’ lives and provided the researcher with a theoretical framework to address these interrelationships.

The theory of *social constructivism*, alternatively, guided the researcher’s understanding of the impact social forces have on individual and social identity formation. In the following quote Wilson (2005) provides a concise definition of social constructivism.

Individuals and societies have enormous flexibility in what they can become, which is largely unconstrained by human biology. This flexibility is reflected in the diversity of behaviors that we observe within and among societies around the world and throughout history. People have almost no instincts and obtain their

behaviors through learning and cultural transmission. Current inequities that are often justified as part of human nature, therefore inevitable, are nothing of the sort and usually reflect the efforts of powerful elements of society to dominate less powerful elements. (p. 22)

There are almost as many definitions of *homelessness* as there are studies on the topic. The definition used in this study was compiled from several authors (Neale, 1997; Speak & Tipple, 2006; Springer, 2000), who defined homelessness as being at the bottom of the *housing continuum*. They described the housing continuum as a range of domiciles from, “satisfactory and secure” to the, “sleeping rough” (Speak & Tipple, p. 147). Thus, for the purposes of this study, a homeless individual is defined as a person whose living conditions are at the bottom of the housing continuum. This includes those whose housing fails to meet basic criteria of satisfaction, safety, stability, security, duration of stay, and support services.

For the sake of this study, the term *criminalizing*, refers to the process of turning previously legal behaviors, through the passage of laws, targeted enforcement, and policies, into illegal, criminal acts. In the following quotation, Amster (2003) describes the process of criminalization from a postmodern perspective.

Constructing the other as disorderly and criminal requires the construction and maintenance of a dominant culture that embodies order and lawfulness. It is equally apparent that standards of civility and legality are generally determined by those in positions of power and advantage who manipulate such standards to suit their interests and protect their domains of property and authority. (p. 200)

Furthermore, the legal apparatus creates illegal behaviors not only by defining criminal actions, but also by defining acceptable behaviors (Lauderdale, 1980). This seems to imply that a great deal of power is afforded to the influential to define legality. In the end, as Amster succinctly noted, “one can only be guilty of violating a law after someone else passes it” (p. 200).

Throughout this document several analogous phrases – e. g. *survival activities*, survival behaviors – are used to refer to what the NCH & NLCHP (2006), called “life sustaining activities in public” (p. 8). These activities, as several authors (Gowan, 2002; Smith, 1996) explained, are unavoidable human functions conducted in public spaces, necessary for survival, such as using the bathroom, eating, sleeping, and sitting. For example, while it is possible, although difficult, for a homeless person to survive without panhandling, it is impossible for someone without a home to avoid sleeping in public.

The term *service provider* refers to any agency intended to assist oppressed populations. For our purposes, this includes specific homeless services and any agency or service provider that homeless individuals might utilize. Types of agencies include mental health providers, day treatment facilities, domestic violence services, emergency services, and others.

The Crime of Being Poor

The causes of homelessness have been widely studied and in serious scholarly literature are generally agreed upon (e.g., Amster, 2003; Applewhite, 1997; Barak, 1992; Foscarinis, 1991). Today, homelessness is not perceived as the result of individual pathology, but is instead a myriad of individual, familial, social, and systemic factors (Barak, 1992; Foscarinis; Rowe, 1999). Once homeless, perceptions of homeless-as-

criminals are reinforced by social control mechanisms of fear, exclusion, and sanitization of public spaces (Amster). Using the available literature as a guide, this section critically assesses reemerging legal trends of criminalizing homelessness and the resulting ineffectiveness of this approach.

There is little doubt that measures criminalizing homeless survival activities have increased. In “A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities,” NCH & NLCHP (2006) reported a, “14% increase in laws prohibiting sitting or lying in certain public spaces [from 2005]” (p. 9). Arresting and incarcerating the homeless is not a new phenomenon, but communities appear to be relying more on these types of interventions (Amster, 2003; Wachholz, 2005). Due to increasing population density and size, many public spaces are becoming more valuable (Amster). Once safe havens for the homeless, public spaces are now hotly contested, controlled, and guarded by private interests (Amster). Using their political and economic influence, homeowners and businesses often demand that homeless individuals be excluded from certain areas of the community (Amster). Access to infinitely more economic and political resources allows private interests to construct social and legal norms of acceptability. Put another way, their goal is social homogenization – of such things as cultural expectations, lifestyle choices, perceptions of value and worth, and norms of behavior – by forcing ‘the other’ out (Amster).

Constructing homeless criminals

Many studies use a constructivist perspective to describe the social and legal creation of homelessness. In their article, Barak & Bohm (1989) called for the universal criminalization of homelessness, not homeless individuals themselves. Their argument

was based on the premise that society has an obligation to criminalize the act of being homeless, while explicitly not considering the person a criminal (Barak & Bohm). Using this logic, if homelessness is criminalized, from a criminal justice perspective, society would become responsible for dismantling the institutions that permit it to exist (Barak & Bohm). In spirit, Barak & Bohm's intention is noble; however, their premise is used to justify the increasing assault on homeless individuals' rights. For instance, recent interpretations have been used to rationalize the extradition of homeless from specific geographic areas (Brown, 1999; Kennedy, 2004; Wachholz, 2005). In contested public areas – spaces of increased urban demand – strategies, such as shuffling the homeless from area to area help to minimize the homeless community's visibility (Amster).

Many communities adopt what several authors (Kress, 1994, p. 95; Baum & Burnes, 1993, p. 183) have called the, *NIMBY Syndrome*. NIMBY is an acronym for Not In My Back Yard. Central to *homeless NIMBYISM* is the unsubstantiated belief that homelessness and crime are interrelated (Kress, p. 95). A pioneer of NIMBY thought, Dear (1992) claimed that it arises from, “protectionist attitudes and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighborhood” (p. 288). Aside from perpetuating feelings of dehumanization and marginalization, NIMBY strategies may also exacerbate the transitory perception of homeless.

According to Amster (2003), the criminal construction of homelessness has the explicit intent of, “restricting, regulating, and removing” (p. 195) homeless people from the public view. Instead of eradicating homelessness, as Barak & Bohm contend, Amster argued that it actually encourages attitudes of increased marginalization and oppression. Moreover, Amster determined, the practical implications of criminalizing homelessness

most likely amplifies preexisting negative stigmas, regardless of linguistic semantics. As well as coping with the emotional anguish of becoming homeless, the individual is perceived as a criminal and can be treated accordingly (Amster). Under Barak & Bohm's pretense, homeless issues would fall under the jurisdiction of law enforcement and police officers are transformed into state sanctioned weapons against homeless individuals (Amster). For example, police enforce homeless status laws by conducting sweeps to remove homeless from certain areas (Smith, 1996). Amster considered these sweeps "disinfections" and the *Disneyfication* of public space; a consequence of allowing powerful economic special interests to dictate social policy (p. 197). From the perspective of many homeless individuals, enforcement of these laws represents their continued dehumanization and marginalization by mainstream culture (e.g., Amster; Barak & Bohm; Smith; Wachholz, 2005).

Amster (2003) wrote of how our culture uses the concept of the 'other' to construct social expectations of morality and civility as a legal justification for criminalization. In the case of homelessness, the 'other' is defined as "disorderly and criminal" (Amster, p. 200). When viewed through a dominant culture perspective, one of superiority, the state assumes the responsibility for eradicating homelessness (Barak & Bohm, 1989). In America though, funding for effective homeless services has a low priority and the preferred method of treatment is removal (Amster; Kress, 1994; Smith, 1996). Arresting and removing strategies does not address issues of homelessness, instead it separates unwanted members of society, herding them into less desirable areas, the prison system, and shelters (Amster). Particularly disturbing about these policies are the connections between race, mental illness, and homelessness. In essence, not only

does the state construct self-perceived, morally superior ideological expectations for acceptable existence, racial differences and mental health disorders are cast as causes of homelessness (Amster). Viewed from a critical social justice perspective, criminalizing homeless allows dominant social forces to blame the victims for causing their own problems.

Criminalizing individual behaviors is utilized by the dominant culture to justify individual pathology (Amster, 2003). Instead of viewing homelessness as systemic issues, with systemic solutions, homelessness is seen as being caused by individual defects requiring individual interventions. Conveniently, society is freed from taking responsibility for causing homelessness, allowing it to perpetuate, and committing resources to fight it. Furthermore, policies that blame homeless contribute to the public's perception of homeless as subhuman and flawed (Amster). According to Amster, the effect of criminalization on homeless people has a devastating potential; since many of the activities being criminalized – panhandling, loitering, vagrancy, among other behaviors – are activities of survival. Here, the leap to feeling one's survival is criminal, may not be far.

A striking example of the hypocrisy caused by the construction of criminalized homelessness is *Pottinger v. Miami* (1992). In this case, the defendant, a homeless man, was arrested for sleeping in a public place, even though local shelters were either full or unsafe. Pottinger argued that because he was arrested essentially for having no alternative place to sleep, he was a victim of cruel and unusual punishment; just for being homeless. Prior to this lawsuit, homeless in Miami could be arrested for violating an anti-sleeping order, regardless that people have an, “undeniable need for sleep” (Smith,

1996, ¶ 2). This example is just one of many similar, “quality of life” ordinances passed, or being passed in most major cities across the country (Brown, 1999; Oehl, 2000; Smith).

Categories of homeless crime

Using the available literature as a guide, crimes typically associated with homelessness fall into three categories. In her article discussing the nexus of incarceration of homelessness, Gowan (2002), explored the existence of a reinforcing cycle of, “incarceration to homelessness, homelessness to incarceration” (p. 524). This recursive cycle Gowan conceptualized was an attempt to explain the difficulty separating homelessness and incarceration. According to Gowan, this nexus is caused and perpetuated by three distinct categories of homeless crimes. She labeled these as (a) “crimes of desperation,” (b) “rabble management,” and (c) “bad company.” By *crimes of desperation*, Gowan described crimes homeless commit out of desperation and may range from such offenses as stealing/shoplifting to con-artistry to violent retribution/self-defense. *Rabble management* are those crimes pertaining to survival; crimes such as loitering, vagrancy, sleeping/eating/urinating in public, panhandling, sitting on curbs, and the like (Gowan). These types of homeless “crime” are the focus of this study; as they criminalize behaviors needed for everyday survival. The third category, named *bad company*, describes environmental elements which are influential in the crimes committed by homeless individuals (Gowan).

Other studies also described distinct categories of homeless “crimes”. The most common crimes distinguish between what are known as “status laws” and “homeless laws” (Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, 1993). The distinction between these types

of laws is that *homeless laws* specifically target homeless individuals and their activities, whereas *status laws* punish people based on economic status (Oehl, 2000). Examples of homeless laws include panhandling, encampment restrictions, no-standing/no-sitting areas, and geographic exclusion areas. Status laws on the other hand are such things as zoning laws that, “produce legal segregation by containing the development of services for homeless people within certain segments of the city” (Wachholz, 2005, p. 145). Status laws have also been called, “quality of life” ordinances (Brown, 1999, p. 2). Quality of life ordinances do not directly implicate homeless or impoverished individuals, but address public space use, often placing restrictions on such things as sleeping, sitting, and parking (Brown).

Explaining her struggle for advocating for homeless rights in Venice, CA, Kennedy (2004) discussed the ease in which changes in local ordinances can seriously affect homeless individuals. Kennedy sympathetically wrote of a situation in which a minority of council members were able to restrict overnight parking on roads known to be used by homeless to park – and sleep in – their cars. In both of these types of homeless “crimes,” several authors commented how the police’s judicious enforcement of “neutral” laws is manipulated to target specific populations (Kerr, 2003; NCH & NLCHP, 2006).

“Crime” and punishment

Homelessness is an individual, local, state, national, and international issue and the variety of ways to confront the problem appears as diverse. Although beyond the scope of this study, Speak & Tipple (2006) completed a worthy assessment of the differences in international cultural definitions of homelessness. Since this literature

review focuses on the criminalization of homelessness, this section reviews available literature regarding three distinct types of criminal measures localities use to punish homeless; as if living on the streets and being treated as subhuman are not enough. The three types of punitive measures are (a) incarceration, (b) ticketing, and (c) containment and extraction.

Research has clearly shown a relationship between homelessness and imprisonment and vice versa (Benda, 1993; Gowan, 2002). Homelessness, along with other deviant elements of society, exists for social control purposes by creating false stigmas and manipulating fears of the unknown. Amster (2003) called this process *social distancing* describing it as the, “social distance between housed and unhoused persons” (p. 198). Although Amster used this concept in the context of homelessness, social distancing seems applicable to any “deviant” social group or behavior the dominant elements of society wish to eradicate. By creating social distance between “housed and unhoused persons” (Amster, p. 198), it becomes easier to construct homeless as criminals and subhuman. Perhaps the recent increase in anti-homeless laws is an example of social distancing as a result of the homeless community’s increased visibility. The concept of circular causality may help explain the irony of how criminalizing homelessness, increases arrests of homeless, and how these increased arrests are used to justify the increased criminalization of homeless (Causality, 2007).

Abysmal social and cultural conditions have created a culture of incarceration among homeless individuals (Gowan, 2002). As a result, many become trapped in cycles characterized by exacerbated pre-incarceration conditions following release from prison (Gowan). Sadly there are insufficient preventative supports in place to keep people out

prison and no support system upon their release (Gowan). Based on a critical assessment of the causes and conditions of homelessness, it is no surprise that cycles of incarceration perpetuate. Although arresting and incarcerating are visible, short-term strategies communities use to “deal” with homeless individuals, they are clearly not intended to address the needs of homeless victims. Not surprisingly – those with mental illness perhaps more so – the traumatizing impact of being arrested has been shown to seriously affect homeless individuals’ perception of law enforcement (Toth, 1993).

Both in the prison system and homeless community, racial minorities are proportionally overrepresented (Gowan, 2002). Increased homeless incarceration can only lead to further disproportionate representation of minorities in an already grossly imbalanced prison population. Already African Americans are the most overrepresented segment of the U.S. prison population (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006) and these trends are similarly present in the homeless community (Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center, n.d.). Perhaps incarceration reinforces, perpetuates, and even creates both individual and societal perceptions of derogatory racial differences (Gowan).

The second method utilized by law enforcement, and far less obstructive than incarceration, is *ticketing*. Many communities use ticketing as means of surveillance and tracking of homeless individuals (Beaty, 2000). Ticketing occurs in many forms including; direct ticketing, harassment ticketing, and, as Kennedy (2004) pointed out with such things as overnight parking, indirect ticketing. In scholarly literature, ticketing is commonly invoked to justify escalating punitive interventions.

According to von Mahs (2005) strategies of extraction and containment are used to concentrate homeless and other impoverished groups into the same undesirable area. Calling this strategy *warehousing*, von Mahs noted how it relocates homeless groups away from commercial centers. Additionally, even though homeless are often relocated close to service providers, they are always transferred to severely impoverished areas (von Mahs). Once homeless individuals are “herded” to an “acceptable” area, it is desirable to keep them there. Toth (1993) conveyed examples of extraction through narrated stories of underground homeless coerced out of their tunnels in order to be shuttled away to unfamiliar, unsafe, and overcrowded shelters. Toth considered this process of *extraction and containment* criminalizing as a consequence of police involvement. Meanwhile, Rymer (2001) used the salient criticism of extraction and containment to describe America’s largest homeless community, which is enclosed in a 50-block section of downtown Los Angeles. Rymer correctly pointed out how, over the past 20 years downtown Los Angeles, including parts of Skid Row, has been rapidly gentrifying. Since this area has supported a thriving homeless community for so long, the majority of the city’s service providers are located there. The situation in Los Angeles highlights two issues: (a) service providers play a role in this process and (b) when urban dynamics change, homeless residents can successfully remain part of that community.

Purposes of criminalizing homeless

Some authors indicate that the intent of criminalizing homeless is more than just a means to get people off of the streets. For instance, Amster (2003) insisted that the maintenance of a deviant perception of homelessness serves as a mechanism of a social control. In fact, several authors (e.g., Amster; Foscarinis, 1991) contend that our national

homeless strategy deliberately exploits homelessness for this reprehensible objective. In order to be used in this way, people must believe that homelessness is, “a short journey from diversity to deviance, from deification to demonization, and from sanctification to criminalization” (Amster, p. 196). Some methods utilized by social control mechanisms are briefly described in this section.

In our society, social control mechanisms exist in many forms. One particularly blatant tactic is the attempt to disappear disturbing behaviors; in our case, those behaviors associated with homelessness. Several authors (Amster, 2003; Toth, 1993; Wachholz, 2005) wrote extensively on the purposeful disappearance, or at least convenient invisibility, of the most visibly homeless. The purpose behind disappearing homeless is multifaceted and is integral to most homeless/social control strategies. This process is fairly straightforward and most effective when similarities to other dehumanized segments of the community proliferate. In an example of extreme invisibility, in Washington D.C. ironically, for some crimes, the police can rely solely on housed citizens’ reports to justify the arrest of homeless individuals (Kress, 1994). Clearly, these anti-homeless laws are dehumanizing, but they also demonstrate to non-homeless citizens what happens if they step out of line.

According to Rowe (1999) the, “lack of positive contact with mainstream society reflects and exacerbates,” (p. 15) both aspects of this dilemma. When homeless individuals are forcibly removed, the negative stigmas justifying their removal linger after their departure. For example, if the prevailing perceptions of homeless individuals are of disease, filth, and criminal behavior, removing the individual does nothing to alter perceptions of homeless. The negative stigmas of homeless can only be deconstructed

though increased education and contact with homeless individuals. Without homeless individuals in a given community, no deconstructive opportunities exist.

When assessing the reasons why disparity exists, or is allowed to exist in our tightly controlled society, it is important to analyze the distribution of resources to address the problem. The distribution of resources generally explains social priorities – or at least the priorities of those with access to distribute resources (e.g., Versel, 1978). Related to homeless issues, we have seen an increase in laws outlawing the basic human rights of homeless individuals while seeing a decrease in social service spending (NCH & NLCHP, 2006). Increasingly, communities “deal” with their “homeless problem” by enacting laws targeting specific behaviors or by selectively enforcing universal ordinances to target specific groups while at the same time under-funding social welfare programs (Amster, 2003). The increased criminalization of homeless survival activities may be a clear demonstration of America’s national priorities. Based on this information, one possible explanation is that the intent of these interventions has little to do with actually ending homelessness.

Barriers to Service Use

Providing support services to homeless individuals – one of the most disenfranchised, alienated, and disaffiliated segments of the population – is not an easy task. For various reasons, homeless people are alienated from both the general population and the helping agencies (Baum & Burnes, 1993). Treatment wise, any alienation is cause for concern, especially considering that easily accessible and effective use of services is crucial to getting and keeping homeless off the streets (Wong, 1999). Lyderson (2000) reiterated this belief, commenting how, “when homeless do hook up

with social service organizations offering drug and alcohol treatment and job counseling, a large percentage succeed in finding permanent housing” (p. 21). Since only about one quarter of homeless use services regularly, the major obstacle for support agencies is getting homeless to use their services (Benda, 1993). Based on the available data, determining barriers of service use appears integral to improving homeless individuals’ quality of life.

Little research has explored how the increased criminalization of homelessness is connected to service use. Furthermore, it does not appear that any studies explore how well outreach workers understand how their clients’ perspective; let alone about having their “life sustaining activities” criminalized. Clearly, recent criminalization of homeless survival activities is only one of many roadblocks to service use and understanding its influence on service use is vital to unravel the complex obstacles facing service providers. To improve service provision, it is vital that outreach workers increase their understanding of the complex factors influencing service use. Consistent with the theme of this literature review, there appears to be two interrelated perspectives to barriers of service use. The first perspective addressed pertains to individual characteristics of homeless that may interfere with service use and the second perspective addressed concerns systemic obstacles that dissuade homeless from using services.

Individual considerations

The concept of individual considerations as barriers to service use can be difficult to differentiate from the systemic causes of homelessness when considering recursive causality. For most homeless it is impossible to untangle causal factors, especially considering how often core issues originate multigenerationally. Some have argued that

individual factors are always responses to the systemic causes of homelessness (Rowe, 1999). Rowe summarized this interrelationship concisely:

In brief, when discussing global capitalism and its relationship to the new vagrancy of a postindustrial economy, and while focusing attention on the material deprivation of the homeless have-nots of the affluent U.S. society, one should not ignore or dismiss the psychological, physical, and social violence that enshrouds the homelessness condition. (p. 7)

Using this perspective as a guide, we can see how individual characteristics co-exist and their value to homeless research. To acknowledge individual characteristics demands an examination of pre-homeless experiences in shaping individual homeless responses to helping services. Clearly, preparing for, and predicting, individual responses based on personal history is invaluable to help increase service use.

Individual barriers to service use are often underplayed in research and are frequently lumped together as a commaed list. One of the most important, and oft studied, barriers is low self-esteem. Available data suggests that daily struggles and traumatic experiences exacerbates feelings of worthlessness and shatters self-esteem (Barak, 1992). Moreover, several authors (e.g., Applewhite, 1997; Barak; Baum & Burnes, 1993; Diblasio & Belcher, 1993) have noted how experiences of homelessness cause disaffiliation and alienation from society. There is evidence that the symptoms of isolation, alienation, and dehumanization negatively influence one's sense of worth and self-esteem. Poor physical health, food, and sleep depravation further exacerbate these difficulties (Diblasio & Belcher, 1993). Undoubtedly, these factors are negatively reinforcing and lead to decreased service use (Diblasio & Belcher).

Clearly, a negative self-image impacts one's desire to use services and is a contributing factor in the downward spiral of an individual's functioning. Homeless individuals with pronounced feelings of negative self-worth have profoundly compromised coping abilities (Applewhite, 1997). As problems compound, one's ability to overcome even small problems becomes difficult (Applewhite). Most research suggests that the overwhelming majority of homeless individuals is disheartened by support services and feel they have little influence on the manner of service delivery (Applewhite; Benda, 1993). Instead of building on clients' strengths, Rowe (1999) noted how, "many social service programs to which individuals will eventually be referred are geared toward treating and managing their clients' *dis-abilities*" (p. 51). Having no say over significant aspects of service delivery promotes feelings of powerlessness, dehumanization, and victimization (Acosta & Toro, 2000; Applewhite). Feelings of powerlessness to change the very services intended to help surely contributes to homeless individuals' sense of disillusionment and worthlessness (Applewhite). It is no wonder that homeless individuals often feel resentment, anger, or like victims without rights (Applewhite). This top down style of service delivery clearly does not take into consideration that the group with the most interest in improving homeless quality of life are homeless themselves (Kerr, 2005).

In addition to facing all of the obstacles of homelessness, homeless minorities are forced to experience multiple forms oppression (Applewhite, 1997; Kress, 1994). It is no surprise then, that a disproportionate percentage of homeless are African American (Kress). Clearly, racism's prevalence in our culture is a significant causal factor of homelessness as evidenced by the analogous language used to discuss racism and

homelessness. These concerns are not restricted to issues of race as many disadvantaged groups feel similarly. For instance, homeless veterans often feel they are perceived as lazy, violent, or criminals with no desire to escape homelessness (Applewhite). For a more thorough review of the impact systemic racism has on the homeless community, see Barak (1992).

Studies consistently show that between 30% - 50% of homeless individuals have chronic alcohol addictions (Benda, 1993; Kress, 1994). Others (Bird, et al., 2002) have shown that those with substance related disorders have increased service use due to prior contact with the criminal justice system. Alternatively, some studies (e.g., Benda) report contradictory results, concluding that homeless with substance abuse disorders are less likely to use services. Adding to the confusion of service use, Wong (1999) found that a, “significant portion of the homeless sample did not use social services and that among service users, most reported receipt of concrete services only.” The one consistency appears to be a lack of consistent findings of homeless research. Perhaps due to the complexity, elusiveness, and transitory lifestyle of homeless individuals, consistent findings have traditionally been difficult to obtain (Applewhite, 1997; Bird, et al., 2002). Regardless, most studies fall short when addressing the multiple influences on homeless service use. Instead of attempting to simplify homeless issues for the sake of research, researchers need to find ways to conduct research from what Donner (1998) called a, “person-and-environment-in-environment perspective” (p. 19).

Experiences of social and spatial exclusion of homeless provide additional roadblocks to service use (Amster, 2003; von Mahs, 2005). These experiences may contribute to increased disaffiliation, isolation, and feelings of worthlessness (Baum &

Burnes, 1993). As a result, homeless individuals' use of services may be negatively influenced by policies of social and spatial exclusion (Amster; von Mahs). Like most aspects of homelessness, feelings of social and spatial exclusion, along with self-esteem, social isolation, alienation, and feelings of worthlessness are part of a recursive trap that drastically influences service use (Diblasio & Belcher, 1993).

Several authors have expressed concern over the lack of research studying homeless individuals' satisfaction with past services (Acosta & Toro, 2000; Bird et al., 2002). It is logical to assume that past satisfaction is a vital indicator for future service use (Acosta & Toro). Providers' failure to adjust services according to client feedback may reinforce existing feelings of dehumanization and invalidation. Instead homeless individuals should not only be included in structuring service delivery, but also in providing constructive feedback to existing services (Acosta & Toro; Benda, 1994). Many authors who have interviewed homeless individuals directly (e.g., Acosta & Toro; Applewhite, 1997; Desjarlais, 1997; Rowe, 1999; Toth, 1993; VanderStaay, 1992) have noted the clinical significance of being valued as a human being.

An individual perspective also may invoke a homeless-as-consumer perspective of service use, meaning that homeless individuals can ultimately choose not to use certain services. One intention of this study is to explore these psychological causes of disaffiliation from services in conjunction with systemic factors.

Systemic barriers

The second main barrier of service use has to do with the manner by which an agency provides services. This means both the quality of services and the organizational characteristics of the agency – e.g., funding source, diversity of services, and type of

services (Benda, 1993). As with many homeless issues, there is ample information on the subject of service use. Summarizing several authors, North, Pollio, Perron, Eyrich, & Spitznagel (2005), noted that “research examining service access and utilization in the homeless population has been limited, primarily focusing on individual predictors such as demographics and other personal characteristics” (p. 576). An exploratory study by Applewhite (1997) revealed three systemic categories of barriers to service use: (a) insensitive service providers, (b) negative policies and procedures, and (c) social service system factors. These three factors are discussed in this section. Please note that Applewhite intentionally downplayed individual factors to avoid reinforcing perceptions that homeless are at fault for their situation; to not blame the victim. Although this perspective is well intentioned, psychological factors of homelessness must be included in contemporary thought (O’Connor, 2003). Perhaps a fourth category, incorporating the ideas discussed in the preceding section is necessary.

Research has revealed correlations between organizational characteristics and service use (Benda, 1993). Her research concluded that the type of agency and the population it serves influences service use. For example, homeless were more likely to use shelter services that provided a range of services, while substance abuse service use was contingent on funding characteristics, professionalism, and focus of services (Benda). Although organizational characteristics appear an important predictor of service use, additional research needs to be conducted. In the opinion of this researcher, predictors of service use are interconnected and contingent on both organizational and individual characteristics. It appears that only exploratory studies have been completed and further research must be increasingly focused.

Applewhite's (1997) first category of systemic service use barriers addressed issues of the quality of service delivery. Frequently homeless people feel degraded and dehumanized by direct service workers' treatment of them (Applewhite). For many users of social services, even the offer of treatment or assistance can elicit resistance. Rowe (1999) questioned whether it was even possible for an outreach worker to offer assistance, "that does not force the homeless person to accept the identity of patient or client" (p. 5). In further exploration on this topic, Rowe stated that, "in general, the homeless persons I talked to were more critical of shelter staff than of the shelter as an institution" (p. 36). Perhaps contributing to this are frequent incidents of staff abuse of power or disrespect to the homeless persons' basic human dignity (Rowe). These types of feelings can be caused by overt disrespectful treatment or more subtle manifestations of invalidation; inadequate follow through by staff on referrals and dismissing homeless feedback are examples of this (Benda, 1993). Regardless, the homeless have to take what is given and have no say in the type or quality of services offered (Rowe).

The second theme Applewhite (1997) noticed is related to negative policies and procedures. Some examples of this include, requiring homeless to have a permanent address to receive services and preventing substance (ab)users from accessing certain services (Benda, 1993). The absurdity of requiring homeless people to have a permanent address in order to qualify for services is almost laughable – except that we are talking about people's lives. On a side note, several authors have noted confusion and frustration over services that exclude homeless with dual-diagnoses from both forms of treatment (Benda; Calsyn, 2005). In many cases, homeless services appear aimed at treating the symptoms of homelessness (e.g., substance abuse, individual counseling, and family

treatment) instead of the causes. Services that pathologize homeless, label and categorize them as the problem, unwittingly can exacerbate isolation and disaffiliation (Applewhite). Contributing to their isolation, many homeless have described the shelter system as a form of penitentiary, “the only thing is you have the freedom to get up and go” (Molchan interview as quoted in Kerr, 2003, ¶ 26). Exacerbating these problems is the interrelationship between staff mistreatment of homeless and staff interactions with dangerous homeless.

Applewhite’s (1997) third theme addressed issues of systemic roadblocks and barriers to service use. Here Applewhite was referring to the structure of the social service system – oft described as complex and fragmented – as a barrier in itself. Attempts to navigate these complex systems can be challenging for anyone, for potentially disoriented homeless, these fragmented systems can seem especially daunting (Benda, 1993). Many authors (Applewhite; Benda; Calsyn, Yonker, Lemming, Morse, & Klienberg, 2005) adamantly call for increased centralization and simplification of services on these grounds.

The cornerstone for any homeless engagement, according to Applewhite (1997), requires an emphasis on tangible services and the removal of stifling service barriers. Others however, caution that any remedies for the current conflagration must include the homeless community’s input (Acosta & Toro, 2000). Benda (1993) suggested that in consideration of the multiple afflictions causing homelessness the cornerstone of any service delivery program is the meal system. Although, Benda’s point is clear, engaging the most disconnected homeless will take more than just serving meals. Perhaps, homeless engagement starts with tangible, basic human needs such as clothing, hygiene

related items, housing, and such things (Applewhite). However, Acosta & Toro cautioned about focusing, “too narrowly on providing temporary solutions to the complicated set of problems with many homeless people face” (p. 363). Either way, to reach the most isolated homeless individual, services must be tailored to meet the individual needs of the client (Applewhite). Providing services in this way may help to decrease resistance, increase homeless individuals’ sense of empowerment, and improve staff/client relationships.

In conclusion, there is no easy answer as to why homeless individuals may or may not use a particular service. In fact, the most insightful information may just come from the voices of the homeless themselves. The following excerpt, compiled from interviews with homeless veterans, thoroughly summarizes prevailing themes.

These veterans self-reported a high incidence of health and mental health problems, limited resources, negative public perceptions and treatment, insensitive service providers, dehumanizing policies and procedures, and high levels of stress and frustration with the service delivery system. They encountered personal, situational, and bureaucratic barriers to obtaining services and were highly critical of service providers. (Applewhite, 1997, p. 19)

Service Providers’ Knowledge

Available information assessing the provision of services and how well outreach workers know their clients appears inadequate. Part of the problem is that traditionally homeless research has been conducted using simplistic surveys and observational studies (Wright, 2005). For the past twenty years, though, homeless research has sophisticatedly increased and outreach workers have realized that homeless people’s input is necessary to

effective service provision (Rowe, 1999). Additionally, increasing service providers' knowledge of their clients is invaluable, as the interventions outreach staff conduct on the street – engaging and referring homeless with mental illness – is an effective form of pretreatment (Wright, 2005). Outreach workers are often the first contact homeless individuals have with support services and may shape future interactions.

Paralleling the importance our society places on homeless treatment, often homeless outreach workers have little knowledge of and/or experience working with homeless individuals (Benda, 1993). Some common reasons why people become outreach workers are (a) exoticness of work, (b) more freedom than conventional treatment, (c) to gain professional experience, and (d) potential for professional advancement (Rowe, 1999, p. 53). Based on his research, Rowe expressed concern about the level and quality of supervision provided for unmotivated outreach workers. In such cases, the service providers' priorities appear reversed. Due to the demands and experience necessary to effectively work with homeless, agencies must require significant experience and knowledge working with the homeless community. The repertoire of skills necessary to be an effective outreach worker can only be achieved through direct experience with homeless clients (Benda, ¶ 37). Clearly, outreach workers' learning curve must be small because just one negative interaction with a homeless individual can cause long-term withdrawal and suspicion from helping providers (Rowe). In the end, effective outreach workers must be able to repeatedly and consistently engage homeless at various levels of functioning (Benda, ¶ 34).

What the service providers

Although ample research has been conducted to see why homeless do not use services, there needs to be increased research exploring what the service providers do know. A review of current research almost throws up the figurative hands in the air on this subject. Paraphrasing Benda (1993), homeless providers severely lack the necessary skills and experience to engage multiple afflicted homeless clients. Engaging and building relationships with multiply afflicted homeless individuals clearly presents a daunting task for the service providers (Benda). Wong (1999) suggested, “that there is a need for service providers to target their programs and interventions to the underserved and hard-to-reach segments of the adult homeless population including males, non-Whites, street users, episodically homeless people, and individuals experiencing alcohol problems” (Abstract section, ¶ 1).

Due to mental illness or previous negative experiences with social service agencies homeless can be easily discouraged, withdrawn, and/or suspicious towards outreach workers (Benda, 1993). When working with the homeless community, most authors suggest that outreach workers take it slow, engage the homeless at their discretion, and build rapport by providing tangible assistance (Benda; Applewhite, 1997). Both authors suggest following these guidelines prior to attempting more sophisticated and clinical forms of treatment. Due to the difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with homeless clients, some authors have called for consistency of services; including having the same clinician conduct and coordinate services (Benda; Calsyn, et al., 2005). Ideally, comprehensive, easily accessible services would provide a range of treatment from prevention to crisis intervention (Benda).

Another area of exploration to consider when conducting research on outreach workers are dichotomies inherent in our current system. Rowe (1999) addressed these issues by discussing how outreach workers effectively manipulate homeless individuals under the guise of friendship. He added that, “the atmosphere of friendship is contrived, a tool for the engagement with the client” (Rowe, p. 79). He noted how, essentially workers are paid to show compassion for homeless individuals in the hopes of engaging them for further treatment (Rowe). These types of engagement styles are frequently used and often represent the accepted best practice model. In the end, he emphasized that to maintain effectiveness, “workers must live with the contradictions of their friendly yet manipulative approach” (Rowe, p. 80).

Summary

There is a wealth of literature related to the criminalization of homelessness. As has been shown, contemporary critical thought on homelessness comes largely from a constructivist framework. Amster (2003) discussed the legal construction of law as coming from an ideological perspective. He claimed that when we criminalize homeless activities, we are creating an environment of dehumanization and personal pathology; both ideologically derived elements (Amster). Others (Barak & Bohm, 1989) claimed that in order to effectively combat homelessness, we are justified in criminalizing homelessness, but not the homeless themselves. Barak & Bohm however, failed to address or consider aspects of dehumanization and invisibility when homeless survival and criminalization are linked. As homeless survival activities continue to be criminalized, further research will need to be conducted to determine its affect on homeless social isolation and their use of support services. Further studies must also be

conducted in regards to the effectiveness of punitive anti-homeless laws on assisting homeless safely get off the streets.

Clearly, based on the examples in this literature review, there is much confusion as to what to do. The disconnection between provision of services and effective treatment is blatantly obvious. In a disturbing illustration of this, the leading Washington lobbyist for the Urban Institute, a powerful voice in shaping homeless policy, has consistently failed to seek any input, “criticism or evaluation from the homeless,” regarding the policies that dictate their lives (Kerr, 2003, p. 29). Based on Kerr’s assertion, it appears that homeless services, from the highest levels, are constructed without input from, who Kress (1994) considered those, with the most interest in homeless issues, the homeless themselves.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative, exploratory study asked the question: How do service providers and homeless adult males view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use? This study's intent was two-fold: (a) to explore the impact criminalizing survival activities has on homeless individuals' service use and (b) to determine the level of consistency between service providers' and homeless individuals' perspective of this issue.

Since becoming a national crisis in the mid-1980s, a wealth of research has been conducted regarding homeless issues. In a very general sense, most homeless research appears to exist on opposite poles; research is either conducted from a psychological or policy perspective. As a consequence, a gap exists between the psychological analysis of homelessness and an analysis of related social policies. In consideration of this discrepancy, this study attempted to bridge these two concepts. The end result was a study designed to explore the psychological impact of social policies on homeless individuals' use of services.

Recently, an increasing number of communities have made basic life sustaining behaviors illegal (e.g., NCH & NLCHP, 2006). For many homeless, public spaces are off-limits and frequent interaction with law enforcement is a part of life. Most studies have addressed the impact of criminalizing homelessness in broad terms; acknowledging

that there is an impact. However, it is unclear how these laws specifically impact an already disenfranchised and alienated group. Additionally, the homeless community is made up of the most at-risk and oppressed members of our society. Thus, depending on one's mental state, the psychological impact of criminalizing life sustaining activities is potentially catastrophic. Due to the complexity of this topic, one study can not portend to provide definitive answers to the questions raised. As such, this study explored one piece of the puzzle, but additional research remains vital if we are to comprehensively understand these issues.

As a liaison between policy-makers and homeless individuals, service providers were included in this study to determine their understanding of their homeless clients. In other words, researchers assessed the level of consistency between the sample groups.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of two groups with separate inclusion criteria. The first group was made up of 6 homeless individuals and the second of 5 homeless service providers. Semi-structured interviews were completed of these two groups over the course of one and a half months at various homeless service agencies on the Westside area of Los Angeles. Due to separate criteria for each sample group, they are described separately. The homeless participants are described first, followed by the service providers.

In order to qualify for this study the homeless participants met the following criteria: (a) were an adult male over the age of 18, (b) had at least 1 interaction with police for a defined survival activity, (c) had been homeless for 6 months consecutively prior to the study, and (d) had a diagnosed mental illness. Since mental illness was an

inclusion criteria, applicants were screened for acute, active symptoms of mental illness; this included such things as active psychosis, delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, grossly disorganized or catatonic behaviors, mania, dissociative symptoms, or other factors that may prohibit their viable participation in the study. Please note that no participants were disqualified due to these factors. Prior to the interview, the Informed Consent was reviewed and each participant was oriented to the situation, place, time, and nature of the study. Interviews for participants occurred on 2 separate days, 3 interviews each day, separated by 2 weeks. Although the target of this sample was seven, six interviews were conducted.

In order to qualify for this study, the direct service workers met the following criteria: (a) were an adult over the age of 18 and (b) had at least 1 year of direct professional experience working with the homeless community. Although only 1 year of direct service experience was required, participants from this sample group had between 3.5 to 17 years experience. Direct professional experience or direct service work referred to any employment working directly with the homeless – e.g. outreach workers, shelter staff, and clinicians. Although the target sample size for direct service workers was seven, five interviews were conducted.

Characteristics of the participants

Following the established pattern in this chapter, demographics for the homeless participants' sample are presented first, followed by the service providers' sample. For ease of conveyance, much of the demographic data is displayed in tabular form. When appropriate, additional demographic data is described.

Homeless participants

The demographic data for the homeless participants was collected at the beginning of the interview. Table 3.1 contains the basic demographics of the homeless subjects.

Table 3.1

Demographic Data of the Homeless Participants

Name	Age	Years Homeless	Race	Religious Beliefs	Ed. Level	Substance Abuse
HOM1	45	25	Caucasian	Agnostic	GED	No
HOM2	30	4	Indigenous Mexican	Anti-theist	Some College	Yes
HOM3	31	7	Caucasian	None	HS diploma	Yes
HOM4	57	10	Caucasian	None	10 th Grade	Yes
HOM5	39	3	Multi-Racial	None	A.A. – Culinary Arts	Yes
HOM6	42	28	Caucasian	Christian	GED, Nursing Cert.	Yes

Each of the participants' ethnic heritages was unique. Using the same vertical order as Table 3.1 they identified as: German, Irish, and Scottish; Narriti (Indigenous Mexican); Irish; German, French, and American; Scottish, American Indian, French W. Indian, and E. Indian; and Irish, English, and Greek.

Table 3.2 contains additional personal and mental health information about the homeless subjects who participated in this study.

Table 3.2

Personal and Mental Health Characteristics of the Homeless Participants

Name	Mental Illness(es)	Substance Dependency	Occupational History	Subject's Stated Reason for Homelessness
HOM1	Depressive Disorder, PTSD	No	Self-Employed, Computers	Personal choice
HOM2	Depressive Disorder, w/Psychotic Features	Yes	Medical Asst., Retail	Onset of mental illness due to acute stressors
HOM3	Depressive Disorder	Yes	Customer Service, Manual Labor, Phone Sales	Onset of mental illness due to acute stressors
HOM4	Anxiety, Depression	Yes	Manufacturing, Restaurants	Personal choice
HOM5	Paranoid Schizophrenia, PTSD	Yes	Zookeeper, Restaurants	Onset of mental illness due to brain trauma
HOM6	ADHD, BPD II, Manic Depressive, PTSD	Yes	Restaurant, Manual Labor	Childhood trauma, Mental illness

At the time of the interviews all homeless participants were receiving mental health treatment, perhaps because of encouragement by *Step Up On Second*. Substances clearly have played a part in the sample's characteristics; all participants reported substance abuse and only 1 (HOM1) stated that it was *not* a major factor in his life. Only

1 participant (HOM2) was actively using and he was currently engaged in substance use counseling. It did not appear that any of the participants were under the influence of substances at the time of the interview. This sample group's most commonly abused substance was methamphetamine; however participants also reported having used cocaine, marijuana, acid (LSD), and ETOH.

Service providers

All service provider subjects were employed at various agencies across the Westside. Of this sample group, 3 were male and 2 were female. Table 3.3 contains the demographic data collected about the service providers.

Table 3.3

Demographic Data of the Service Provider Subjects

Name	Age	Years as S.P.	Race	Ethnicity	Religious Beliefs	Educational Level
SP1	58	17	Caucasian	American	None	14 years
SP2	31	8	Bi-Racial	Jamaican	None	BA – Social Studies
SP3	28	10	Caucasian	German	None	MSW Student
SP4	41	12	Latino	Chicano	Catholic	HS Diploma
SP5	27	3.5	Caucasian	American	None	BA – English

Table 3.4 displays the relevant employment experience of each service provider subject. To maintain confidentiality, only their job title is included.

Table 3.4

Relevant Employment Experience of the Service Provider Subjects

Name	Job Titles
SP1	Outreach coordinator, residential manager, case manager, residential service coordinator
SP2	Volunteer, outreach worker, liaison to police
SP3	Homeless services coordinator, volunteer (rape crisis)
SP4	Outreach coordinator, volunteer at homeless shelter
SP5	Case manager, teacher

As Table 3.4 suggests, the professional experience among the service provider subjects is quite varied. Note how several of the service providers have significant volunteer experience.

Data Collection

This qualitative, exploratory study was designed using flexible methods; a design well suited for narrative data collection and analysis. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews of all participants were conducted with a small, mixed, non-probability, sample of convenience on the Westside area of Los Angeles. Each participant was given a confidential, audio-recorded, one on one interview. This method was derived from personal experiences working with homeless individuals, relevant homeless literature, and from applicable methodology literature.

An interview approach was chosen over other possibilities, such as observation or survey, after careful consideration of the population being studied. Factors such as literacy, mental illness, dual-diagnosis, social impairments, among other things were taken into consideration regarding this issue. Considering the research goal and the population being studied, this method of data collection was deemed the most appropriate. In particular, as Anastas noted, “for the interviewer, there is always an element of being there with the respondent, which can afford the opportunity for observations above and beyond what the interview itself is designed to call forth” (p. 351). Moreover, flexible method interviews allow the interviewer to clarify, reframe, revise, interpret, and explain aspects of the interview that may be confusing to subjects (Anastas). In consideration of the potential variance of mental states of homeless, this was deemed vital to gathering useful, insightful data.

While the semi-structured model served as a guide for the interview, it also allowed the researcher to explore salient experiences unique to each client. This flexibility suited the uniqueness of homeless experiences well, and as Anastas stated, “is the greatest strength of the interview” (1999, p. 351). The initial results of the literature review revealed a glaring lack of research specifically devoted to exploring homeless experiences of criminalization, isolation, and use of support services. As such, the design outlined was determined to be the most appropriate for this topic.

Since part of the research included synthesizing two sample groups’ information together, there were no existing guides or developed measures. Accordingly, interview guides were created and tailored specifically for each sample group. Each interview guide included demographic questions, including participants’ age, gender, race,

ethnicity, overall length of homelessness, mental health issues, substance use, and highest education level achieved. Demographic data was included in the interview guide in order to examine differences in responses based on demographic characteristics. Although not exactly the same, each interview guide was designed to elicit parallel responses and asked interviewees to discuss their direct experiences. In the case of the homeless participants, this meant direct experiences of being arrested, ticketed, or harassed by police for a survival activity. For the service providers, to limit hearsay, preferred responses were from direct observation of incidents with police or directly from the involved homeless. Though each sample size was relatively small, 11 in total, the thick, descriptive data obtained helped balance out this possible discrepancy. For the complete interview guides, please refer to Appendix A (Homeless Participants) and Appendix B (Service Providers).

Each interview guide grouped questions into three general categories that matched up with the research question. The three categories are: (a) demographics, (b) experiences with the legal system, and (c) use of support services. These categories effectively broke down the research question into manageable sections and allowed the interviewer to ask guided questions on each subject. Additionally, matched data was more easily and reliably integrated together.

To increase the study's validity and reliability, an expert reviewer, the Clinical Director at *Step Up On Second* reviewed and provided feedback on the study's design and interview guide. Her feedback constructively improved the study and addressed personal biases of the researcher. Biases are an intrinsic part flexible methods research and must be taken into consideration when processing the data (Anastas, 1999). In this

way, research biases were addressed by incorporating them into the study's design process.

Although participation in the study was voluntary and subjects were free to refuse to answer specific questions and withdraw from the study at any time, no participants used these options. If a participant had decided to withdraw, all descriptive data would have been immediately destroyed and excluded from the study. Ethics and safeguards were of utmost importance in the design of this study and were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Due to the sensitive nature of this subject and in consideration of the population studied, separate safeguard procedures were created for each sample group. Please see the Informed Consent, Appendix C (Homeless Participants) and Appendix D (Service Providers), for a review of the safeguards used in this study.

Research was conducted under guidance, and following approval, from the Smith College Human Subjects Review Committee (HSR). Prior to submitting this HSR application, the researcher consulted with *Step Up On Second's* Clinical Director, for validity, feasibility, and appropriateness of the research. Please see Appendix E to review a copy of the approval letter. To help recruit subjects for this study, a flyer was created and distributed to various social service agencies, please see Appendix F for this flyer.

This study was conducted on the Westside area of Los Angeles, also known as Service Planning Area 5 (SPA 5). Since the racial and ethnic diversity of the homeless population in the SPA 5 deviates from overall demographics, every effort was made to recruit a sample representative of the homeless community's unique demographics. Table 3.5 contains demographic information regarding the racial diversity of the SPA 5

homeless community. Data for Table 3.5 was taken from the *2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count* (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2006).

Table 3.5

Demographic Comparisons by Racial Identity

Group	Caucasian	African – American	Hispanic – Latino	Other
SPA 5 Homeless Community	49%	28%	10%	13%
Homeless Sample	67%	0%	17%	17%
Service Provider Sample	50%	0%	20%	20%
Combined Sample	64%	0%	18%	18%

As can be construed from Table 3.5 the homeless sample was only slightly similar to the SPA 5 homeless community. However, these statistics are somewhat misleading, because two participants, one from each sample group, identified themselves as bi-racial (African and Caribbean). Due to limitations of SPA 5 demographics – specific statistics are unavailable – these subjects were included in the “Other” column.

Service provider participants were recruited from various Westside homeless service agencies utilizing the researcher’s social service contacts. After a candidate was

determined to have met the selection criteria, an interview was scheduled. Prior to beginning the interview, the Informed Consent was reviewed and any questions or concerns were elicited

To acknowledge and address diversity inconsistencies between the homeless community and the general population, the diversity of service provider participants was attempted to equal that of the SPA 5 homeless community. Logically this was determined to address issues of racial segregation and privilege rampant in the homeless community. This was not intended imply that non-dominant culture service providers do not adequately grasp the racial disparity that is a major contributor of homelessness. In other words, this was an additional consideration to maintain consistency across sample groups. Table 3.5 includes the racial diversity of the service providers compared with the homeless subjects and the SPA 5 homeless community. Although this sample group was comprised of mostly Caucasian individuals, at least three service providers were of different races.

The recruitment process

All homeless participants were members at *Step Up On Second*, an inclusive homeless service agency in Santa Monica, CA on the Westside of Los Angeles. The researcher had previously worked with the Clinical Director at *Step Up On Second* during a community development project and she acted as a liaison to agency staff. Members were then referred by *Step Up On Second* staff and all interviews were conducted privately on-site. *Step Up On Second* was a good fit for the project design as it provides a continuum of care ranging from basic needs to permanent housing for mentally ill homeless individuals.

In order to qualify for services at *Step Up On Second* homeless individuals must have been, or be, diagnosed with a mental illness prior to becoming a member. As such, mental illness was assumed and diagnostic information was taken from *Step Up On Second* staff prior to conducting interviews. In order to increase the level of comfort during the interviews, *Step Up On Second* staff personally introduced the homeless participants to the researcher. Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher briefly assessed participants for criteria and current mental status. In recognition of the debilitating impact mental illness can have on individuals, those with severe mental illness and psychotic symptoms were reluctantly not included in this study. For reasons of validity, it was necessary to screen individuals for severity of mental illness and psychosis. Although this was a necessary exclusion; the severely mentally ill homeless are perhaps the most impacted by the topic of this study and an accurate reflection of their perspective would have been invaluable. After careful consideration, the researcher determined that severe mental illness would have undoubtedly clouded accurate data collection and therefore provided the justification for exclusion.

Prior to beginning each interview, the Informed Consent form was verbally reviewed, signed, and participants were given a copy upon request. Due to the significant amount of time spent participating in this study each homeless subject was given a \$5 food card.

Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded for audio using a digital voice recording device. These digital audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher and entered into a computerized database specifically created to analyze the data. This database was

specifically created for this study and was integral in the data collection and thematic coding process. Data analysis was undertaken, in consideration of Drisko's (1997) statement that, "qualitative researchers must maintain accuracy to local, subjective meanings in the processes of data coding and summarizing results for publications, and reduce the potential for bias via self-awareness, efforts to find contradictory data, and efforts to develop alternative interpretations" (¶ 25).

As suggested by Anastas (1999), the data analysis phase began with a thorough review of all of the available data. Individual interviews, as described by Padgett (1998), then underwent a, "process of identifying bits and pieces of information (*meaning units*)" (p. 76). These meaning units were used to link the, "concepts and themes around which the final report is organized" (Padgett, p. 76). Thematically coding the data helped reduce the, "narrative data to conceptual categories into which parts of the text can be grouped and in terms of which the text can be described or displayed (Anastas, p. 419-420). According to Anastas, categories and themes that, "will emerge from the coding process...becomes the major focus of the analysis" (Anastas, p. 424). Organizing and analyzing the data this way was chosen because of its effective and relevant application to social work research (Anastas, p. 420). To assist in identifying patterns of similarity and/or variation, a table was created for the demographic data and major themes.

To provide an accurate representation of the thematic findings, excerpts from the interviews are included and discussed. Each interview was faithfully transcribed verbatim and coded to preserve the identity of the participants. For readability purposes, jargon, such as "you know" and "like," were removed from the excerpts and replaced with ellipses. Ellipses were also used to indicate space where the interviewer may have

commented or asked a clarifying question. When using ellipses, the meaning of the subjects' comments was meticulously and faithfully maintained. Concluding each excerpt is a citation referring to the appropriate interview and the referenced line numbers. To increase the readability of the findings and discussion of the data each participant was given a random alias. Table 3.6 lists all of the referenced interviews using their coded name and corresponding alias. Due to the volume of data collected and the extensive data analysis, this information was unable to be included in this text; however both are available upon request from the author.

Table 3.6

Coded Interview Names and the Corresponding Aliases

<u>Homeless Participants</u>		<u>Service Provider Participants</u>	
Coded Name	Alias	Coded Name	Alias
HOM1	Walter	SP1	Al
HOM2	Manuel	SP2	Ernie
HOM3	Derek	SP3	Chrissy
HOM4	Ian	SP4	Roger
HOM5	Philip	SP5	Salma
HOM6	Frank		

As with any quality study, the researcher's personal bias and preformed opinions were identified during the design process. Throughout the research process every effort

was made to minimize the impact of these factors. Potential biases include the researcher's social justice perspective and prior experience working with this community. Clearly, these opinions informed the basis for the study's design and influenced its conception. Although, these factors can not be expected to be fully excoriated from any research – perhaps even more so for research of a social justice perspective – hopefully their impact was minimized and participants' experiences were accurately reflected in the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the research related to the question; How do service providers and homeless adult males view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use? To conclude the analysis, similarly themed data was grouped into categories. As expected, the categories are very similar to the interview guides' division of the research question. The major categories identified are; (a) interactions with the criminal justice system, (b) understanding anti-homeless laws, (c) the negative impact of police enforcement, and (d) service use. Due to the volume of qualitative data collected, only the themes relevant to the research question were included and superfluous data was excluded. During data analysis, redundancies were removed; leaving only the most succulent, clear, and revealing data.

For ease of dissemination, themes are presented as narrative examples, vignettes, and in tabular form. Themes from each sample group are compared and contrasted when applicable. To protect the anonymity of the participants, their names have been changed. Please see Table 3.6 in Chapter 3, Findings, for a listing of the aliases and the corresponding interview code.

Interactions with the Criminal Justice System

The homeless participants were asked to discuss circumstances that they had been arrested, harassed, or ticketed for out of survival. As this was a criterion for inclusion in the study, common among all of the homeless participants was an experience with police

that infringed on their basic survival. Alternatively, the service provider participants were asked to describe police interaction they had heard about or, preferably, witnessed. This category includes all themes related to police interaction and is divided into subcategories.

Homeless are most commonly ticketed for camping

The first theme presented was common among the homeless participant sample. This excerpt, from Derek's interview is indicative of the homeless participant's description of a typical interaction with police.

I was just sleeping, I was at a park, I was with some friends and we were laying down on blankets and these sheriffs got really pissed off and arrested us...we went to jail for like 8 hours over that shit....they called it camping. (HOM3, 102-109)

Derek's comment suggests that the police intervened solely because he and his friends were visibly homeless. Though this may be an accurate reflection of the situation, it is also possible that Derek minimized his role in the situation's escalation. Regardless, Derek and the majority of the homeless participants described their typical interaction with police similarly. Further supporting this theme, Ian describes his typical interaction with police for camping.

Well they treat you like a criminal...They go up and through your things and in your bags and stuff, see if you got any knives or weapons or anything like that or drugs...treat you like a convict...Then they run you, see if you got any warrants or anything. Then if they don't find any warrants...they say okay, we're sorry we'll see you later and that's it. But until then, you're just a criminal to them. (HOM4, 146-154)

Both of these incidents clearly imply negative police interaction for life sustaining behaviors such as sleeping. Also, these types of incidents appear to have reinforced

homeless participants' negative perceptions of police for unavoidable activities. For both subjects, the consequence of sleeping in a public place is obvious.

Although all of the service providers interviewed agreed that police interaction with the homeless can be frustrating, here Salma reiterates how she understands the incidents her clients tell her.

...harassment, you know, a police officer might ask you just to move and that person might feel like they're being harassed...where, as an outsider you might be like, 'well you're sleeping in someone's doorway, all someone's doing is asking you to move...no one's trying to send you to jail... (SP5, 95-98)

It appears Salma wants to empathize with her clients' perception of harassment, but also that she tries to see both sides. Although this was the only instance among the service providers addressing how homeless may perceive any police interaction as harassment, it is consistent with how the overwhelming majority of homeless participants described their experiences with police.

Lack of other options

Like the homeless participants, the service providers were asked to share their observations of homeless individuals' experiences with police for survival activities. The following excerpt, from Ernie, is representative of this theme.

I've seen the people mainly getting arrested, some of the time it's just for this long sleeping on the sidewalk, which is partially, somebody doesn't have enough housing out here, there's not enough shelter, to the people ratio, so when the shelter's are filled the people live on the streets for survival or they may fear going into the shelter because they may have gotten abused in the shelter, so they're sleeping on the sidewalk, so that's one reason people are getting arrested for on the streets of LA. (SP2, 66-70)

This excerpt is particularly rich and many themes overlap within his statement. For example, this sense that homeless lack other options was common across both sample groups. This was especially noticeable in regards to survival activities. One really gets the sense of how despondent homeless must feel when faced with such impossible choices. Roger's following example reiterates and expands on this theme.

The reality of it is that there's not enough beds on the Westside for the number of homeless people that we have, so if a person, if there's not a shelter bed available, and you don't have a car that you can sleep in, and even the people in vehicles, I think probably on this side of town there's more people living in their cars than any other part of the city and you can notice that just driving up and down Rose or Abbot Kinney or any of the surrounding streets of all the different campers and trucks and vans that are parked with people...So live-boards are constantly being harassed, they're constantly being ticketed...if you ever speak to anyone who has a motor home pay attention to their door, a lot of them have ding marks from the officers banging on their doors...wanting them to come out so that they can write 'em a ticket, cause you have to prove that they're living in the van in order for it, to actually...how are you going to prove that you're living in a van? I guess... one way would be to knock on your door at 3 o'clock in the morning and have you come out and you're half asleep, so a lot of times, people refuse to come out of your camper at 3 in the morning especially when you're banging on the door like that, because number one you're probably afraid and two you don't want to get ticketed. But that's huge here on the Westside, people in vehicles... (SP4, 106-131)

In addition to reinforcing Ernie's perspective, Roger's statement is a good description of the conundrum most homeless people face on a daily basis. Homeless are repeatedly forced to choose between either illegal and/or dangerous activities.

Particularly worrisome is Roger's assertion that the police utilize fear tactics to extract homeless from certain areas. While police interventions are clearly not intended to be therapeutic, one has to wonder how effective these types of interactions are in helping homeless get off the streets. It is no surprise that the homeless community's perception of law enforcement is so abysmally low.

Service providers rarely observe police interventions with the homeless

Related to the experiences that the service providers presented, it was clear that few had witnessed police interaction with the homeless for survival related activities. Most of the experiences the service providers shared were secondhand stories told to them by their clients. The typical response to this question was;

No[t] personally, I have heard stories or clients complaining about officers harassing them for defecating or urinating, but I haven't personally observed an officer harassing somebody for that specific incident. (SP4, 71-72)

Several service providers had witnessed non-survival related interactions such as issuing tickets for smoking and drinking in public. However, on the whole, the majority of service providers had not directly observed police intervening with the homeless for basic survival activities. Only one service provider, Roger, had witnessed an officer interacting with a homeless individual for a survival activity, in this case a mentally ill homeless man who was sleeping on the sidewalk.

...there was a very chronically mentally ill person that we were...to engage for a number of years and one time we pulled up and we saw the LAPD...ordering him to stand up, and because he was so deranged and mentally ill he wasn't able to obey the command. So what the officers did is they pulled the blanket from underneath him and just kind of flipped him into the air...as he tumbled off the blanket into the sidewalk...I don't know if it affected our ability to engage him, because we were kind of, off in the distance observing what was going on, we, I'm sure if we tried to advocate on his behalf, I mean, it's when the officers are doing their job...As private citizens...all you can do is be a witness, record it if you have a camcorder or anything else... (SP4, 259-271)

Roger's comment tells of the officers' startling lack of empathy when interacting with a visibly mentally ill individual. Although practically impossible to determine, one

has to wonder how this police intervention impacted the homeless man. This theme was common among the majority of service providers.

Just courts, unjust cops

This section addresses the subjects' perceptions of the differences between law enforcement and the court system. Although there was no consensus among the participants on this issue, a few opposing themes emerged. It is important to note that not all of the subjects discussed the court system and differences among these arms of the criminal justice system.

One of the themes that arose among the service providers was the perception that homeless had positive experiences with the courts and negative experiences with the police.

I'm aware of one individual I was working with here, he was sitting on the curb on The Promenade and he wasn't aware, no you can't sit on the curb there, because he had seen other people do it...non-homeless people. There's no signs posted you know around that area where you observe but him and I took a walk down there, at The Promenade, and at the beginning way up on a light pole is what you can't not do there, like it's not all that obvious...So he got a ticket for it and we went to court for it and they dismissed it...In the interest of justice....it wasn't obvious, I never knew it and I'm up and down The Promenade all the time. (SP1, 185-199)

In this example A1, the most experienced service provider, stated how his experiences with the court system was productive and helped his homeless client. Fewer than half of the service providers discussed favorable experiences with the court system.

Supporting A1's comment, about half of the homeless participants mentioned having positive experiences with the court system. For example, in this next excerpt Manuel discusses his feelings about the differences within the criminal justice system.

I think, the cops are, the court system, for me it's worked well. They dismissed the cases if you have a good judge...They've not been lenient, they've been good...more understanding, they see the big picture, but the cops they don't...cops are...I don't know if it's because most of the time they don't have anything else to do. (HOM2, 308-316)

On the other hand, a smaller number of subjects discussed their negative experiences with the court system. Two examples are provided supporting this; the first is by Philip, a multi-racial homeless male, and the second from Chrissy, a service provider with seven years experience in the field. First Philip;

It was frustrating because, knowing from being in the court that it's your word against the cops and the judge always goes with the cops. That's what's very frustrating...It's a no win situation...it doesn't count at all...with the judge. (HOM5, 464-471)

This comment was the lone representation of frustration with the courts from the homeless participants. It was included because it demonstrates the frustration and anger some homeless people feel about being dismissed due to their status. This theme of being judged for being homeless appeared throughout Philip's interview. Chrissy is 1 of 2 service provider subjects who expressed their concern about the court system.

...it's just kind of ironic in that the county spent I think around \$700,000 to implement the homeless community court, which is fine, with the intention of connecting people to services, but are you people that coming to them or already connected to services...the reason they want to go to court is to expunge the tickets and the reason the court wants them to come is to get them connected to services. But in my opinion, it's just all a waste of money, if we weren't enforcing these things we wouldn't have to spend the \$700,000 on the homeless court and we could maybe develop long-term housing or something like that, it just seems sort of backwards like we're all spinning our heels... that's a lot of money to pay for a judge, they're paying for a psychiatrist, they're paying for law enforcement during that time and then they're expecting case managers to come with them and, I think it's every other Friday. And they make you come at noon, and then we sit around for two hours and then maybe you're the first or maybe you're the last with your client...just the amount of staff to have going to it, for something prior to the court we could write a letter to the

judge and explain that this person's engaging in services and...usually that ticket would have been expunged. (SP3, 326-343)

Chrissy's comment is evidence of service providers' multiple concerns about the court system and its (in)ability to effectively and efficiently help the homeless. She makes mention of a previous system, which may suggest prior positive experiences with the court system related to her homeless clients. While Philip's excerpt may reflect his frustration of being disregarded by society for being homeless, Chrissy's may convey a sense of frustration with the institutions set up to help the homeless. It seems that she may be questioning their intention and validity.

Police treatment of homeless: from brutal to benign

In this last section related to law enforcement, the themes presented are about police treatment of homeless individuals.

Scattered across the homeless subjects' interviews were a few examples of positive police interaction. However on the whole, negative police interaction was by far the more common theme, perhaps resulting in the near-universal negative perception of law enforcement. Perhaps this demonstrates the significance of negative interactions compared with positive ones. The following few excerpts support the majority theme of homeless participants regarding treatment by police for basic survival activities.

It's just so degrading, it's just, just cause you think that you, you don't own that cop car, you don't own that uniform, they belong to the city. It's just, you, the worst thing is, is that only because you're homeless you either an alcoholic, a drug addict, a liar, or a thief, or if you are associated with *Step Up*. Like I was given a statement for a really horrible accident, once the guy found out I was affiliated with *Step Up*, the guy stopped talking to me, the cop walked away. I guess people with mental illness issues they aren't credible for their variations of what they saw...For being mentally ill...I witnessed this guy commit suicide and...[the officer asked] 'well what's your address?' and I gave him this address, he's just

stopped writing and turned away and walked away, 'I need somebody...' and I was like, 'excuse me?' ...It was hurtful...It was just, degrading, it was just a very degrading....the way they treat you was very, was in a very degrading way. (HOM5, 329-352)

For this homeless participant, Philip, this comment demonstrates the destructive impact of negative interactions with police. Even though Philip was not discussing a specific ticket or a survival behavior, this excerpt was included because it highlights his feelings of dismissed both as a homeless, mentally ill person and a person of color. One can truly sense the humiliation Philip felt as a result of this interaction with police. Here Philip was offering to help after a tragic accident and the officer discredited his comment solely because of his status as a mentally ill, homeless, black male. Homeless individuals have often described feeling devalued and without a voice in society, perhaps these types of incidents help explain why.

This next excerpt is more indicative of the typical response the homeless sample gave about how police had treated them. This example was provided by Frank, a middle aged Caucasian male, who has been mostly homeless since he was 13. Sadly, Frank's life has been rife with trauma and suffering, both prior to and since becoming homeless.

It all depends on the cop, I mean generally, there's a couple that'll be...real decent about it, it's like, 'hey you can't be here' or whatever then you got the other ones that are just...want to come over and like, 'hey wake up!'...[They] try to make you go off, so they can do something...and that's the outlook they've got on it...[I want to be treated] with a little bit of dignity... (HOM6. 312-323)

Frank begins this discussion by mentioning that there are a few 'decent' officers out there, however it is clear that he has a general disdain for police and their intervention tactics. Like many of the homeless participants Frank mentioned how he felt the police tried to instigate him in order to justify a more punitive response. Considering Frank's

traumatic history and mental illness, these tactics are particularly concerning. While there is little debate about the traumatic impact of homelessness, Frank's experiences with police may actually exacerbate his trauma.

All of the interactions with police described by the homeless participants were not negative; in fact several benign and/or positive interactions were discussed as well. The following excerpt is representative of this theme in the findings. Here Ian describes an interaction with police over his sleeping in a businesses doorway.

...after I got that second ticket, in '94 I was back here in the alley behind this furniture store and up on Lincoln, the guy who was on 4th that I slept behind his store, he's over there on Lincoln so I started sleeping in his doorway and the cops woke me up one night and said, 'well we can't chase you out of here cause you're on private property, you're in his doorway' and so he said, 'but we're going to talk to him tomorrow to see if we can chase you out.' So they went and talked to him the next morning that night he, and the cops woke me up and they said, 'well we talked to him and he said, no we can't run you out of here, so you'll be safe here, just consider yourself as a guardian here' (laughs)...that was alright, I was glad the guy did that. The police, that was alright, that was alright, at least they talked, they did talk to me then civil...they didn't act like a criminal...they let me know they wasn't going to be bothering me. (HOM4, 513-524)

Ian was asked how he felt following this interaction with police, to which he replied, "a lot better" (HOM4, 526). These excerpts, and the corresponding themes, suggest that police have frequent, often negative, interactions with the homeless. Unexpected though, was the notion that police can have a positive influence on the homeless and their mental state. Although every homeless participant discussed having been treated negatively by police, half discussed at least one occasion when police treated them fairly and with respect. Based on the frequency in this sample, these positive interactions do not appear to happen frequently; however, when they do, they are

particularly important. Perhaps this is indicative of the positive impact police can have on the homeless community.

This next example is from Ian's interview. In this excerpt he is describing police interactions which resulted in two tickets for camping.

...but the cop says, 'don't worry about it, because we're not going to tell you move, to leave, we're going to tell you to go ahead and stay here, but anytime somebody calls on you, we'll have to come out and give you a ticket' and I said, 'okay.' And so they gave me a ticket then a month later, they came out again...and I was in the same location and then a month later they came out again and gave me another ticket. Somebody complained, so they gave me another ticket for camping out...It was behind a building in an alley...in Santa Monica, in an alley and the people that was upstairs, they knew I was there, and they didn't care if I stayed there, they'd already told me, they didn't care if I stayed there. So they wasn't the one's complaining but, you know the police are like well we got a complaint here...I was just sleeping in my sleeping bag... (HOM4, 128-144)

This theme, represented by this excerpt, is that police interaction does not necessarily have an affect; is essentially benign. In this excerpt, Ian discusses this incident in a very matter of fact manner, as if it was no big deal. The language he uses seems to imply a fairly civil encounter with police. Anyone who has received a ticket from police may have difficulty believing the casualness of the interaction between Ian and the officers.

Specially trained officers are more effective: The providers' perspective

As has been noted, all of the homeless participants discussed negative interactions with police, with 4 having mixed experiences. The service provider responses to this question were somewhat similar. The most common theme from the service provider sample regarding police treatment was about specialized police training. Incidentally, only 1 homeless participant mentioned specialized

police training. The excerpts supporting these themes follow. In the first example, Chrissy emphasizes the differences between general Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) officers and the ones on their Homeless Liaison Project (HLP) Team.

The HLP Team is specifically trained, however they might not always be the first people to respond to a situation...I'm trying to differentiate but, typically the homeless women that I've worked with have had a decent experience with the members one the HLP Team, however sometimes when police confront them that are not on the HLP Team or not particularly trained or sensitized to homeless issues, they maybe not had as much as a favorable experience....I think there's a noticeable difference and I think speaks to just relationship building, that the police on the HLP Team have a relationship with people that they run into. (SP3, 76-85)

Chrissy's statement about the HLP Team is an accurate representation of the service provider subjects' opinion of specialized police training. Three of the 5 service providers made specific references to the HLP Team and the other 2 made general references to specially trained officers. All of the service providers were in agreement that specialized officers treated their homeless clients with greater sensitivity and empathy. Chrissy's excerpt also suggests an improved relationship between HLP Team members and service providers. If, as Chrissy portends, that police intervention is aimed at connecting the homeless person with services, a positive relationship between police and the service providers is vital.

This next excerpt is included to support the general consensus among service providers about the differences between police officers. This excerpt is from Salma, a young woman who provides case management services for elderly homeless.

I guess it depends who you ask. For some officers that are sensitive to the issues of homeless people, they may have an awareness of what goes with some of these individuals whether it's substance abuse or mental health

or...any other I guess variety of issues that can be affecting them, and they'd be, they may sympathetic, they may be sensitive to the needs...that they're up against, but these are, I think a small percentage of officers that are actually trained to work with this population. Again I've experienced both...aspects of how officers treat homeless individuals...I've seen officers...harass people, I've seen officers manhandle mentally ill individuals that shouldn't be treated that way, but then again I've seen officers... (SP4, 250-257)

Salma's excerpt seems to suggest that she feels the officers who do not receive specialized training, cause the majority of homeless maltreatment. The other service providers' responses seem to support this notion. It is also important to note Salma's emphasis regarding the prevalence of mental illness within the homeless community. This statement may reflect her personal feeling that working with mentally ill homeless requires specialized training.

The police treat the homeless differently

The next theme presented was asserted by a majority of homeless subjects who felt that police treated them differently compared with the general population. All but 1 of the homeless participants felt such a difference existed. Meanwhile, 2 of the service providers discussed this issue. Three brief excerpts representing these varied themes are presented. The first is from Manuel.

...I don't like the fact that people, other people get away with the things we do and we get tickets...And clearly there's times where the cops are there present and people are crossing the street for example, with the light being red. These, this casual, just minor things. (HOM2, 241-244)

This excerpt was included to support the near consensus of homeless participants who feel that police treat them differently than they do non-homeless individuals. As this area was a popular tourist destination, several of the homeless subjects made references

to observing tourists getting away with the same things they are frequently harassed for, such as sitting and other “minor things.”

The next excerpt is from one of the 2 service providers who agreed that police treat homeless individuals differently compared to the general public. Since this theme was not a direct query in the interview, it is unclear how other providers would have felt about this issue. Only those who independently mentioned are included. It is important to note all but 1 homeless participant felt this was an important issue to bring up, especially considering it was not directly asked of them.

... it's a targeted population for drug dealers, because they know that a lot of people down there are high, or they're getting high, and money's readily available by whatever means, but I think a lot of people who get arrested for sleeping on the sidewalk, they could feel like, there's other people out there that need to be arrested for, arrested for something larger, right, because you know, like criminals out there who are raping people or doing other harm to people and they think, for the most part for what I've seen, that they shouldn't be arrested for sleeping on the sidewalk... (SP2, 157-162)

Ernie's example provided this analysis of the findings with a unique perspective and the only one that acknowledged how others prey on desperate homeless. Here, Ernie appears to suggest that, aside from the “criminal” homeless criminals who go unpunished, many homeless wonder why law enforcement targets them. Moreover, his statement implies that many homeless individuals break the law out of necessity – including substance use and other minor infractions – while those taking advantage of the homeless are not pursued more vigorously. In other words, his statement suggests that police focus on the easiest target, perhaps a homeless person using substances to cope with severe mental illness or trauma, instead of the criminals preying on them.

One homeless participant dissented from the others regarding fairness of treatment between police and the homeless community. Prior to this excerpt, the topic under discussion was the use of public bathrooms.

They've got bathrooms in the park, but you're not just supposed to like urinate in a bush. See that's just the thing, these are not laws that were just designed to just harass homeless people. They're public laws, but homeless people seem to think that they're entitled...and it's crazy... (HOM1, 393-395)

Taken at face value, Walter's statement seems to suggest that he sees little difference between police treatment of homeless and non-homeless individuals. Although this opinion is the only representation of its type in the data, others in the homeless community may also feel this way. Based on our knowledge of homelessness, these last two excerpts seem to suggest a, "blame the victim" mentality. For Walther, perhaps this can be likened to Ferenczi's (1980) classic psycho-analytic concept of identification with the aggressor; in this case oppressive police forces. This type of thinking is present throughout Walter's interview – as an astute reader may have noticed – in order to separate himself from other homeless individuals.

From tickets to jail, a short journey

An important category that arose was about the rapid escalation of minor tickets and misdemeanors into serious offenses. The common theme among those subjects who discussed it was of concern. This theme was one of a handful that all of the subjects who mentioned it were in agreement; both sample groups. This first excerpt is from Manuel, a 32 year old Mexican-American male with a history of substance dependency.

...in the daytime, sometimes...you take naps and people go read and what have you. If you're in the park and you have anything covering you, like a blanket, that has a blanket or coat or whatever, they'll give you a ticket.

So once that happens now if you have warrants from other minor things, then you'll go to jail. (HOM2, 254-257)

Manuel's statement is beautiful in its simplicity and is important because it succinctly summarizes the homeless participants' perspective of this issue. The straightforwardness of his statement seems to suggest that these types of incidents are a common occurrence and part of the culture of homelessness. Moreover, as the reader may be able to deduce, Manuel spoke in a flat tone, as if tired of fighting this injustice. Perhaps his statement comes from one of personal experience and capitulation. As mentioned, this was one of the few themes where all of the participants who mentioned it were in agreement. The following excerpts represent this theme among the service providers' subjects.

...but what I am seeing is a lot of people getting a lot of these tickets for being on the sidewalks, sleeping on the sidewalks or whatever, misdemeanor infractions that they're getting, and it becomes a legal issue and now it can turn into a warrant, and becomes bigger than this misdemeanor fine. So it can be damaging to you mentally behind that and financially and are you starting out with no income, or low income, you know or fixed income for survival...it's tough. (SP2, 239-243)

This excerpt was taken from a particularly rich section of Ernie's interview and parts of it are scattered across these findings. It was included because of its emphasis on the psychological impact of these minor tickets. Reading his explanation, one can see how a minor ticket can quickly become a major problem for homeless individuals. Ernie's statement also highlights the ludicrousness of expecting homeless individuals to financially prioritize infractions for sleeping over other expenses. The following statement of Roger's reiterates and expands on some of Ernie's concepts. Here Roger is discussing some things his homeless clients have been ticketed for.

[There are some] clients that come in that are visibly upset because they were just ticketed for sleeping on the beach, or for pushing a shopping cart, or what have you. We have a mailbox system here where we distribute mail to clients that, you know use this as an address and...on any given day you can look through any of the mail and there's just tons, of mail from court, from any of the local court houses, Santa Monica, or you know LA, that, that these tickets turn into warrants, because the homeless person wasn't able to get into the courthouse or maybe refused to or just didn't want to deal with it and they turned into warrants and they're notified by mail that they either have a court appearance, or that they have you know, an outstanding warrant because they didn't show up because they were ticketed for, some of these minor infractions. (SP4, 79-86)

Somewhat ironically, Roger makes a subtle reference to the requirement that homeless individuals have a mailing address to receive these quality of life tickets. It appears that not only are officers writing tickets for such things as sleeping, shopping carts, and other things, these tickets require processing by a multileveled criminal justice system. Several homeless participants and service providers discussed concerns about the amount of resources dedicated to this process. One ticket for sleeping could feasibly involve each element of the criminal justice system; from the officer writing the ticket, to the court apparatus processing them, to the jails and service providers handling the punishments.

Also note Roger's mention of homeless civil disobedience by refusing to pay these tickets. This theme, of civil disobedience, was the only representation among the service providers. Alternatively, several homeless individuals also discussed engaging in acts of civil disobedience. Here Ian explains why he does not pay his camping tickets.

...I just don't think it's right, I wasn't bothering nobody. I was in an alley, I wasn't out. If I was out sleeping in front of a business or something like that I could see it...Out of where people could see me and everything...[I] try to stay hidden a little bit and everything so I just figured now I'm not gonna pay it. (HOM4, 210-216)

Common among several homeless participants was this theme of engaging in civil disobedience. In Ian's case he is discussing his refusal to pay tickets received for camping. Interestingly, in the statement following this excerpt he mentioned how he had paid some open container tickets, but refused to pay tickets for camping. As a result these camping tickets had turned to warrant.

Frequency, place, and time

To help ascertain and clarify patterns police interaction with the homeless, data was collected on this topic. For comparison purposes the service providers' responses are presented as well. Due to the variability of data, all of the participants' responses are presented in tabular form. When appropriate, descriptive excerpts are also included.

This first table (4.1) contains data collected from questions regarding the frequency homeless individuals interact with police for engaging in illegal life sustaining activities.

Table 4.1

Frequency of Police Interaction of Life Sustaining Activities

<u>Homeless participants</u>		<u>Service providers</u>	
Name	Response	Name	Response
Walter	Shifts in personnel	Al	No response
Manuel	Infrequently	Ernie	Daily
Derek	Depends on area	Chrissy	Daily
Ian	Monthly	Roger	Daily
Philip	Infrequently	Salma	Depends
Frank	Infrequently		

As the data in Table 4.1 demonstrates, there is no consistency among or between each sample group. Excerpts are provided to clarify the range of responses. The first is from Derek’s interview.

Hollywood is almost everyday, but here is not that often, it happens every once in a great while. Once in a great while carries great magnitude though, because when the issue does like this hospital thing, it’s like way out. (HOM3, 369-371)

Derek is suggesting that while interaction with police is less frequent on the Westside, less does not necessarily mean better. It is unclear from this excerpt which way he prefers.

In this next excerpt, Salma, a service provider participant, explains how she understands frequency of police interaction.

...the client threw himself away doesn't get harassed ever by the police, he completely isolates, the other client who, yeah, he gets harassed all the time because he has cars that aren't in his name and their not registered and he doesn't have a license and he gets harassed all the time...it depends on the person, I think it really depends on the person, I think when you're targeted you're harassed often, and you're not... (SP5, 502-506)

Salma's remark suggests that the frequency of police interaction depends on the visibility or behaviors of the homeless person. She also seems to be implying that the homeless individual is partially responsible for their frequency of police interaction.

The following remark is from Ernie and explains why homeless individuals frequently interact with the police and security guards.

Well, for the area that I worked in, they had BID, which was part of the business district security guard, that was working basically 7 days a week, they had another team that was working in the fashion district, that was a security company that patrolled, so they had those people patrolling... (SP2, 372-374)

Ernie is the only service provider who discussed the private security forces patrolling business and commercial areas; to monitor and disrupt homeless activities.

Table 4.2 contains data collected from questions about the areas homeless individuals frequently interact with police due to illegal life sustaining activities.

Table 4.2

Common Areas of Police Interaction for Survival Crimes

<u>Name</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Response</u>
Walter	Varies	Al	Responses to community complaints
Manuel	Parks	Ernie	Varies
Derek	Parks	Chrissy	Intentionally unpredictable
Ian	Residential, tourist areas, alleys	Roger	Tourist areas
Philip	Beaches	Salma	Beaches, areas near service providers
Frank	Parks, alleys		

The homeless participants' responses suggest the theme that most police interaction occurs in public areas where many people congregate. There do not seem to be any consistent themes among the service providers' responses, though two did concur with the majority of homeless participants. It may be important to note that, in this category, three service providers did not agree with the rest of the sample.

Derek's response to this query is typical of the homeless participants;

...in Hollywood it was definitely in the day time so they were around the parks. It was definitely in the daytime, man they would come and hit all

the parks and you didn't know what parks they were going to that day. And they would bust raids on these parks, homeless raids. (HOM3, 383-385)

Table 4.3 contains a summary of the data collected regarding certain times of police interaction for homeless individuals' survival activities.

Table 4.3

Times of Interaction Between Police and Homeless

<u>Name</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Response</u>
Walter	Fridays	Al	Mornings, holidays, tourist season
Manuel	Night	Ernie	Mornings, holiday weekends
Derek	Daytime	Chrissy	Varies
Ian	Night, holidays, tourist season	Roger	Holidays, community complaints
Philip	Mornings	Salma	Night
Frank	Holidays, varies		

As can be ascertained from Table 4.3, no dominant themes emerge from either participant group. The most common response, from both sample groups, suggests that there is increased police activity during holidays. The following two excerpts discuss the influence holidays have on police enforcement.

...over the course of a day, I don't think...there's much difference at what time they're actually trying to...enforce certain laws, but in terms of certain seasons or certain times of the year, there's definitely an increase in sweeps during... Christmas season at *The Promenade* or, 4th of July weekend at Venice Beach, that sort of thing. (SP4, 387-390)

In this preceding excerpt Roger appears to be suggesting that police enforcement increases during holidays to minimize the visibility of homeless individuals to visitors.

In the next excerpt, Walter discusses why he lays low on Fridays.

Friday's are the bust days because they, um you don't get to court until Monday and the city makes money off you being in jail, so the longer they keep you in jail the more money they get so, they're a little bit more tougher on Fridays because they know they're going to be able to house you all weekend long so I try to stay out of the way on Friday's because I don't want to be in jail all weekend long. (HOM1, 500-503)

Both of these excerpts demonstrate the variability of responses to these queries. Perhaps the lack of consensus to these questions represents the pervasiveness of police presence in conjunction with the uniqueness of individual experiences.

Understanding Anti-Homeless Laws

As part of the interview guide, both sample groups were asked why they thought laws criminalizing life sustaining activities were created. Themes from the two sample groups will be contrasted and differences and/or similarities will be highlighted. The themes presented are organized from most to least common and each one is thoroughly explained. Please note that most of the participants from both sample groups discussed multiple reasons.

Gentrification of urban spaces

These first theme presented comes from those who felt residents and business interests are influence the creation of anti-homeless laws. This first excerpt is from

Derek who is responding to a direct question about this topic. Three homeless participants (out of 6) and 4 (out of 5) service provider participants felt this was a reason these laws existed.

Because the people in the community are pushing the police to do that...they have a general view or a label or a stereotype to throw on somebody when they walk by just like the police do. And they program the police to be in that mode. People of the office or whatever you want to call it or City Hall or whatever... (HOM3, 278-282)

In this brief comment, Derek seems to be saying that the laws impacting homeless are created by legislators responding to resident complaints. The sole police function meanwhile, is the enforcement of these laws. The reader may also sense that Derek feels judged by community residents because of his homeless status. Like several homeless participants, feeling judged by community members based on homeless stereotypes was evident throughout Derek's interview.

This next excerpt is from Chrissy, a service provider participant. During this part of the interview, Chrissy's tone became increasingly passionate and she became unable to conceal her frustration.

I think it makes some community members feel like something's happening, so I think...if the police are acting a certain way then maybe a city council can go up and say, well look at what our city's doing, our police enforce these laws, look at how we're, and...that appeases some people, but I think...it's just political weakness, really....really strong stereotypes are held about homeless people that there's a lot of fear...and there are examples of homeless individuals who are violent, but I think there's just as many examples of housed people that are violent, and should probably be arrested and whatnot...I just think the stereotypes are such a struggle and people...honestly I just think it's...an easy way to make it look like you're actually doing something, you know police can move 50 people off of a corner and all of a sudden it looks like homelessness went away, and so your tourists can be a little bit more comfortable in your city and the business members... (SP3, 195-211)

This particular excerpt was chosen over several similar ones partially because of the passion from which it was expressed. Hopefully this transcends printed words.

Chrissy's statement seems to suggest tremendous frustration with the injustices committed by the political and social systems dictating governmental policy against the homeless. Furthermore, Chrissy's comment suggests much anger towards politicians who manipulate the stereotypes and fears of homelessness, mental illness, and race for their personal benefit. As much as Chrissy appears to blame political showmanship for this, her comments also suggest community-wide culpability; that community members are culpable for their role and ignorance of these social issues.

This next excerpt is from Roger, a homeless outreach worker. Roger's comment reflects his opinion of why these laws exist and the differences in levels of enforcement.

...it usually comes from complaints from neighbors, that feel it to be an eyesore in their community...they're the ones that are calling to complain...it's neighbors, neighbors that complain about people living in their vehicles...And the police come to respond and...that is their duty to respond to the calls, whether it's actually helping...the person that made the call, probably because they want them out of there, are they a danger to somebody? (SP4, 153-160)

In Roger's mind, these laws exist because of community pressure to exclude homeless from their area, not because the community members really believe the homeless person is a danger. It also appears that Roger feels residents do not consider that homeless individuals are part of the community, even though some may have lived in the same area their entire life. This idea that homeless individuals are not considered part of the community may contribute, as evidenced by Philip's earlier excerpt, to one's feelings of being dismissed. This excerpt has elements of spatial exclusion, but was included in this section because of its emphasis on community influence.

Anti-homeless laws ensure safety and public health

Several participants felt that these types of laws are created to maintain safety and public health. Of the respondents, 3 homeless participants (out of 6) and 2 service providers (out of 5) discussed this theme. Three excerpts, 2 homeless and 1 service provider, are presented to support this theme.

The first excerpt comes from Ian, the eldest homeless participant. Prior to this excerpt, Ian was asked why he thought the laws that outlaw such life sustaining activities exist.

I can see why they do it, but to an extent I can't, you know? Like on the beach and stuff like that, I can't see them passing it...Or in parks...but to an extent, I can't see that, but I can understand why they do it. Because if they didn't do it you wouldn't be able to go down there....cause even walking down the alleys, I mean you can't stand to walk down the alleys...Cause of the smell and everything. Cause people just don't take care of themselves. I always do, but there's just people that just don't...where I sleep at, I clean it, I get up in the morning, I clean up after myself when I get up in the morning...any papers or anything there. I clean up and put them in the trash, people won't even do that...They just don't care...they'll take cardboard and lay down to lay on and then they'll get up and they'll leave the cardboard right there and walk away...if I use the cardboard I'll pick it up and put it somewhere...by a dumpster or something. There's a lot of people that won't even do that...No, they don't take care of, if they've got to go the bathroom, they'll just get up and go the bathroom, they don't care...don't even walk away...from where they're sleeping at...there's a lot of people that way. (HOM4, 253-272)

In this example, Ian's ambivalence towards these laws is obvious. Although he appears to generally disagree with them, his response also is an attempt to understand why they exist in the first place. Ian seems to suggest that these types of laws exist because public places need to be kept clean and many homeless individuals do not clean up after or take care of themselves. Additionally, similar to Walter perhaps, Ian desires

separation from other homeless individuals. In fact, this theme was common theme among all of the homeless participants. On a slightly related note, another common theme among the homeless participants, implied in Ian's quotation, was the inability to empathize with other homeless. Again this could be attributable to a "blame the victim" mentality or could be related to a difficulty empathizing with issues too closely related to one's own. Regardless the result is the same.

This next quote, provided by Walter, contains elements of two themes. The first theme contains Walter's opinion of why these types of laws exist while the second illustrates his difficulty empathizing with other homeless' problems and concerns. Although not the only homeless participant to express these feelings, he is the harshest. In this example, Walter is making a reference to the cliffs separating the commercial/tourist areas of Santa Monica, CA and the Pacific Ocean. Below the bluffs, between the ocean and the commercial/tourist areas, is the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH).

...especially on the bluffs, you have these morons that are sleeping on the bluffs and then roll off...And then bump he's the edge. Or an earthquake would happen, or rains would come and they'd be washed down onto PCH. So the bluffs got x'd out...a lot of the other part of that is if you let them start camping in the parks, and we're talking about camping now, some people do not want to go anywhere during the day. They're unmotivated so they're just going to lay in that park all day long, their trash is going to accumulate....Where are they going to go the bathroom, and...it's one of these incidents, have you ever heard of the phrase, the slippery slope? (HOM1, 240-247)

Throughout his interview, it was difficult keeping Walter focused on discussing his perspective, perhaps this enabled him discuss these issues while remaining relevant to the study. In this response, Walter appears to indicate that such laws exist to keep homeless individuals from engaging in activities that are unsafe for them. The last two

excerpts both cite public safety and health reasons; however Walter's suggests a more patriarchal view of these laws than Ian's. Walter seems to be implying that homeless people need to be protected from themselves and their poor decisions. As Walter also sees it, these laws are there protect non-homeless members of society from the homeless.

Salma was one of 2 service providers to discuss this theme. This excerpt represents the service providers' view of this theme.

I think that somebody who wrote the law would say that, it's created for safety, for that person's safety, because humans are not meant to be sleeping in cars, or sleeping outside, it's not meant for human habitation, right...you've heard that phrase before, this place's not meant for human habitation, so I think those things are done to prevent people from endangering themselves, but it's like creating a law against suicide...are you going to jail someone for trying to slit their wrists, it's crazy....I haven't really thought about whether I think things should be legal or illegal, I don't have time, I feel like I don't have time almost to like think, it just is... (SP5, 373-379)

An initial review of Salma's statement suggests a strong ambivalence about why she thinks life sustaining activities are criminalized. Even though this excerpt was not the most obvious statement of this theme from the service provider group; it was included because of her provocative statement at the end of the excerpt. In the final sentence, Salma admits to not thinking about these issues much, mainly because she does not have the time. Is she suggesting that she has not thought about these issues because of personal reasons or because she is overworked? Perhaps this is an expression of her frustration about being overworked. Regardless it is unclear how other providers ponder these questions.

Spatial exclusion

A few of the participants felt that these types of laws are created to exclude homeless individuals from certain areas of public spaces.

Frank provides the first example of this theme. His response comes directly from the associated question.

...the way it was explained to me, the smoking on *The Promenade* was basically aimed towards us more than anyone else, because they figure if you can't smoke in Santa Monica, on the street, where a good percentage of the homeless are smokers...Then they'd go someplace else, and, it really didn't work, that and you've got LA bussing 'em down here and now from what I understand they're just trying to chase 'em back up to LA...[to] get rid of people. (HOM6, 358-365)

Using this excerpt as an example, Frank appears to be intimating that universal laws are created with the intention of specifically targeting the homeless community. Applicable literature contains many references to this type of criminalization. Additionally, Frank seems to be suggesting that universal laws are passed to force homeless individuals from certain spaces. The area that Frank is referring to, *The Promenade*, is a public walking street/outdoor mall four blocks from the Pacific Ocean. Incidentally, in the last few decades, corresponding to a rise in anti-homeless ordinances, The Promenade has experienced unprecedented retail growth on the way to becoming a popular tourist destination.

Representing the service provider sample for this theme is A1. Here A1 provides his succinct opinion about what a homeless individual's perspective may be.

Well they kind of look at an excuse for them to be excluded from using the parks and the bathrooms and The Promenade, you know just sitting there. (SP1, 106-107)

In this excerpt, Al seems to suggest that homeless individuals would say they are excluded from public spaces for just being there. His use of the word “excuse” perhaps indicates the contemptuous view the homeless community has towards these restrictions. For some, this excerpt may imply that spatial exclusion laws are universal ordinances, but through targeted enforcement the homeless community is singled out. Al’s comment may help explain why many view these laws as an “excuse” to exclude homeless individuals from public spaces.

Police are required to meet artificial quotas

Although not specifically a reason why these anti-homeless laws exist, the next theme presented concerns issues of police quotas. Two homeless subjects and 1 service provider discussed police quotas related to homeless ticketing. One excerpt from each sample group is included to support this theme. Excerpts are provided by Philip and Ernie, respectively.

...they have a quota...They do have a quota, all, I know this from my father, my father told me, they all have a quota, there’s a certain amount of tickets each cop needs to write, they all have quotas they need to make....Cause that’s money that’s being generated for the city....Because those are easy tickets to write. (HOM5, 484-491)

And here is Ernie’s perspective of this issue.

I think all law enforcement agencies have a quota...and they’ve got a quota of the amount of people they’ve got to arrest and it becomes again a money issue where they got to show that they’ve been productive, so I’d say...[it’s measured by] arrests and the amount of people who go to jail. (SP2, 407-411)

Both of these respondents suggest that there is an economic motivation to these tickets. Philip’s concluding sentence implies that the homeless are particularly prone to receive quota-related tickets because it is easy to write a ticket for a homeless person, one

who is sleeping for example. He almost seems to be saying that officers seek out homeless individuals to ticket as an easy way to meet their quotas. Perhaps homeless individuals represent an easy target because of their visibility and the improbability that they will fight these tickets.

Using the homeless as bait to trap more serious offenders

Although the final theme from this category was only mentioned by 1 participant, a service provider, if true, is important to include in these findings. In the following excerpt Ernie discusses the police perspective towards anti-homeless ordinances.

...one ploy that they've been using, from what I've seen they said they're not really doing it to get the homeless. They're trying to catch the people who are preying on the homeless, with different drugs, the ones that are drug dealers go to the homeless, or homeless in downtown area, or different areas and because they can have them sell it for, rather than them sell it to them directly they're using them as a mule basically...But the police said they're trying to catch those people, rather than catch the ones that are sleeping on the sidewalk, but once you start saying, 'I'm going to catch you for sleeping on the sidewalk,' without putting in place housing and your option is limited housing, cause you're not increasing the amount of shelters out there or housing, to put the people into, it's like a revolving door. You see people come in for, being arrested for sleeping on the sidewalk, they go to jail for 2 – 3 days and you're back on the street and then get arrested again for the same thing, paraphernalia...So they go back in to the same, back into the same, back in jail every couple of weeks.
(SP2, 99-112)

Ernie's attempt to convey law enforcement's perspective on these types of laws appears in good faith. His comment seems to suggest that the police consider some homeless individuals victims and they are really targeting the, "criminals" who prey on the homeless. However, Ernie does seem to imply some skepticism of the police's genuineness due to the high rate of recidivism and the fact that adequate support services are not provided.

Homeless awareness of laws varies, providers perceive less awareness

This next category of responses is from queries attempting to ascertain homeless individuals' knowledge of the laws that make some life sustaining activities illegal. The information contained in Table 4.4 was collected to further narrow and clarify the impact these types of laws have on homeless individuals.

Table 4.4

Subjects' Knowledge of Laws Impacting the Homeless

Homeless Participants		Service Providers	
<u>Aware</u>	<u>Unaware</u>	<u>Aware</u>	<u>Unaware</u>
2	3	1	3
1 No Answer		1 No Answer	

The data in Table 4.4 seems to suggest that the homeless participants are almost equally split regarding their knowledge of these laws. Alternatively, a majority of the service providers' sampled seem to feel that most homeless individuals are unaware of the laws they are breaking. Due to the small sample size and lack of consensus, this data is not relevant beyond this sample. Also, please note that 1 participant from each sample group did not answer this query.

The Negative Impact of Law Enforcement

This next category of the findings presents themes regarding the impact criminalizing basic survival activities has on a typical homeless persons' mental state(s). The excerpts comprising this category are grouped into themes based on the responses

from interviews of both sample groups. These responses are compiled from several queries across the interview guide.

Criminalization of self: I am / I am not a criminal

To understand how homeless individuals might have felt prior to police interaction for a life sustaining activity, both sample groups were asked for their perspective. The homeless participants were asked about their personal feelings, the service providers were asked about their perception of the homeless community.

On the whole, both sample groups generally agreed that homeless individuals do not feel like criminals prior to police interaction for survival activities. The following excerpt supports this theme. This one is courtesy of Derek, a young man battling with depression and substance dependency.

No, not really, I don't really ever tend to feel like that. I didn't feel like a criminal then either, it just made me feel kind of even worse than I already was feeling. (HOM3, 179-180)

Derek's response to this query was typical of the homeless participants interviewed. It is important to note that while interactions with police may not have made him feel like a criminal, his response suggests that they increased his depressive symptoms.

Of the provider respondents only 1 felt homeless individuals may feel like a criminal prior to police intervention.

...it goes so much in tandem with mental illness...I think that if you're really [an] ill individual, then you're gonna feel more...you're gonna feel like a criminal, they're telling me I am a criminal, I'm just a criminal... I'm just a low-life, and they get, and they're being sarcastic, but I think they believe it too...On one level...I think that like, not to be cheesy...but I think that stuff sinks in, if you're told that year after year after year and you're homeless year after year after year, that wears on you no matter

what kind of front you put up...I think that your little soul gets crushed somewhere in there...I think it's the same thing [as DV] the same reaction that happens...I think it's gonna depend on the person's history, I have found a lot of homeless people have had sexual abuse in their past, so you're already thinking it's your fault, whatever it is, whether it wasn't or it was ...You're already blaming yourself. (S5, 276-294)

Even though a significant portion of homeless are mentally ill and/or have traumatic histories, only a small portion of the service providers discussed its impact at length. This response was included, even though it is clearly the minority opinion across both sets of participants, solely because of the emphasis on mental illness. Particularly important to note is Salma's comparison of police oppression to domestic violence (DV) relationships. She seems to be suggesting that the cumulative impact of oppressive, derogatory social forces eventually wears down even the strongest individuals. For instance, Barnett & La Violette (1993) emphasized that there is no typical description of domestic violence victims and strong, educated individuals have fallen victim to violent, oppressive abusers. Moreover, her assertion that mental illness may compound these factors implies that mentally ill homeless may be particularly at-risk.

A related query asked participants if homeless individuals feel like criminals after interacting with police for survival activities. The majority theme among both groups was that they do not typically feel like criminals in these situations. All but 3, of both sample group respondents, felt these interactions would not impact ones' sense of criminality, even though these activities are illegal. Dissenting from the majority, 2 homeless participants stated that they felt more like criminals because of police intervention for survival activities. Alternatively, 2 service providers felt this would depend on the individual. Three excerpts are included in support of these themes.

...I didn't feel like a criminal after or before, because I know I didn't do nothing wrong...I know I wasn't doing anything wrong, I know I don't go out there and do that kind of stuff, so...The way they project it and the way they write it down on paper, it's pretty bad. (HOM3, 179-188)

Derek's statement is a typical example of the theme that homeless individuals do not feel like criminals after police intervention for survival activities. The preceding excerpt is powerful for its repetition and defensive positioning. Derek seems to be very angry about being cast as a criminal and passionately rejects being given that label. This is most obvious in the excerpt's concluding sentence.

The majority of service providers also support this theme; the excerpt supporting this was spoken by Al.

No they don't feel like they're criminals, there is an element of the homeless population that are criminals and they know they're criminals and they know they're criminals and it's just a way of life for them. (SP1, 81-82)

His response suggests that there are members of the homeless community who feel like criminals and that there are different types of crime. Unfortunately, Al did not discuss how the criminal element of the homeless community is differentiated.

It is important to note that several homeless participants and service providers differentiated between types of crime and criminality. The preceding selection is representative of that theme in the data.

I think people kind of make the distinction that even though technically it's a law on the books, it doesn't, what harm are you really causing...I've never heard a woman ever just say she feels like she's a criminal...it just seems, and this is my opinion coming out, but it, they seem so absurd, these citations seem so absurd! I don't think that one would walk out going, 'oh I must be a criminal,' not with the negative implications that come with that. They might walk out not feeling any better about themselves or that the system's there to help them. (SP4, 131-147)

In this excerpt, Chrissy is speaking from her experiences working with homeless women. Her final thought, regarding the psychological impact of these interactions with police, mirrors a prior excerpt of Derek's.

In this next passage, Manuel explains how he feels about being criminalized. His statement represents the theme that police interaction for life sustaining activities can cause some homeless to feel like criminals.

...yeah definitely, I do feel like a criminal, yeah it's like I said before, heavy into drugs. I wasn't like...your perfect neighborhood kid...I wasn't doing like illegal activity, in the sense of like violence or burglary or anything like that, but now it's like...I've had a bunch of tickets now to jail...it's like now, for example say I want to get a job, and I mean my record might be, I might be a problem...And sometimes like you're in public and they're harassing you for example and everybody's just watching there...it's not a good feeling at all. (HOM2, 292-304)

Here Manuel discusses that even though he engaged criminal activity prior to being homeless, he did not feel like a criminal until becoming homeless. Clearly these types of interactions are humiliating for him. Additionally, he expresses concern about his ability to procure employment because of his criminal record. It seems that Manuel received some tickets, let them escalate, and ended up with a criminal record. Now these minor tickets have become, as it seems he is suggesting, another roadblock to getting off the streets.

Of the service providers, 2 dissented from the majority opinion and felt that homeless individuals may feel like criminals following police interaction depending on their mental state and personal experiences. The following passage is from Roger's interview.

I think that's...an individual perspective in terms of how that individual may feel...sometimes people are visibly upset because they received a ticket for pushing a shopping cart or sleeping on the beach. (SP4, 200-202)

From this statement, we may be able to extrapolate Roger's attempt at understanding the uniqueness of the homeless experience. For Roger, the impact of these types of laws and police interaction impact depends on the individual receiving the ticket. Although this is not a definitive answer to this question, it does raise the important point about individual perspectives and mental states. Expanding upon Roger's comment, on any given day, the same individual could experience these incidents differently.

Homeless perception of non-homeless unchanged by anti-homeless laws

Another query asked the participants about the impact these laws have on homeless individuals' interactions with non-homeless individuals. Perhaps a correlation can be made to service use, if the impact is severe enough. In this category, several themes were present; however there was no consensus apparent in either sample group. The competing themes are presented instead.

Of the direct queries put forth, 3 homeless participants stated that these laws did not impact their perceptions, interactions, or relationships with non-homeless individuals. Here Derek's discusses this theme.

...not about...it changes just about the people in general. Not about whether they have homes or not, what kind of, these people or where there personalities are coming from...for the fact that they're homeless or not [is irrelevant]... (HOM3, 329-331)

In this selection, Derek's anger and frustration about being homeless appears to have significantly impacted his view of all people, homeless or not. Even though being homeless has jaded his view of others, Derek maintains that he does not judge people

based on their status. This type of response was fairly typical among the homeless participants regarding non-homeless individuals.

This theme was present in 2 of the service providers' interviews. These 2 service providers felt that these laws, or their enforcement, would have no effect on homeless individuals' feelings towards the non-homeless.

...I think most people, except if somebody's got some twisted drugs, or they're pretty psychotic, they may do something outrageous, or if they might be having just a really nasty day, where they think everybody's against them, and you may something that may trigger them, or you may look like somebody who did something (laughs)...it depends...but for the most part I would say no, most people, they wouldn't harm unless, they feel they feel they've been harmed themselves... (SP2, 315-322)

This preceding statement is pretty clear evidence that Ernie feels these laws do not have much impact on homeless views of non-homeless unless extraneous circumstances exist. It may be important to note that the 2 service providers supporting this theme responded to this query in a confident and matter of fact manner.

The majority of service providers agreed that the impact of these types of laws and police interaction on homeless individuals depended on the homeless person. They also agreed that at least some impact was probable. Of the service provider sample group, this theme was the most common.

Maybe, probably...it might prevent...if a homeless individual wanted to spend the day in the park, they'd have to deal with, they might have to be looking over their shoulder all the time, whereas if I wanted to spend the day in the park, I'd never think about police approaching me, it creates another kind of layer to just being...it might prevent them from interacting with people. Probably more times than not it prevents interaction and creates more isolation. (SP3, 256-266)

As Chrissy begins her response, she appeared to express some initial uncertainty, but then went on to explain her perspective. First she acknowledges the

differences between her and a homeless person's ability to freely use public spaces, in this case "the park." These differences in treatment and intimidation by police may cause homeless to become increasingly isolated and alienated from the general public. Within her response, we also see an attempt to empathize with her clients even though, as a non-homeless member of a society, she enjoys basic privileges not afforded to them.

Homeless perception of personal invisibility

Two of the service provider subjects contributed this category's the next theme from a slightly different vantage point; that homeless individuals are generally invisible anyways. In the following excerpt, Roger explains why he thinks this is the case.

Well, I think with my experience it has been, that sometimes, people that are homeless and non-homeless don't interact very frequently....How many times have you noticed a homeless individual and they're kind of invisible? People walk right by them, whether they're panhandling or just sitting there, how many times do people stop and offer them something to eat or...a handout or whatever, most of the time they're invisible, so I don't know if there's any real interaction between homeless and non-homeless. (SP4, 347-352)

This excerpt is very revealing about the place Roger feels homeless individuals occupy in our society. Roger's comment suggests a dreary portrait of the indifference our society has towards the homeless. He seems to be saying, 'these laws have no effect, because that is just how it is to be homeless.'

Two subjects, 1 from each sample group, supported the notion that these laws impact homeless individuals' interactions with the non-homeless, but a direct quotation was not included because they are solely affirmative statements containing no additional meaning.

The impact on sense of self varies from being harmful to non-harmful according to the experiences of different subjects

One intent of this study was to determine how being treated like a criminal for basic survival activities impacted homeless individuals' sense of self. To acquire this information, several questions were asked on this subject. The findings from these questions were synthesized together and the themes extracted. Essentially two contradicting themes emerged as dominant; meaning that almost half felt these laws do have an impact and half saying they do not. Alternatively, 2 service providers' statements comprised a third, minor theme. They agreed that level of impact depends on the individuals' history and mental status.

Since there was no general consensus about the impact these laws and their enforcement has on homeless individuals' sense of self, relevant excerpts from each theme will be presented. The first excerpts are from those who felt that no impact existed.

The following selections supports theme that laws prohibiting basic survival behaviors have no effect on homeless individuals' sense of self. Al provides us with the first example of this finding.

Once again it's that frustration, because they have no choice or no other alternative where they're going to sleep, most of them are up all night long for safety reasons, and during the daytime they're in the parks or on the beach and they get ticketed for that because they have no other place to go...they're doing it for survival, so it's not going to change anything. They're resilient in what they do to survive. If it's selling drugs, or selling themselves...They can't think of anything else to do at the time and the situation presents itself where here it is. (SP1, 74-182)

In these few short sentences Al seems able to convey the power of human resiliency and ability to survive in horrific environments. He seems to be suggesting that these kinds of activities are part of the culture of homelessness and the least of one's worries is police harassment. Perhaps his pragmatism comes from the fact that these types of behaviors are unavoidable.

This next excerpt is from Salma, a case manager for elderly homeless.

Again I think it's so hard to, it's like really hard to make generalizations cause I think it really depends on like how high functioning that person is and the mental illness, I think mental illness plays, plays such a huge part...I used to work with this one women who had had a certain shady dealings in her past, but for the most part was trying, trying to do her thing, but she'd get a little aggressive sometimes, and you know occasionally the landlord had to be called or something...there'd be little incidents, she'd be like, well, 'I'm just a thug anyway,' ...it's just like, she's already there and even though you'd be like 15 years out of it, she's still just a thug... (SP5, 304-311)

Salma's statement reflects the same theme as Al; that these laws have no impact on how homeless individuals view themselves. Both excerpts essentially describe the same thing; that life on the streets is hard enough and enforcement of these laws probably does not cause much additional damage. In her example, she feels that interactions with police, over activities like sleeping, would unlikely have any serious impact on her clients' sense of self. Moreover, she seems to be suggesting that one's sense of self is established over the course of our lives and is probably not significantly impacted by these types of city ordinances. Also note that again Salma mentions the influence of mental illness in her explanation.

Several homeless participants' discussion was of a similar theme. The following two excerpts are included to support this. This first selection is told by Manuel.

...I'm always going to do this civil disobedience...I've been fighting as an indigenous person, just as a human, you know, just being a human... (HOM2, 414-418)

And this next excerpt is from Philip.

I've not lost my taste, I've not lost my standards, I've and I've told myself just because I'm in the situation does not mean I've...I don't eat bologna, I don't eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, I don't. I eat out every night, I go to the movies when I want to, I buy whatever I want. I don't go to clothing closets. I don't go to handouts for food. I'm self sustained. Except for I don't have an apartment. (HOM5, 395-398)

Both of these excerpts convey their virile sense of self. They also suggest intense anger and frustration with the oppressive forces at work against them.

Alternatively, the rest of the participants – comprised of about half of both sample groups – were in agreement that these types of laws do have an impact on homeless individuals' sense of self. Excerpts from each sample group are included to support this theme.

The first selections are from Chrissy and Ernie, respectively; both are service providers. Combined these excerpts capture the general consensus of those service providers who feel that these laws and their enforcement do have an impact on how homeless individuals view themselves.

I think the psychological impact feed[s] into, I mean, homeless people tend to feel already ostracized, already shamed and stigmatized because they don't have a home, and then, to be cited for things that are essentially out of their control, just feeds into that, that it just systematizes the notion that it's, that society's saying, 'we don't care that you're homeless.' That we've then created this whole criminal system in order to criminalize your

life, and I imagine it's just so dehumanizing and I think it just must add to all the other factors that make it hard to have a high self-esteem when you're homeless. (SP3, 99-104)

Throughout her interview Chrissy's passion and empathy for the homeless community is readily apparent. This selection is no different. Her statement is suggestive of the severe psychological impact of criminalizing survival. In contrast with the preceding excerpts, Chrissy appears to be saying that these other damaging aspects of homelessness do not deaden homeless people to the intensity of impact, they enhance it. The next quotation, taken from Ernie's interview reiterates her assertion.

...that has to hurt somebody's self esteem, by being arrested and you're dead asleep, you get shaken up and woken up and say, 'Hey, you're not really hurting anybody, you're not really trying to do anything criminally to get arrested, but because you're sleeping, and you have no home'...because people can change the laws to make the laws fit into certain things, because not all laws are set equally, and if somebody doesn't have a voice to speak up for somebody, they can make a law for anything...So I think it does hurt somebody's self esteem... (SP2, 219-236)

Both of these excerpts were chosen because of their discussion of self-esteem factors, an essential component of maintaining a healthy sense of self. They seem to imply that these types of laws are damaging to homeless individuals' self-esteem in addition to the other difficulties of street life. As Ernie notes, in the end all a homeless person is trying to do is sleep, yet they are constantly harassed for unintentional, and obviously unavoidable, behaviors.

The array of feelings in the data conjured up by this question are many, and as such only a small sample of the data can be included. Also, the volume of data supporting this theme is much larger than the data not supporting it. Although the volume of data is larger, this does not necessarily mean one is more generalizable than

the other. The following excerpts encompass the range of feelings of the homeless participants related to this theme.

In this first selection, Frank discusses his feelings about being subjected to police intervention for sleeping.

It's more humiliating, hurtful, hurtful, it hurts to have to be out there in the first place and then have somebody come along and wake you up, 'you can't be here, move!'...especially if somebody's around watching it, it was just humiliating period. (HOM6, 274-279)

Here Frank is discussing the humiliation of being kicked out of an area for sleeping. His explanation in the following excerpt mirrors many of the homeless participants'.

...I mean if you gotta sleep you gotta sleep, I've climbed up behind a dumpster more than once, especially in this area....you got to do what you got to do... (HOM6, 350-353)

Combining these two excerpts, we clearly see that, outwardly Frank has a pragmatic attitude towards police interaction for basic survival behaviors, but his psychological well-being has clearly been impacted. In Frank's case, feelings of humiliation and shame. This was a fairly common reaction in this theme. Perhaps many homeless, as suggested by the following excerpt, one's mental state at the time of the police intervention can shape the level of impact. Again, Frank supplies the supporting citation.

...it might if I was depressed and probably enough to really drag me down for the rest of the day... (HOM6, 667-668)

Several homeless participants also expressed their anger at these laws. The supporting statement for this theme is from Derek's interview.

Frustrated, they're treating animals probably better...It's getting worse and worse I feel towards homeless people...it used to be easier, now it's harder... (HOM3, 268-272)

Here Derek discusses his anger about the inhumane treatment homeless people are subjected to. In addition to the noticeable anger in his statement, one can also sense his feelings of dehumanization and hopelessness.

A few service providers also mentioned homeless individuals' anger towards these injustices. Although anger is typically seen as reaction emotion, it may be indicative of deeper psychological damage and the excerpt was included for that reason (Berzoff, Hertz, & Flanagan, 2004). Here Ernie discusses this theme.

...they're pretty pissed off, from what I've seen a lot of them, a lot of people who get arrested for sleeping on the sidewalk, they verbalize that they are pretty upset, that, 'why am I being arrested for the simple, trying, trying to get some sleep,' knowing that there's not enough housing out there, so they what they do is they become (inaudible) they get a chance for shelter and cardboard and they sleep on the sidewalk, so now, the city (inaudible) get wise and say, 'you know what it's okay when you sleep on the sidewalk between the hours of, what's that 9pm and 6am, but if you sleep longer than that we're going to arrest you.' So still it's legal but it's not legal, it's a grey area where we're going (inaudible) because we don't really want to see in the morning, interrupting people's businesses, and they get pretty upset behind it because a lot of people say, 'you know what it's a free county, I can't sleep, where I want to sleep on the sidewalk.' And they get pretty upset because they see all this other criminal stuff going on in the neighborhood... (SP2, 177-187)

Here Ernie seems to be suggesting homeless individuals' anger comes from a sense of injustice towards the criminalization of sleeping, for example. Also, implied in his statement, is the acknowledgement that homeless individuals engage in acts of civil disobedience homeless to combat these injustices. Recall that in a previous excerpt Manuel discussed supporting homeless rights by engaging in acts of civil disobedience.

The final quotation in this section addresses the sense of pride among the homeless community after police intervention.

You know some of them just don't care, some of them are proud...the community that they're in that's kind of like a badge of honor. That they got arrested for this, they got arrested for that, they laugh about it and joke about it. But it doesn't seem to be a serious concern at that time. (SP1, 137-141)

Al's comment is the only instance of this idea among both sample groups and was included because of that. His comment seems to suggest that members of the homeless community view police interaction positively and can be a source of bonding.

Interestingly, none of the homeless participants discussed feeling proud after being woken up by police for sleeping behind a dumpster. Perhaps the outward expression of pride and lightheartedness, are actually defense mechanism functions, masking feelings of pain and frustration.

Service Use

In this category, themes related to the use of homeless services are presented. This data was collected to clarify the impact criminalizing life sustaining activities has on use of homeless services. Presented in the first section are the services currently used by the homeless participants and the frequency they use them. The second section presents themes collected from querying participants about the impact police intervention for survival behaviors has on service use. Data from both sample groups are presented together to assess for consistency.

Frequency and services used varies among respondents and across sample groups

This category includes findings related to the essential services used by homeless individuals. Both sample groups' responses to this query are presented. Table 4.5 contains both sample groups' data.

Table 4.5

Support Service Use

Type of Service	Homeless Participants	Service Providers
Basic Needs	-	1
Meals	4	4
Showers	4	4
Laundry	3	1
Bus Tokens	2	-
Mental Health/ Groups	5	2
Case Management	5	3
Public Assistance	1	1
Medical	1	1
Clothing	1	-
Housing	1	1
Internet	1	-
Shelters	2	1
Mail	-	2
Phone	-	1

As the data contained in Table 4.5 demonstrates, services used by the homeless participants are varied and do not necessarily correspond with the providers’

expectations. Although the sample size is too small to generalize beyond the participants of this study, it is interesting to note how the homeless participants' use of mental health services and case management differed from the providers' expectations.

All of the homeless participants reported that they use some type of social services at least once daily. Interestingly, the service providers' expectations differed significantly. None of service providers reported that they felt homeless individuals use services daily. Four service providers felt most homeless individuals use services infrequently and 1 felt it was too varied to make generalizations. These findings may suggest that service providers underestimate how frequently homeless individuals use services. However, as noted, these findings are not generalizable beyond the sample.

Police intervention can lead to increases in service use, decreases in service use, or have no affect on service use

Participants from both samples were asked about the impact police interaction for basic survival activities has on homeless services use. Several questions were asked to help elicit this information from study participants.

Of the homeless participants, only 1 felt that interaction with police for survival related crimes impacted his use of services. Derek's following excerpt describes the changes in his service use due to interacting with police for survival type crimes.

It probably would make me use services more so I could get the hell away from them on the street. Seriously...It makes me not want to go to the park, or wherever...because this place is where they won't harass me...It all depends, it all depends, it really all depends...Right now I'm not, no I'm not really feeling shelters right now, no I did that about a month ago for a little while and it, I was loosing rest. (HOM3, 576-586)

In the preceding quotation, Derek clearly connects the increase in his use of homeless services to interactions with police. Derek's statement suggests that he does this to avoid police intervention. Some service providers, as will be shown, feel that police intervention increases homeless service use, but for different reasons than Derek suggests.

All of the other homeless participants stated that their use of services was not impacted by police interaction for illegal life sustaining activities. This was the most common theme among the homeless participants in this category. Their responses to these queries were all fairly straightforward. Aside from a simple, "no," Ian's following comment represents the homeless participants' typical response.

...I don't know, they just, even when I got to, open container, they just like...it didn't matter, it wasn't like they was holding it against me here...it was just an everyday thing to them... (HOM4, 488-490)

In this example Ian refers to open container tickets, however he seems to be implying that they are worse than other tickets, such as camping, and "even when" considering this, his access to services was unaffected. The concluding sentence in this excerpt seems to suggest that these tickets are quite common and present no obstacles to receiving services.

The service providers' responses to this query were somewhat less uniform and there was not much consistency among them. Overall, the majority of service providers seemed to feel the impact of these types of laws on service use depends on the individual. In their discussion, three basic themes emerged, that police intervention due to illegal survival activities: (a) increases service use, (b) decreases service use, and (c) has no effect on service use.

The first theme presented is that police intervention for survival activities increases use of services by homeless individuals. This excerpt is from Al, the most outspoken service provider on this perspective.

I think that...it's more beneficial for them to, some people need a little push to get services and when it's learned that okay this can be taken off your record, but you need do this, this, and this, it's gonna benefit their quality of life, in the long run...they have this specific homeless court, they use quality of life crimes, minor crimes that'll be erased or expunged from their record, but they have be linked up with a service provider and there's going to be a progress report, and probably after a year, it'll be expunged...and what I observed from the one's in Los Angeles, the individuals were real happy, you know with the progress that they made, totally different attitude from when they first got started the process. Their self esteem improved, they felt better, you know they dressed better, they acted a little bit, a little better...but it's still them, but they felt good about themselves. (SP1, 381-396)

Al's statement suggests that, in his experience, police intervention seems effective at linking homeless individuals to service providers. He makes a specific reference to the homeless court, which allows homeless individuals to expunge "quality of life" tickets from their records if they are actively connected to social service agencies. Moreover, his statement also seems to imply that, as a result of their connection with services, homeless individuals' self-esteem improves.

The first selection is from Ernie, the most outspoken representative of the idea that police intervention decreases homeless use of services. This theme is more abundant in the data and two excerpts are included to represent this.

...that analogy is you've been harassed so many times by an individual with a badge and a gun, and you start [to] become and you become resistant. So your barrier, that you build up is again a trust factor and now somebody has to break that barrier down and let them know you care about them, and you're not the police, you're not trying to harass them, you're not trying to control their every moves, so, that becomes a huge

struggle, because, you know, somebody using that power, on you in the sense that it's controlling. (SP2, 483-488)

Ernie's excerpt suggests that police intervention can cause some homeless to fear trusting any authority figures. Moreover, he addresses the importance of trust, implying that a major part of his job is forming trusting, safe relationships with the person. Ernie's comment suggests that repeated police intervention can severely impact service providers' ability to engage homeless individuals. If these pieces are connected together, the difficulty service providers have forming relationships and establishing trust, due to police intervention for survival crimes, may impact homeless individuals' use of services.

Adding to Ernie's perspective on this subject, recall Roger's story of the police throwing a mentally ill homeless man off of his blanket. Roger's assessment of that incident, contained in the next excerpt, addresses how mental illness, in conjunction with police intervention, may impact homeless individuals' service use.

Well, since this person was very psychotic, I don't know if would actually, be detrimental to accepting assistance when he was offered, but again, I'm sure it couldn't help. (SP4, 274-275)

Although Roger is guessing about the impact this interaction had on the mentally ill man described in his story, he does admit, "I'm sure it couldn't help."

Although the previous citations represent an important aspect of the data collected on this subject, the majority of responses were mixed. Salma's example, presented next, provides a useful link between mental illness and readiness for treatment.

I think if you're in one of those places where psychologically, you're not able to weather bumps, like let's say somebody starts here and they get into a shelter, but then somebody cuts into line, which happens all the time, and this person is from the street and like all you have is your respect right? So somebody cutting in line is a big deal to that person. And they're going to say fuck it, I'm going to leave shelter...I was correlating

that because...I think that if something happens to you that is unpleasant, you're, it's going to deter you, if you're in that state of mind, you're like, 'screw it the freakin' police ticketed me, I don't need anybody, I'm just going to la la la.' (SP5, 698-706)

Salma's perspective seems to be that police intervention for these types of survival crimes probably have an impact, but it is impossible to isolate one factor among all the rest. This response seems to suggest that these types of laws are just one factor among an indeterminate number of others, including; mental illness, trauma, family issues, disability, among others. In other words, whether or not someone will use services depends on a variety of factors.

The following example reiterates Salma's point.

...let me tell you that, although some of these laws, you're saying that whether or not they would prevent them from getting help...or where they would force them into seeking some type of resistance, whether that's beneficial or not, I guess remains to be seen, because...our objective is to meet individuals where they're at and if you're not ready to get help because of whatever's going on with you, and are these laws that are put in place going to actually help you make that change...personally I don't think so, if you're not ready, you're not ready, and... if these laws are put in place, and any future laws that people may think that are going to be effective in helping you seek the assistance that you need, I seriously doubt it. (SP4, 335-341)

Here Roger's point seems to be the same as Salma's; that the truly essential factor is individual readiness. The providers' role, as suggested by Roger, is to meet them where they are at; when the homeless individual is ready to receive services.

This next excerpt, also provided by Roger, is relevant for two reasons. First, it represents the theme that police interaction for survival activities may not have any impact on use of services. Second, it is demonstrative of varied responses each service provider gave on this subject.

...I don't think that being ticketed, I mean that's just part of life on the street, is being ticketed, whether or not they're going to use more services because of that, probably not...there's people that stack up...30, 40 tickets and that's not uncommon....Does that make them, does that push them to get services and get help, probably not....I don't think it's gonna... (SP4, 495-502)

This excerpt suggests that he feels the police presence probably has little impact on homeless individuals' patterns of service use. Additionally, in this excerpt he makes a reference to the exorbitant number of tickets he has seen homeless individuals acquire. Perhaps he is implying that punitive strategies, such as the one being discussed, are ineffective in helping homeless individuals connect to services. Roger's overall perspective seems more realistic; that these types of interactions are, 'just part of life on the street.'

Several service providers discussed what is known as the homeless shuffle. Essentially, through a variety of techniques, law enforcement agencies force homeless individuals into another, nearby area. This following excerpt is presented to support this theme.

It could be, I mean, I know it's common to hear people say that LAPD and Santa Monica play ping-pong with their clients... Venice may conduct a sweep here and everybody moves into Santa Monica, and then Santa Monica will the same thing and it's just a back and fourth. Maybe where everybody's trying to get them off their beach, for what reason. (SP4, 413-416)

As noted, several service providers discussed this theme that homeless individuals are shuffled from area to area. As noted earlier, given that trust is widely accepted as a major component to effective service provision, one has to wonder how trust can be established – and maintained for that matter – if people are frequently shuffled between

different communities. This next excerpt, of Ernie's links the impact of shuffling around homeless individuals to service use.

On a grand scale you will see a lot of people scatter when police comes and they say I'm going to arrest you for this, I'm going to arrest you for that, you see people scatter like, like when you turn on the light, cockroaches, you see people scatter about. And when they scatter about and go to different areas, where service providers are, that's like going into an emergency room after an earthquake or an, some catastrophe, because you're not able to care for, you're already caring for a lot of people and there's an influx of people coming from being scattered to a certain area and it drains the resources that they have, now they've got to find other staffing, maybe it be volunteers or whatever, and now you've got also try to find services that will be able to meet the person's needs in the neighborhood. So it becomes challenging for the service providers, because there's a fallout basically you're not really expecting, so many people at one moment in time, because you're not expecting everybody to scatter towards you, because they're trying to get away from not being arrested. (SP2, 562-572)

Ernie's comment appears to suggest that when homeless people scatter, the receiving area's services become overwhelmed; along with their ability to provide quality services.

Combining the previous two themes yields another, albeit indirectly, manner law enforcement may influence homeless individuals' use of services. Alternately stated, if the police force enough homeless individuals into an area to cause the quality of services of that area to decline, some may stop using those services. In this scenario, the service providers are at fault for the decrease in use of services; even though police action set this in motion, they are only seen as the indirect cause.

Collaboration between providers and police may decrease homeless use of services

A small number of participants discussed the collaboration between police and service providers regarding service use. Since this was not a question asked of each

participant, not all discussed this issue. The major themes that arose in the data analysis are presented. Two homeless participants discussed this issue; however the meaning of Manuel's response (HOM2, 566-576) was unclear. The following excerpt is provided by Philip, a homeless participant.

Everything that goes on with a client of this place, Santa Monica Police has a list of all the clients here and if you check in to any hotel here, that hotel, there's information saying, to call over here to let them know you're over there, you know and it's just like...when I leave here if don't come back for a few days, that's none of your business, don't worry, be concerned about me, I'm an adult, when you're off from working here I don't, you're off I don't care what you've done, I don't care what you did, I'm not really concerned about you, so why are the hell are you so concerned about what I'm doing... (HOM5, 604-611)

In this excerpt, Philip's anger towards the police is readily apparent, as is his concern about these two entities communicating with each other. Although Philip does not state how collaboration with police would impact his use of services, his strong reaction may indicate a negative one.

This concern was especially apparent among the service providers, as all but 1 discussed this connection directly. The following excerpt presented represents this theme.

If they're correlated, if they've connected it to an agency, like, we had the unfortunate experience, like cops came because of something and that person doesn't come here anymore because they think we called the cops on them, we didn't...When they, which they might easily, completely illogically because they have other things going on, absolutely, I think could easily deter, I think that people who are homeless are like depressed and get easily deterred. (SP5, 717-722)

Salma's comment is typical of this theme in the providers' sample group. Here she appears to suggest that, while providers do occasionally work with the police, there is no collaboration with police. She seems to feel that such collaborations would be

perceived negatively by her clients. This seems to imply that a connection between service providers and police would affect the homeless community's use of services. Moreover, her statement also suggests that mental illness and general anti-police sentiment among the homeless community may enhance fears of collaboration between police and providers. It is unclear whether these factors are specifically related to enforcement of survival crimes or just general anti-police sentiment.

Factors of service use

A fair amount of data was collected on the topic of factors why homeless individuals use services. The researcher had hoped this data would help further clarify the impact police have on service use; however, all of the data collected on this topic was deemed irrelevant to the research question because it failed to provide additional insight. Since the volume of this data collected was slightly significant and a specific question in the interview guide elicited this information, the researcher felt that its absence in the findings warranted this explanation.

Conclusion

The volume of qualitative, narrative data collected in this study was impressive. As a result, only a fraction of the total data collected was presented. The researcher, however, made every effort to ensure that all relevant categories and themes were represented in this chapter. Throughout the data analysis and reporting process, conscious efforts were made to convey an accurate and truthful exposition of the data. Although, all efforts were made to maintain an accurate reflection of the data collected, undoubtedly, based on the richness and meaning that is attached to narrative data, some

may have been missed. The discussion of these findings can be found in the next chapter, Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter begins with discussion of these findings in relation to the topic and previous research. Second, the findings' implications for the practice of social work is presented. The third and final section contains a discussion about the limitations of this research and recommendations for further research.

Research Findings in Relation to the Topic and Previous Research

This study explored the relationship between criminalizing life sustaining activities – such as sleeping – and service use among homeless individuals on the Westside area of Los Angeles. Considering the intimate role direct service providers have with their clients regarding homeless service provision, their perspective on this topic was also elicited. Parallel data was collected from each sample group and assessed for consistency. To answer the research question, separate interview guides, sample criteria, and informed consents were created for each sample group. Interviews with the homeless subjects began with a discussion of their experiences with law enforcement. Most of the homeless participants discussed interacting with police for several different types of survival activities and all reported receiving camping tickets at some point in their lives. There is an abundance of literature regarding these types of laws that criminalize homeless survival activities, such as Smith (1996), who considers it “cruel and unusual” (§ 2) to punish homeless people for, “the undeniable need for sleep” (§ 3).

Results from the two sample groups seem to agree, as the majority of providers also felt camping was a major concern for their homeless clients.

Moving on, the majority of subjects, from both sample groups, felt that police mostly treated homeless individuals negatively. Responses to this query were mixed as some subjects described multiple incidents. Often police treatment varied between each incident. Adding to the complexity of these findings, all of the providers made a distinction between specially trained homeless units and general police officers. All of the providers felt these specialized units were more effective and proactive in assisting homeless individuals. This theme is supported in the literature as an effective, alternative strategy to criminalization (NCH & NLCHP, 2006, p. 20). Regardless, these themes suggest that homeless individuals do not distinguish between alternative police units even though the service providers do. Most prior research supports a very negative view of law enforcement across the board, via overt and implied references to police maltreatment (e.g. Amster, 2003; NCH & NLCHP).

Although not a dominant theme in the findings, issues of self-esteem were intertwined with the enforcement of survival crimes. A few homeless subjects independently discussed the impact police interaction had on their self-esteem and mental health. For Ian, his positive experience with police, after they caught him sleeping in a doorway, actually helped to boost his self-esteem. On the other hand, Derek, Frank, Philip, and to a degree Manuel, discussed feelings of anger, depression and resentment following negative interactions with the police. While a good deal of research has addressed the topic of self-esteem within the homeless community (e.g. Applewhite, 1997; Barak, 1992; Diblasio & Belcher, 1993); very little specifically addresses the

negative psychological damage caused by oppressive police tactics. The closest supporting reference to this in the literature may be Baum & Burnes' (1993) discussion of disaffiliation and decreased self-worth because of social and spatial exclusion. General findings for the service providers, on the topic of self-esteem, was mixed, but most stated that it depends on the individual receiving the ticket. Some providers felt the effect could be significant, while others felt that negative police interaction was an expected part of life on the streets.

Related to this issue of self-esteem, questions were asked about homeless individuals' sense of criminality. With minor exception, the two sample groups' perspectives seemed to be in agreement on this issue. Generally speaking, the majority of the sample agreed that homeless individuals probably do not feel like criminals for engaging in criminal activities for survival purposes prior to police intervention. Alternatively, only a slim majority of sample participants agreed that homeless individuals do not feel like criminals after interactions with police for survival crimes. A few subjects from each sample group concurred that, due to these types of interactions with police, homeless individuals' sense of criminality was affected. Although these themes are relevant to this study, support in the literature appears sparse.

At the heart of the research subject was data collected regarding criminalizing survival activities and use of services. Aside from one exception, all of the homeless participants felt that there was no direct connection between changes in their use of services and police enforcement of survival crimes. Derek, the lone dissenting homeless participant felt that negative police interaction had caused an increase in his use of services; to avoid additional police interaction. On this topic, the providers' responses

were mixed and no dominant theme emerged. Due to the independence of their results, they are described individually: (a) Al felt that there would be no impact, (b) Ernie felt that it would lower service use, (c) Chrissy felt it may increase service use, and (d) Roger and Salma both felt that that it would depend on the individual, but probably could not help. Forced to make a generalization for this sample group, overall it seems that the majority of providers' agreed that these types of laws probably do not help increase the service use of homeless individuals.

Implications for the Practice of Social Work

This study has many implications for the practice of social work as the findings differed slightly from the researcher's expectations. One fundamental finding of this study was the apparent lack of impact the laws criminalizing survival activities had among the homeless subjects' use of services. As noted, all of the homeless subjects denied a decrease in their use of services as a result of police enforcement of survival activities. This finding, if accurate, contradicts a significant portion of academic literature and assumptions about the homeless community's use of services. Even the most outspoken participants, Derek and Philip, who discussed decreased self-esteem, anger, and resentment following police intervention, denied any decrease in their use of services use as a direct result. The findings also demonstrated that the service provider sample was largely split on their understanding of this. Alternatively, several service provider subjects felt that these laws would have an affect on homeless individuals' use of services, while others felt any impact would depend on the homeless individual. Although the sample size is too small to generalize beyond the subjects of this study,

these findings may indicate the resiliency of the homeless community and diversity of service provider experiences.

Although the findings show that the homeless subjects do not directly attribute punitive social policies criminalizing survival behaviors to a decrease in use of services, one has to wonder about their indirect influence. The findings when examined a little closer, seem to imply that service use is indirectly affected by police enforcement of illegal survival behaviors. A more detailed discussion of this, along with the excerpts supporting this claim, is presented in the Findings chapter. To understand this process, two simple concepts must be connected. First, as this research suggests, there is a possible connection between police enforcement of survival crimes and decreased self-esteem. Second, as Diblasio & Belcher (1993) noted in their study of homeless individuals, a connection exists between self-esteem and social isolation. When combined, these concepts appear to provide an alternative understanding of the indirect impact police enforcement of survival crimes has on support service use.

The findings of this study may also affect our view of the social policies impacting homeless individuals. If our goal, as a society, is to help improve homeless individuals' lives, these findings raise some important questions regarding service provision. Several subjects, from both samples, discussed the allocation of resources in relation to the criminalization of survival activities. Chrissy, a service provider, had difficulty containing her disgust at the formation of a "homeless court" in her service area. Some research considers homeless courts, if administered proactively, a viable, effective alternative to the traditional criminal justice system (NCH & NLCHP, 2006). Chrissy, however, views the enormous expense used to fund this initiative as a

misallocation of resources. According to Chrissy, the homeless court is promoted as a way to link homeless individuals with “quality of life” tickets to service providers. This is illogical because, according to Chrissy, a homeless individual has to be connected to a service provider to get a referral to the court in the first place. Roger also discussed this lack of access to homeless courts without a service provider advocate. The findings seem to support Chrissy’s concern of misappropriation; namely that increased police interaction appears to have a negative affect on self-esteem and a minimal impact on service use. Regardless of these findings, it is clear that our homeless policies need to be reviewed and updated. Hopefully this study, and ones like it, provides useful information for an effective revision of our social policies.

Limitations of This Research and Recommendations for Further Research

A primary limitation is the study’s small sample size. The factors limiting the small sample size are (a) time limited degree requirements, (b) population being studied, (c) availability of subjects, (d) use of snowball recruitment method, and (e) study design. First, the requirements of this project, as designated by the Smith College School for Social Work thesis guidelines, restricted the time available to complete this study. Specifically, these guidelines established project deadlines regarding design, subject recruitment, and data analysis. Due to time constraints, additional subjects would have created an inordinate amount of data to process. Next, the researcher’s ability to recruit a larger sample was restricted by the population being studied. For instance, while the actual interviews were only about an hour long, each required a much larger commitment of time. Moreover, a portion of the researcher’s already limited time was used to conduct mental status assessments and build relationships with participants, ensuring that accurate

data was collected. An oft transient subject pool meant that the recruitment of homeless subjects was conducted just prior to the interview. In this regard, the research was invaluablely aided by staff at *Step Up On Second* both for referrals and use of agency facilities to provide a safe, familiar place to conduct interviews. However, this also represents a potential implication of the study, as their biases and influences may be magnified in the data (Anastas, 1999). Finally, the design of the study also impacted the size of the sample. By dividing the sample into two groups, the amount of analyzable data for each group was halved. Although this was a necessary inclusion to address the research question, it undoubtedly limited the number of responses from each sample group.

For many homeless, the daily realities of living on the streets presented additional obstacles for this research. The homeless subjects who participated in this study were obviously connected to support services; all were members of *Step Up On Second* and reported using support services daily. Unfortunately this is not representative of the homeless community at large. The most desperate and deprived of the homeless community—perhaps those most impacted by laws criminalizing survival activities—were reluctantly excluded from the study sample. This is not meant to imply that severely mentally ill homeless are not worth researching. In fact, this segment of the homeless community would benefit immensely from continued research. Instead, the intent is the opposite, but one has to consider that the reality of severe mental illness, social alienation, and trauma that makes conducting research on this population extraordinarily difficult. It is important that research be conducted under appropriate

conditions for those being studied so that their voices are accurately heard. Hopefully, this research can, at least, provide a glimpse into their world.

There is a potential my personal biases impacted the research. Political and social beliefs related to oppression, social justice, marginalization, and racism also presented significant biases for the researcher to overcome. Moreover, the researcher had to be aware of cultural biases that shape definitions of social worth; as this can contribute to the stigmatization of the homeless community. In order to minimize the impact of these biases, conscious efforts and frequent reviews were undertaken at every step of the research process.

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the complexity of homeless research and the importance of continued research. This study could be improved by having a larger sample, in a more controlled research environment, and with a more diverse homeless sample. While the data collected in this study was purely qualitative, a larger sample may not be feasible. A study with a larger sample may be better served using a mixed method design to ease the data analysis process. Lastly, one theme that emerged from the data analysis was the indirect influence criminalization of survival activities may have on homeless individuals' behavior. Perhaps a more in-depth exploration of these indirect factors could be the basis for future research on this subject matter.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide – Homeless Participants

Demographics

1. Demographic information:

- a. age: _____ b. gender: _____
c. race: _____ d. ethnicity: _____
e. religious or non-religious beliefs: _____
f. current/past use of services: _____
g. reason for being homeless: _____
h. overall time homeless: _____
i. mental health issues: _____
j. current mental status: _____
k. substance (ab)use hx, describe: _____
l. physical disability(ies): _____
m. education level: _____
n. occupational/employment hx: _____

Experiences with the Legal System

1. Since becoming homeless, what are some things that you have been ticketed, arrested, or harassed for that you did out of necessity for your survival? *Ask questions here to elicit as much information as possible.*
2. What does it mean to you to be arrested for such things as sleeping, sitting, eating, or going to the bathroom?
- a. How does it make you feel about yourself?
3. Did you feel like a criminal before being arrested?

- a. Do you feel like a criminal since being arrested?
4. How did the police and the legal system treat you during these types of incidents?
Describe
5. Why do you think laws are made that outlaw the things you do for survival?
6. How do these types of laws make you feel about yourself?
 - a. Do they affect how you view yourself?
 - b. How do they make you feel about getting help from homed people?
7. Does knowing that the things that you do for survival are considered a crime affect how you view yourself? *Describe.*
8. Have you ever been arrested for something you did not even realize was a crime?
If so, please describe.
9. How often would you say you are harassed, arrested, or ticketed by police or security guards? (*e.g., often, sometimes, never*)
10. Are there certain areas and/or times that you are harassed, ticketed, or arrested more often?
 - a. If so, please explain why you might think this is the case

Effects on Use of Support Services

1. What services (e.g., shelters, meals, mental health, medical, emergency), if any, are you currently using?
 - a. Please list them in order of importance.
2. What makes one service more useful than another?

3. How often do you use any kinds of services over the course of a month? (*e.g., daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.*)
4. What kinds factors contribute to whether or not you use a particular service?
Please think about both personal reasons and ones related to the way agencies provide services.
5. What kind of impact, if any, did being arrested, ticketed, or harassed by police, security personnel, among other things, have on your use of services?
 - a. Why do you think this is?
6. Are there services that you use more or less as a result? *Please describe.*
7. Has treatment by the legal system affected the way you view help by support agencies?
 - a. If so, how?
8. Do you think there is any connection between being arrested and treated like a criminal for a survival activity and a change in your use of services?
9. Are there any other factors not included in this interview that contributed to a change in your use of support services because of being arrested, ticketed, or harassed for a survival activity?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide – Service Providers

Demographics

1. Demographic information:

- a. age: _____ b. gender: _____
c. race _____ d. ethnicity: _____
e. religious or non-religious beliefs: _____
f. education level: _____
g. occupational/employment hx: _____
h. time as S.P.: _____

State at the beginning of the interview: “Please base all of your responses on observations and direct contact with homeless individuals, if you are unsure of a response, please pass on the question.”

Experiences with the Legal System

1. What are some things that you have observed homeless being ticketed, arrested, or harassed for out of necessity for survival? *Ask questions here to elicit as much information as possible.*
2. From your observations, what does it mean to homeless individuals when they are arrested for such things as sleeping, sitting, or going to the bathroom?
 - a. How do you think it makes them feel about themselves?
3. Do homeless individuals feel like criminals before being arrested?
 - a. Do they feel like criminals after being arrested?
4. How do the police and legal system treat homeless people during these times?
Describe

5. Why do you think laws are created that outlaw the things the homeless do for survival?
6. How do these types of laws make homeless people feel about themselves?
 - a. Do they impact how homeless individuals view themselves?
 - b. How do they make homeless people feel about interacting with non-homeless people?
7. Does knowing that the things the homeless do for survival is considered a crime affect how homeless people perceive themselves?
8. Are homeless people often arrested for something they did not even realize was a crime? If so, please describe.
9. How often are homeless harassed, arrested, or ticketed by police or security guards? (*e.g., often, sometimes, never*)
10. Are there certain areas and/or times that homeless are harassed, ticketed, or arrested more often?
 - a. If so, please explain why you might think this is the case

Effects on Use of Support Services

1. What services, if any, do homeless currently use?
 - a. Please list them in order of importance.
2. What makes one service more useful to a homeless individual than another?
3. How often do homeless individuals use any kind of services over the course of a month? (*e.g., daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.*)

4. What factors may contribute to whether or not homeless use a particular service?
Please think about both reasons personal to the homeless individual and reasons based on the way services are provided.
5. What kind of impact, if any, does being arrested, ticketed, or harassed by police, security personnel, et al, have on homeless individuals' use of services?
 - a. Why do you think this is?
6. Are there services that homeless individuals use more or less as a result? *Please describe.*
7. Has treatment by the legal system affected the way homeless individuals view help by support agencies?
 - a. If so, how?
8. Do you think there is any connection between when a homeless individual is arrested and treated like a criminal for a survival activity and changes in their use of services?
9. Are there any other factors not included in this interview that contribute to a change in homeless individuals' use of support services because of being arrested, ticketed, or harassed for a survival activity?

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form – Homeless Participants

February 19, 2007

Dear Participant,

My name is Brion Phipps, I am completing a study that assesses how homeless individuals and service providers view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use. The study is part of a Master's of Social Work thesis, which is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work.

You are being asked to participate in this study if (a) you are a homeless male over the age of 18, (b), have been homeless for six months consecutively prior to the study, (c) have been arrested, ticketed, or harassed for at least one "survival crime", and (c) have been diagnosed with a mental illness. As a subject in this study you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. Questions will center around your experiences following an arrest for a "survival crime" and its impact on your use of services. The interview is expected to take 45-60 minutes to complete. With your consent, interviews will be preferably recorded for audio or alternately, detailed notes will be taken. To ensure confidentiality your name will be kept separate from the interview recordings and/or notes.

The potential risks of participating in this study are the possibility that you might feel strong or uncomfortable emotions while talking about your experiences. In case you feel the need for additional support after participating in this study, you will be given a list of resources for mental health services in your area.

Your participation is voluntary and for participating you will receive a \$5 meal card. You may also benefit from knowing that you have helped increase the understanding of homeless issues. It is my hope that this study will help social workers better understand the impact criminalizing survival activities has on service use and if service providers understand why this is. You may also benefit from being able to tell your story and having your voice heard.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained, as consistent with Federal guidelines and the social work profession. Confidentiality, including your identity, will be protected by separating your name from any data collected. Also, all data will be kept in a locked file for a minimum of three (3) years. The data may be used in other educational activities as well as in the writing of my Master's thesis. Thesis preparation may include, but is not limited to, consultations with research advisors, peer review, and as disguised stories or brief quotes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any interview question(s), and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by contacting the researcher or the referring outreach worker. You have until March 15, 2007 to withdraw from the study; after this date, I will begin writing my thesis.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Signature of Participant

Date

I suggest that you keep a copy of this consent form for your records. If you have any further questions about this study, participation, rights of participants, or this consent form, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Thank you for your time, and I greatly look forward to having you as a participant in my study.

Sincerely,

Brion Phipps, MSW Candidate
Venice Family Clinic
2509 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(310) 664-7518
bhipps@email.smith.edu

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form – Service Providers

February 19, 2007

Dear Participant,

My name is Brion Phipps, I am conducting a study to assess how homeless individuals and service providers view the influence criminalizing survival activities has on support service use. The study is part of a MSW thesis, which is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been a direct service worker to the homeless population of the Westside of Los Angeles County for more than one year. As a subject in this study you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. Questions will center around your experiences working with homeless individuals who have been arrested for crimes of survival. The interview is expected to take 45-60 minutes to complete. With your consent, interviews will be preferably recorded for audio or alternately, detailed notes will be taken. To ensure confidentiality interview recordings and/or notes will be coded numerically; this means that your name will be kept off of the data, instead it will be given a numerical code.

The potential risks of participating in this study are the possibility that you might feel strong or uncomfortable emotions while talking about your observations. In case you feel the need for additional support after participating in this study, you will be given a list of resources for mental health services in your area.

Your participation is voluntary and you will receive no financial benefit for participation in this study. However, you may benefit from knowing that you have contributed to the knowledge of homeless issues. It is my hope that this study will help social workers better understand the impact criminalizing survival activities has on service use and if service providers understand why this is. You may also benefit from having your perspective heard.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained, as consistent with Federal guidelines and the mandates of the social work profession. Confidentiality will be protected by coding the information and storing the data in a locked file for a minimum of three (3) years. Your identity will be protected, as names will be changed in the analysis of the data. Your name will never be associated with the information you provide in the interview. The data collected may be used in other educational activities as well as in the preparation for my Master's thesis. Thesis preparation may include, but is not limited to, consultations with research advisors, and as disguised vignettes or brief illustrative quotes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any interview question(s), and you may withdraw in writing from the study at any time without penalty. You have until March 15, 2007 to withdraw from the study; after this date, I will begin writing the Results and Discussion sections of my thesis.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Signature of Participant

Date

Please promptly return this consent form to me to indicate your intention of participating in the study (I suggest that you keep a copy of this consent form for your records). If I do not hear from you by then, I will attempt a follow-up.

If you have any further questions about this study, participation, rights of participants, or this consent form, please feel free to ask me at the contact information below. Thank you for your time, and I greatly look forward to having you as a participant in my study.

Sincerely,

Brion Phipps, MSW Candidate
Venice Family Clinic
2509 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(310) 664-7518
bhipps@email.smith.edu

APPENDIX E

HSR Approval Letter



Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950
F (413) 585-7994

December 13, 2006

Brion Phipps
5457 Kinston Avenue
Culver City, CA 90230

Dear Brion,

Your very thoughtful and careful revisions of your documents have been reviewed and we are happy to give your project final approval. You explained the survival behaviors very well and also did a good job of separating the Consents. Each is shorter and clearer than trying to do them together.

Be sure you give your homeless participants an extra copy of the Consent for them to keep. Also, you must sign and date the Consents, so please add a place for this on the bottom of each. With that addition assumed, we are glad to give final approval to this study.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with this most interesting project. What a sad, sad situation. Things are so desperately unequal in our world. Last night on PBS News a woman told about a very popular purse that is being sold for something like \$23,000. It made me sick and very angry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Hartman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Peter Titelman, Research Advisor

APPENDIX F

Subject Recruitment Flier

What is the impact when laws make being homeless and surviving on the streets a crime?

A study by MSW candidate attempts to explore how homeless see the influence criminalizing life-sustaining activities has on support service use and if support workers see it the same way.



Too often, the homeless are without a substantial voice in the research concerning them.

This study needs **homeless individuals** and **direct service workers** for a 45 – 60 min. interview. **All homeless participants will be given a meal card for their involvement in the study.**

Criteria for Homeless Participants:

- Male over the age of **18**.
- Homeless for at least **one (1) year**.
- Must have been **arrested, ticketed, or harassed** by police for sitting, going the bathroom, sleeping, and/or eating.
- Have a diagnosed **mental illness**.

Criteria for Direct Service Workers

- Must have at least one (1) year Direct Professional Experience with homeless.

Please contact Brion Phipps at (310) 664-7518 to refer appropriate candidates or email at bhipps@email.smith.edu.