5-1-1995

A case study of homelessness in the city of Atlanta from a public policy perspective

Robert Wilkes Jr.
Clark Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations
Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation
ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

WILKES, ROBERT JR. B.A. MOREHOUSE COLLEGE, 1991

A CASE STUDY OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF ATLANTA FROM A PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Advisor: Professor Michael Bailey

Thesis dated May, 1995

This study examined the conditions of homelessness in the City of Atlanta and historically in the United States of America.

The study focused on three objectives. The homeless population in the City of Atlanta was identified. Six independent variables were employed that explain the contributing causes of homelessness in the City. In addition, the forces that led to the creation of the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances were investigated as well as how homeless persons view these ordinances.

The researcher found that the homeless population in the City of Atlanta is diverse. It was found that single women with children and African Americans are among the fastest growing groups of homeless persons in the city. It was also found that homeless persons view the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances as a means for preventing them from earning material possessions.
A CASE STUDY OF HOMELESSNESS IN
THE CITY OF ATLANTA FROM A
PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY
ROBERT WILKES, JR

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY, 1995
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words cannot express the thanks that I owe to others who unselfishly assisted me with the completion of this challenging task. Mrs. Anita Beaty and Greg Payne of the Atlanta task force, thanks for allowing me to volunteer at the task force. It was in this capacity that I was able to collect a huge volume of homeless data. Coach Frank Robinson, my appreciation to you goes without question for not only granting use of your office but for permitting unlimited use of your computer as well. Lastly, I thank Beverly Kelly for proof reading this paper; your proof reading and critical thinking abilities proved invaluable.
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................. ii
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................... v
LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................... vi

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ....................................................... 1
   Statement of the Problem
   Significance of Research
   Key Concepts
   Method of Analysis

II. LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................. 11
   Causes of Homelessness

III. METHODOLOGY ..................................................... 26
    Research Design
    Interview Procedure

IV. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF HOMELESSNESS IN U.S. .... 32

V. PROFILES OF HOMELESSNESS IN CITY OF ATLANTA ........ 41
   Who are the Homeless
     Race
     Age Factor
     Homeless Men
     Homeless Women
     Homeless Children
     Length of Stay in City
PART TWO

Causes of Homelessness

Economic Explanations
Deinstitutionalism and Noninstitutionalism
Government Cut-backs
Lack of Affordable Housing
Urban Renewal
1996 Olympics and the Homeless

VI. CITY OF ATLANTA ORDINANCES ......................... 68

1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance
Window-washing Ordinance
Homeless Persons

VII. CONCLUSIONS ........................................... 75

Appendix

1. HOMELESS PERSONS CONSENT AND INTERVIEW FORM ..... 78
2. INTERVIEW FORM FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS .......... 84
3. PROFILES OF INDIVIDUALS IN DISPOSSESSORY COURT .. 88
4. TASK FORCE FOR THE HOMELESS INTAKE FORM ......... 89

REFERENCE LIST ............................................. 91
# List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.</td>
<td>Homeless Population 1900 - 1960</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.</td>
<td>Homeless Persons in Atlanta</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.</td>
<td>Additional Caller Information</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.</td>
<td>Profiles of Individuals in Dispossessory Court</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.</td>
<td>Affordable Housing Decreases in Atlanta</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.</td>
<td>Atlanta Council Members Interview Results</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.</td>
<td>Viewpoints of the Homeless</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.</td>
<td>Racial Breakdown of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.</td>
<td>Age Composition of Homeless in City Requesting Shelter</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.</td>
<td>Gender Profile of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.</td>
<td>Family Status of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.</td>
<td>Adult and Children Make-up of Homeless in City Requesting Shelter</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

What is the purpose of government? Although such an inquiry would probably receive numerous responses, government's primary purpose should be that of providing pleasure, happiness, and delight to all Americans as they function daily. In fact, a scholarly book was written a quarter of a century ago which accentuates such a point and is still relevant today in terms of understanding social problems. The authors of Understanding Social Problems, advance, as championed by Alan Keith Lucas that:

Persons who, in the absence of other means of support, must look to the government for enough money to maintain health and decency (and do so by meeting eligibility requirements for aid established by Congress) are not thereby any the less free American citizens, with all the privileges and responsibilities that belong to citizenship. While some may be lazy or lacking in traditional qualities of rugged individualism, others are sick, old, handicapped, fatherless, or caught in the ineluctable workings of an economic system that no longer rewards only the industrious or only punishes only the slack. To discriminate against relief clients as a class makes no more sense than to discriminate against negroes as a racial group. The virtue or lack of worth lies in the individual, not in the group.¹

In today's terms, some of these underprivileged individuals are what we categorize as "the homeless". Indeed,
homeless persons are among the poorest cohorts of the United States poor population. America's homeless and poor populations are plagued by extreme deprivation. Intrinsic to what we consider necessary or irrelevant in assisting the nation's poor by means of social policy should reflect our value system toward the poor, the homeless, and the actual causes of these conditions. Therefore, one should not deny that we must initiate and support policies that seek to eradicate or alleviate the conditions of homelessness and poverty. Even so, one should argue against policies that tend to acknowledge to persons of the above-mentioned status that their condition is somehow the end result of their own lack of determination or incompetence. In order to reach these goals, we must educate ourselves and others about the actual conditions of homelessness.

Homelessness in the United States and in Atlanta, Georgia in particular, has existed for decades. Yet, due to marginal effects, neo-homelessness has become an overbearing dilemma for numerous American citizens. According to Carol L. M. Canton in Homelessness In America, America got its first view of the conditions of homelessness during the colonial era. Although today's homeless population is represented by those who are extremely poor, male, female, single, young, racial minorities, it is still a largely homogeneous group. They are without adequate funds to secure permanent housing.

Atlanta councilmen passed two ordinances that may have a
direct impact on Atlanta's homeless population. The ordinances are the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances. This study attempts to examine the forces that led to the creation of these policies. Moreover, as with other public policy areas, the results of the research on the conditions of homelessness, undoubtedly, can play a compelling role in determining policy. The results can also play a cogent role in overturning policy.

In addition, counting or identifying who are actually homeless is political in and of itself. By estimating how many are homeless and who are homeless, policies can be created to address the numbers and characteristics of this population. Furthermore, identifying the causes of homelessness could and should lead to the design of policies that seek to run counter to the causes of homelessness. Thus, the political debate about homelessness raises a number of serious public policy issues.

Description of Atlanta's homeless population is desperately needed for two primary reasons. First, in order to aid the homeless population or provide policy recommendations that attribute to the alleviation of homelessness in Atlanta, one must first come to a consensus of what homelessness is. Providing inappropriate or ineffective measures to remedy homelessness would be counter productive to homeless persons. Nevertheless, such an experience could be attributed to a non-definitive analysis of homelessness in Atlanta. Second,
designing policy that is remotely away from the root causes of homelessness does not seek to reduce homelessness. In fact, such policies would seem to make the conditions of homelessness worse. For this project, homelessness is conceptualized as including those persons who are without a permanent place to call home. Within this group, the street, shelter, and crowded-up homeless are accounted for. This group will be measured in terms of those persons who seek assistance through the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. The task force plays an integral role in providing access to the city's shelters.

The purpose of this thesis is three-fold. One aim of the study is to identify the demographic make-up of the homeless population in Atlanta. The study also attempts to determine the causes of homelessness in the city. Lastly, the study seeks to describe and assess two policies that currently exist pertaining to the homeless population.

**Significance of Research**

Reports and studies detailing the conditions of homelessness within the United States overwhelmingly conclude that the homeless population in urban as well as rural areas is visible and on the rise. Nonetheless, most earlier research that addresses the issues of homelessness focus on the skid row homeless population, which is considered homogeneous. However, contemporary homelessness is now viewed as a multifaceted/diverse social welfare problem that increased
dramatically during the 1980s. In fact, it is commonly held that research efforts on homelessness have been prompted by the increase and visibility of homeless persons.

The same studies and reports cite numerous, however, different causes of homelessness. Nevertheless, the main causes of homelessness fall under one of two categories: structural causes or individual/personal causes. The structural causes include inadequate or failing mental health policy, recessions, high unemployment rates, the disappearance of low-income housing, and cutbacks for social programs by the federal government. On the other hand, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental illness, social disaffiliation, irresponsibility, and free choice of lifestyle are the conditions that are championed by those who marshall that the causes of homelessness are personal. However, in this project, the structural causes, assuredly, are adduced as the most persuasive causes. The personal or individual perspective can be researched by sociologists and psychologists. Based upon the data collected, the individual/personal perspective has no empirical basis within this project.

Moreover, most contemporary studies of homelessness also employ diverse methodology. Nonetheless, the majority of recent studies have two characteristics in common. Most of these studies are based on the results taken from questionnaires that are administered to homeless persons or shelter providers. These studies are also concerned with
soliciting information regarding to demographic profiles of the homeless and causes cited.

The majority of the studies that focus on homelessness in America center on urban areas and this study of homelessness in Atlanta is similar in that respect. In fact, results reported from earlier research that espouse personal or structural theories in addressing the causes of homelessness are suggestive and provide a framework for the discussion of policies to reduce homelessness. This study also provides a framework that leads to the creation of policy that could eliminate the conditions of homelessness. Questionnaires were utilized as well. However, in this study the difference between this study and earlier ones lies in the fact that interviews with homeless persons and members of Atlanta's City Council were conducted. This study also concentrates on policies that already exist as opposed to gathering information to create policy. Moreover, public policy was investigated relative to only the homeless population residing in Atlanta instead of all homeless persons. Some studies use individual stories of homelessness, but this project does not.

**Key Concepts**

The primary focus of this study is to determine the causes of homelessness. The rate of homelessness serves as the dependent variable whereas economic factors, government cutbacks, deinstitutionalization, noninstitutionalization, and urban renewal are the independent variables. This study also
examines city ordinances that may have a punitive impact on the City of Atlanta's homeless population. The ordinances are operationalized by their main points as listed below.

1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance: It is unlawful to enter a vacant building or the land where a vacant building is located without the permission of an authorized agent of the property, provided that the building or property is so marked. Trespassers are to be prosecuted by the police as the property's own agent. It is also unlawful to remain on a parking lot unless the person's car is parked there or the person has lawful business on the property, provided that it is so marked. It is unlawful to beg or solicit alms (by spoken, written or printed word or other method) by accosting another or by forcing oneself upon the company of another. "Accosting" is defined as approaching or speaking to someone in such a manner as would cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or the commission of a criminal act upon their or upon property in their immediate possession. "Forcing oneself upon the company of another" is defined as continuing to request, beg or solicit alms in close proximity to the individual addressed after the person to whom the request is directed has made a negative response, blocking the passage of the individual addressed, or otherwise engaging in conduct which could reasonably be construed as intended to compel or force a person to accede to demands.10

Window-washing Ordinance: The main point of the ordinance is to make it unlawful to be in any roadway for the purpose of cleaning automobile windows or for the purpose of soliciting funds to clean windows.11

The objectives of this research project consist of addressing and answering three questions of inquiry in regard to "homelessness" in the City of Atlanta. They are:

(1). Who are the homeless?
(2). What are the causes?
(3). What forces led to the creation of the two city ordinances listed below and how the homeless
population view these ordinances?
   a. 1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance
   b. Window-washing Ordinance

Although the above questions are addressed within this study, the study begins with a brief, but sound historical analysis of homelessness in America. The objective of the historical description is to explain to readers the origin and earlier causes of homelessness. One cannot dispute that homelessness in this country can be traced back to colonial days; nonetheless, this research project begins its historical analysis of homelessness dating back to the 1960s. The rationale for starting in the 1960s is that the conditions of homelessness demanded more attention during this time frame. In addition, it was during this period when social policy erupted on the scene. According to Christopher Jencks in Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass, "In 1961, the term social policy was not part of America's political vocabulary".12

Method of Analysis

The methodology used to complete this research project consists of aggregate data analysis, field research and survey research. Books, reports and articles obtained from public libraries and the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless were used in assessing the historical understanding of homelessness. In order to compute the characteristics of homeless persons residing in Atlanta, questionnaires were used for gathering these data. In order to respond to the third
objective, personal interviews with homeless persons and City council members were conducted. The questionnaires are attached. (see Appendix 1 and 2)

A detailed description of the study's research plan and methods employed is provided in Chapter Three. The following chapter offers an overview of the relevant works that address the conditions of homelessness. Chapter Four presents historical findings. Chapter Five identifies Atlanta's homeless population. Chapter Six highlights the critical factors that influenced the creation of the two ordinances and if they have an impact on Atlanta's homeless population. Chapter Seven outlines the conclusions drawn based upon the data obtained.
ENDNOTES


2 Coates, Robert C., A Street is not a home: Solving America's Homeless Dilemma (New York: Brometheus, 1990), 281.


6 Ibid.


CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

"People everywhere confuse what they read in newspapers with news."
New Yorker 7 Apr 56

Although studies and reports purport that contemporary homelessness is visible and on the rise, these same studies and reports differ on not only what homelessness is but, also on the causes of homelessness. In Atlanta, the controversy is no different. According to Jamshid A. Momeni in Homelessness in the United States: Volume II: Data and Issues, despite the fact that the majority of the literature that concentrates on homelessness is new, a consensus on its meaning is absent. An array of definitions currently exist. While some researchers employ literal or descriptive definitions, others define homelessness in physical and subjective terms. Yet, there are still researchers who contend that the estimation of those who are homeless is difficult. This is due to the commonly held belief that the homeless population is mobile and always fluctuating. Nonetheless, it is possible to obtain information on homeless persons that seek shelter or assistance. According to Anne B. Shlay and Peter H. Rossi in "Social Science Research and Contemporary Studies of Homelessness", the controversy that surrounds the causes of
homelessness focus on whether the causes should be examined from a personal or structural theoretical perspective.\textsuperscript{2}

In 1984, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) advanced in their study on homelessness that homeless persons comprise those who spend their night(s) in emergency shelters.\textsuperscript{3} These shelters may be public or private. Shelters that homeless persons occupy include hotels, boarding homes, government buildings, schools, churches, and apartments.\textsuperscript{4} However, this definition is not exclusive. Those persons who spend their nights in subways, abandoned buildings, railroad stations, parks, bus terminals, cars, under bridges, on the streets or in any other space that is not created for human habitat are not exempt from this category.\textsuperscript{5} However, this definition appears to be inconclusive if one actually sought to locate all homeless persons. For instance, this categorization does not include those individuals who are residing with families and friends due to their inability to secure permanent housing. Most importantly, when stating that all of the above named persons are homeless, it would be difficult, although not impossible, to count those individuals because some of these persons would not be assessable. For example, one could not refute that persons who sleep in cars and abandoned buildings would be hard to locate.

Other studies directly highlight the absence of money and shelter in their categorization of homelessness. Homelessness has been defined as those persons who do not only have
inadequate shelter but also as those who lack money and social support systems such as family. Although this definition focuses on those individuals who lack personal resources to obtain shelter, it would not be able to identify if these persons are actually homeless. I assume that there are individuals who do not have personal resources such as money and family but are not homeless. In a study conducted by the National Coalition for the Homeless, homelessness is defined as a multifaceted problem. Homelessness is conceptualized as including those who sleep under bridges to those who obtain shelter from friends. Admittedly, this definition grants latitude to researcher's when operationalizing the homeless problem; however, it is very dubious in nature. It wrongly allows a researcher to subjectively define homelessness without looking at every element of homelessness.

Moreover, some researchers have defined homelessness in terms of a persons geographical location at a particular point in time. For instance, definitions include those persons who congregate in urban downtown areas and those who are witnessed going through trash cans. Such a definition is not convincing. This definition is not adequate because it focuses on how one looks and where one tends to hang out. Instead, this definition should be based upon some type of sound empirical evidence. This definition is primarily subjective and should not be used in academic/systematic research. Indeed, such a definition has no true meaning in academic
research.

Some researchers also maintain that the homeless are those persons with several personal problems. Researchers who endorse this perspective claim that the homeless include those who are considered alcoholics, mentally ill, derelicts, bag ladies, and physically disabled. However, Richard H. Roper in *The Invisible Homeless: A New Urban Ecology*, advocates that this definition does not take into account any of the structural causes of why some persons end up homeless. This is a very important observation that Roper points out. One cannot deny that in order to inarguably define homelessness, one must include the inevitable structural conditions that come into play. In fact, the homeless should not be viewed as a certain type of person. Even so, homelessness should be seen as a condition of extreme poverty in which people move into and out of.

Furthermore, according to Christopher Jencks, homeless persons can be separated into groups on any given night. Homeless persons can be defined as those who sleep in free shelters or as those who sleep on the streets. The shelter homeless include those persons who sleep in free shelters or shelters provided at a minimal cost. On the other hand, persons who sleep outside shelters are commonly referred to as the street homeless. According to Peter H. Rossi, homelessness can also be divided into two groups. The literal homeless and the precarious homeless are the two groups identified by
Persons who are considered literally homeless include those persons who live in shelters or in places not intended as dwellings. Yet, those persons who reside in conventional dwellings but run a high risk of becoming literally homeless are illustrated to be the precarious homeless. But how does one persuasively determine those who are at high risk of becoming homeless from those persons who are not at high risk? For instance, one could consistently spend more money than one earns, but does that mean that he or she has a high risk of becoming homeless?

During the skid row era, the homeless were defined as those persons who lived in absence of shelter and family with whom they could reside. Nonetheless, empirical research today maintains that homelessness is the state of those persons who exist without a permanent place to live. Studies of neo-homelessness conclude that homelessness is a diverse population that primarily comprises women, children, single men, families and non-whites.

**Causes of Homelessness**

Numerous reasons exist that could possibly explain why individuals become homeless. For instance, some persons experience homelessness as the end result of floods, earthquakes, or hurricanes. Others face homelessness when they flee their countries for political or economic reasons. Indeed, economic and institutional changes can lead to homelessness. Nonetheless, most research point to the fact
that the causes of homelessness are individual or structural. The personal and structural theories, in fact, can explain why some become homeless. Nevertheless, proponents of the individual theory advance that the causes of contemporary homelessness is due to individual pathology.\textsuperscript{15} Drug and alcohol dependence, a lack of marketable job skills, incorrect social attitudes, mental illness, and personal instability are cited as examples. In fact, Elliot emphasizes that much research has been conducted on the conditions of homelessness that concentrates on personal problems, such as mental illness, that some homeless persons may possess.\textsuperscript{16} Adherents of this theory contend that a high percentage of homeless people are without homes because they are addicted to drugs or are mentally ill. This inconclusively leads these proponents to the opinion that the homeless problem will not be solved until the issues of personal pathologies are addressed.

What is more, in Alice S. Baum's and Donald W. Burnes's latest book, \textit{A Nation in Denial: The Truth about Homelessness}, they maintain that credible data is prevalent that details the extent of alcoholism, mental illness, and drug addiction among homeless persons but that researchers fail to examine this data because they do not want to be looked upon as "heartless" to homeless persons.\textsuperscript{17} Baum and Burnes conducted their study of the homeless at church based organizations for the poor and the homeless in the nation's capitol in the latter part of the 1980s. They championed in their study that "What we saw
instead were people frustrated and angered by personal lives out of control. They were entrapped by alcohol and drug addictions, mental illness, lack of education and skills, and self-esteem so low it was often manifested as self-hate. However, it was not observed anywhere in this study where homeless persons interviewed were asked if structural conditions had led to their current conditions.

According to Meredith Van Ry in Homeless Families: Causes, Effects, and Recommendations, two other models are consistent with this theory. They include the victimization and vulnerability models. The victimization model claims that when one encounters stressful events that one cannot control at an increasing rate, one becomes hopeless in attempting to survive future stressful events that life will inevitably bring. On the other hand, although similar in nature, the vulnerability model purports that due to the absence of appropriate social skills and a social support system, one does not only know how to mediate between life and events that occur but also the outcomes of such life experiences.

However, the personal pathology theory including the two models just mentioned does not take into account other possible causes of homelessness. These studies mistakenly lead one to believe that the real causes of homelessness are mainly personal. Other factors could cause homelessness, which includes the lack of affordable housing, unemployment, lack of access to health care, institutional oppression, or cutbacks
in federal entitlements. In fact, according to Richard Ropers, contemporary homelessness cannot be explained by using the personal pathology theory but instead by looking at the economic, social and political processes that are changing as society transforms. Also, persons who espouse the personal pathology theory tend to say that the result of homelessness is the fault of homeless persons. For example, researchers who emphasize the structural causes of homelessness accuse others of blaming the victim by emphasizing the problems of individuals. Thus, the individual pathology theory tends to focus on the characteristics of a person's behavior solely, instead of examining the housing market, economic system, or social structure as well. Moreover, disabilities that homeless persons have may not be the ultimate causes of their homelessness.

The structural causes of homelessness focus on numerous theories and policies. This approach is also looked upon as a macro level explanation for the causes of homelessness. The incomes theory, government cutback theory, affordable housing theory, deinstitutionalization and noninstitutionalization theories, and the holistic theory represent the structural perspective. Although the proponents of the above just mentioned theories disagree in terms of the specifics when addressing the root causes of homelessness, they all tend to suggest that homeless persons as a group should not be blamed for their homeless condition. Instead, they maintain that the
causes of homelessness is the direct result of structural changes within American society.

The incomes theory discusses those persons who possess economic or financial problems. These individuals may be unemployed or underemployed. They do not have jobs, work temporary, part-time, or hold low paying jobs. Several studies maintain that it is indeed the economic status of homeless persons that render them homeless. Admittedly, this theory has merit and could be empirically verified as a possible explanation for the causes of homelessness on its own, but it does not acknowledge that other possible structural causes could contribute to someone becoming homeless. In other words, a mixture of structural causes could lead one into the state of homelessness.

Another aspect of this theory is the discussion of economic restructuring and its relationship to the labor market. This aspect of the theory maintains that the consequence of economic restructuring, the loss of manufacturing jobs, the rising skill level demanded for jobs that pay more, and the increasing number of low paying jobs explain why people become homeless. Once again, this aspect places emphasis on only one economic explanation as opposed to looking at other possible structural causes such as the levels of government funding.

The government cut-back theory advocates that "homelessness" is the result of federal cutbacks in social
policy funding. Federal cutbacks for the construction and maintenance of public housing is also cited. For example, cutbacks in federal appropriations during the Reagan and Bush years are normally acknowledged. Reductions in federal appropriations for employment and training programs, income maintenance assistance and food stamps illustrate that fewer people in need could be assisted.

Another commonly cited example acknowledges changes in the social security disability insurance program (SSDIP). Under this program, those who were physically or mentally unable to perform in any kind of job for which they were qualified, regardless of job availability, received benefits. However, following a report published by the General Accounting Office that as many as 20 percent of the recipients may not have been eligible for benefits, a review of this program was conducted. As a result of this investigation, between 150 and 200 thousand people lost their benefits. However, as with the incomes theory, this theory does not take into account other possible structural causes such as affordable housing.

The affordable housing theory maintains that homelessness is the result of a lack of housing, in particular, "affordable" housing that is accessible to low-income people. Another aspect of this theory deals with housing policy. Proponents of this theory commonly highlight that downtown revitalization and gentrification have increased the price of
Theories of deinstitutionalism and noninstitutionalism claim that social policy has been created to eliminate the state mental hospital's role as the primary place of care for the chronic mentally ill. Instead, adherents of this theory state that policies in favor of community-based treatment were established. Community-based programs involve discharging long-term patients from state mental hospitals and limiting the admission of new patients. According to Momeni, however, deinstitutionalization is a traditional reason for the cause of homelessness, but no longer the main one. The statement that deinstitutionalization is no longer a primary cause of homelessness is unconvincing. Mentally ill patients are still released from and are not granted admission to mental hospitals under this program.

The holistic theory is different from the others in one important way. Homelessness is viewed as complex, heterogeneous and multifaceted. Supporters of this theory contend, and rightly so, that all of the above mentioned structural explanations of homelessness could be taken into account when investigating the true causes of homelessness. In addition, solutions to the homelessness problem are seen as comprehensive and coupled with diverse remedies. For example, the Stewart B. McKinney Assistance Act funds various programs in order to eliminate the conditions of homelessness instead of just funding one particular program. Programs provided by
the above mentioned act consist of emergency shelter, veterans job training, health services, community mental health services, supportive housing, rent subsidies and adult literacy.

Nonetheless, the major issue is whether homelessness stems from housing shortages, acute poverty, physical and emotional disabilities, joblessness, economic restructuring, changes in family structure or some combination of these factors. It is maintained that if one examines homelessness from a group perspective, one could not refute that the main causes of homelessness are indeed structural.
ENDNOTES


4Ibid.

5Ibid.


13 Ibid., 129.


18 Ibid.


23 Ibid., 115.


25 Ibid.


28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.


32. Ibid.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

There is no distinct method to use when studying the homeless. Several approaches can be used. They include key-persons surveys, partial counts, heroic extrapolations from partial counts, windshield street surveys, and adaptations of area probability designs. Nevertheless, these approaches are non-traditional in terms of conducting social research.

Key-persons surveys mainly involve asking "key" persons to determine the number of homeless persons and their demographic profiles as well. Key persons are normally conceptualized as those persons with in-depth knowledge of the conditions of homelessness. This knowledge base is more likely to have come from working directly with homeless persons. The benefits of this approach are that key persons have greater direct experience than anyone else in their communities with homeless persons. In fact, it is with this reasoning that this approach is utilized in this study.

Partial counts rely on surveys of some subset of the homeless population; usually one that is easily identified. Examples include persons residing in shelters and requesting food in lines of soup kitchens. However, one of the primary disadvantages with employing this approach is that no one
actually knows what proportion of the total homeless population is overlooked. All homeless persons do not use shelters and soup kitchens. Nonetheless, this approach is very important in influencing public policy to assist homeless persons who are seeking help. This fact alone should not rule out the usage of this approach. In fact, in this study the homeless are enumerated by those who request assistance through the task force, but generalizations based on this homeless sub-set have not been used to make generalizations about the entire homeless population in Atlanta.

Heroic extrapolations from partial counts are used because some portions of the homeless population are easily counted and interviewed. Nonetheless, this approach is haphazard and is avoided in this project.

Windshield street surveys attempt to conceptualize homeless persons by sight. This approach is carried out not only by examining public streets but other open places within a city. We must acknowledge that this approach is inexpensive, but it overlooks a very important point when assessing the homeless community. A researcher must be able to verbally communicate with someone. This approach falls short of this request. In fact, only race and gender can reliably be recorded. It is also not clear if those who are actually homeless can be distinguished from those who just frequent the above-mentioned locations. It is with this logical reasoning that this approach is not utilized in this study.
Adaptations of area probability designs modify the conventional survey methods. This approach takes into account obstacles that are prevalent in studying the homeless from a methodological perspective. The user of this approach would not only have to draw unbiased samples of the homeless population from shelters and non-dwelling units, but also from urban streets and in other public places where homeless persons congregate. This is exactly what this study attempted to do.

In sum, conventional social research approaches cannot be used when investigating the homeless. For example, most methods involved in quantitative studies assume that people can be counted and sampled within their dwelling units.

**Research Design**

In order to identify who the homeless are, a questionnaire designed and used by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless was utilized. In fact, much of the research on the homeless community, including homeless families, involves analyzing data collected on intake forms administered by emergency shelters. This questionnaire is used for three reasons. First, the questions asked of homeless persons listed on this form are primarily the same questions that would have been asked if an actual questionnaire had been designed. Nonetheless, survey instruments were created and used to supplement the above-mentioned tool. Second, homeless persons who live crowded-up and on the streets would be
difficult to reach to interview due to a low operating budget and time constraints of this study. Third, attempting to interview persons who live on the streets could be a life threatening situation. Therefore, persons who were attempting to leave the streets were interviewed at the task force.

Given the volume and diversity of the information collected, aggregate data analysis is used to summarize the data. Available data exist on individuals requesting shelter through the task force in 1992-1993. However, this study concentrates on data obtained from 1993; the most current available data.

In order to satisfy the third objective, which investigates the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances, an examination of the results taken from city council members and homeless persons were analyzed. Content analysis was also performed on the actual ordinances. An exploratory survey was also used to collect information regarding the major influences that led to the creation of these ordinances. Both instruments were designed to collect information in semi-structured format. (see Appendix 1 and 2)

In addition, participant's in this study possess a certain degree of knowledge about the conditions of homelessness. The participants are either homeless, homeless advocates or council members. Lastly, it is evident that the case study approach is utilized in this study; the study examines only the conditions of homelessness in Atlanta.
Interview Procedure

Questionnaires were administered to homeless persons at the task force during mid-December 1994, since during the winter months homeless persons may frequent shelters more due to cold weather. In addition, questionnaires were hand delivered to the information office at city hall to be distributed to all council members during the latter part of December 1994. However, only council members Doug Alexander, Barbara Asher, C.T. Martin, Lee Morris, Gloria Tenelo, and Jared Samples completed the surveys within the course of two and a half months. The other council members simply refused to complete the questionnaires. Nevertheless, both questionnaires provided a brief description of the study and instructions for completing the survey.
ENDNOTES


2Ibid., 54.

3Ibid., 56.

4Ibid., 60.

5Ibid., 57.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"The very concept of history implies the scholar and the reader. Without a generation of civilized people to study history, to preserve its records, to absorb its lessons and relate them to its own problems, history, too would lose its meaning."
NY Times 27 May 84

Historically, when one refers to the homeless, he or she is making reference to the characteristics of a cohort that is different from the attributes that are highlighted when discussing homeless persons in 1995. In 1995 and in nearly the past two decades, one normally employs a broader definition of homelessness. On the other hand, a more narrow connotation is associated with homelessness from a historical perspective. Research indicates that during the 1960s and even before, if a person was considered residing in a state of homelessness, it was not due to his or her inability to secure housing. Instead, a person was defined as homeless based upon his or her connection to mainstream society. If persons occupied homes but lived isolated from family and others socially, they were considered homeless.¹

Another aspect of homelessness during this earlier period provides a picture that expresses the demographic profiles of homeless persons as homogeneous.² They were not only primarily
white but male as well. (see Table 4.1.) In addition, their marital status was labeled "single". The mean of their ages tended to be what we consider middle aged today. According to Caton, homeless people fell within the age group of a person living in his or her late 30's or early 40's.³

Homeless persons during this earlier period, moreover, were classified according to the geographical location in which they inhabited.⁴ Actually, they were given a nick name that corresponded to the area in which they lived. They are called skid row residents.⁵ This conceptualization is the direct consequence of earlier research that illustrates that homeless persons lived primarily in skid row areas. Skid row areas comprised a host of businesses that responded to the needs of the destitute, transient and familyless working men.⁶ These areas provided the homeless with many valuable resources. Employment agencies that sought transient labor were located within these areas.⁷ These agencies provided the homeless with an opportunity to make a decent living for themselves in which residences could be purchased for stability. Although homes could be obtained with incomes from a paycheck, skid rows also provided single room occupancies (SRO's) that made acquiring housing easier by means of low rent.⁸ Restaurants located in these areas also provided food at low cost.⁹ Clearly, the ability to consistently, at least for a while, draw a paycheck and obtain housing at a reduced rate allowed homeless persons to maintain permanent housing.
Nevertheless, it was during this historical period that reasons were put forth to explain the non-necessity of skid rows because homelessness was seen as a problem within its last stages of existence. For instance, research demonstrates that modifications in the Social Security Old Age Pension program played a major role in suggesting that the homeless problem was ending. This program began to include or provide monetary assistance to people already participating in the labor market. Subsidized housing for the elderly was also provided by the federal government. The elderly as a class were able to obtain not only cheap housing but with financial assistance. Individuals classified as physically disabled and those labeled as chronically mentally ill were also assisted financially by the federal government. They were able to receive additional income through supplemental security income (SSI) and social security disability insurance (SSDI), which aided in their daily expenses.

Furthermore, provisional labor was no longer confined to skid row areas. The structure of the labor market changed. For instance, Rossi emphasizes the fact that freight railroads where homeless persons worked were supplemented by long distance trucking companies. Factories and warehouses also moved out of these skid row areas. As a result, urban renewal programs were created and implemented to expand downtown areas while skid row areas were being torn down. It is during this period in the 1970s that homelessness began to take on new
During the late 1970s, initially, one important factor began bringing attention to the issue of homelessness. However, less than 10 years earlier, homelessness was considered to be diminishing. Nonetheless, it was nothing more than the visibility of homeless persons that refocused our attention on the conditions of homelessness. As a result, homelessness began to be understood in a broader context.

Homeless persons were now seen as those who had no permanent place to live. In fact, the locations of the homeless changed as people were witnessed living in public places. They were seen sleeping or resting in doorways of buildings and in abandoned cars. Bus terminals and railroad stations became common places where homeless persons could also be noticed. Nevertheless, another important description of the homeless community began to change. Homeless persons were not considered homogeneous anymore. They were no longer just white males; women and children began to make-up the demographic profiles as well. Age composition, employment status, and ethnic composition also changed. Those considered homeless suddenly became those without adequate incomes or jobs to acquire permanent housing. They could also fall within any age bracket. African Americans, furthermore, were seen in larger numbers among homeless persons.

The increase in the visibility of homelessness is attributed to the destruction of low cost housing located
within skid row areas, urban renewal and the lack of availability of low-cost housing. Deinstitutionalization and economic reasons are also cited. In response, shelters emerged.21

During the 1980s and even in the 1990s so far, the high visibility of homeless persons remains unchanged.22 The demographic profiles and causes remain heterogeneous.23 However, one of the main differences of homelessness during the 1990s and the decade before, lie in the manner in which the conditions of homelessness are dealt. As indicated above, shelters to house homeless persons were established. Shelters were created due to three primary reasons.24 One, funds were allocated on the local, state, and federal levels to combat the homeless problem. For instance, in the latter part of the 1980s Congress passed the Mckinney Homeless Assistance Act, which for the first time appropriated nearly $500 million to directly assist homeless persons.25 The availability of this additional revenue to homeless persons provided avenues for them to better their living conditions than had existed before.

Due to the McKinney Act, revenue was used directly by different public agencies to assist the homeless obtain housing, trade skills, and medical services.26 Subsidies were also provided to maintain existing shelters and a variety of rehabilitation programs including vocational training, medical care and services for the chronic mentally ill. This Act is
still in existence today. Nevertheless, numerous homeless advocates purport that current funding provided by this act does not meet the needs of the homeless today and should be increased. This Act came to life only after public involvement. In fact, Congress members and homeless advocates slept on the footsteps of Capitol Hill in order to influence the passage of this act. Three, private foundations offered grants to aid in the establishment and maintenance of shelters to house the homeless. For example, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in association with the Pew Memorial Trust supports medical clinics and other shelters for homeless persons. Atlanta is one of the cities that receives such funding. As a result, the money distributed among these public agencies are intended to make available social services to and for homeless persons.

We can see that history acknowledges that the conceptualization of homelessness dating back to the 1960s is less broad than the conceptualization today. The conditions, demographic profiles, and causes of homelessness have also changed. Homelessness is more diverse today (see Table 4.1.), although most of its victims who were interviewed seem to suffer from structural causes. However, direct funding to assist homeless persons has entered the picture, although some maintain that funding should increase. Lastly, public involvement and funding by agencies have played a major role to help eradicate the conditions of homelessness in America.
TABLE 4.1.
HOMELESS POPULATION 1900 - 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Homelessness in 1960s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>White Men 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Held Job 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>557,087</td>
<td>Median Age 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of Homeless in 1907</th>
<th>Race of Homeless in 1907</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14</td>
<td>White 584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>Black 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>Other 342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>Not Known 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 and over</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of homeless persons in 1907: 1000

ENDNOTES


2. Ibid.


4. Ibid.


9. Ibid.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 28.

14. Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 35-36.

20 Ibid., 40.

21 Ibid., 35.


23 Ibid.


25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.


29 Ibid.

CHAPTER V

PROFILES OF HOMELESSNESS IN ATLANTA

"People who are homeless are not social inadequates. They are people without homes."
Christian Science Monitor 7 May 85

Who are the Homeless

The homeless residing in Atlanta are no different from homeless persons living in any other urban area. Homeless persons represent a diverse population. For instance, the demographic characteristics of the homeless population residing in Atlanta may differ according to their race, gender or ethnic background. They could be African, Hispanic, White, Native, or Asian or male or female. Age could also differ among the city's homeless. In fact, some persons may be categorized within an age bracket that labels them young, middle-age, or old. At any rate, these homeless populations are constantly in need of physical dwellings, securing employment, permanent housing, food and clothing. In addition, they may be in need of legal assistance, transportation, or assistance with paying utilities.

This chapter attempts to provide a closer look at the demographic characteristics of the homeless population in the city. In order to assess the characteristics and causes of those who are indeed homeless, information has been collected
from the Atlanta Metropolitan Task Force for the Homeless. Again, survey instruments designed by the researcher were also employed to obtain the above named information. Moreover, analysis of the data on the homeless population having to appear in Atlanta's dispossessory court due to their inability to pay their rent or mortgage was performed.

Race

According to the local task force, African Americans significantly represent the majority of individuals seeking shelter and who experience problems with paying rent. In addition, the study attempted to investigate the notion that only African Americans are homeless. Figure 5.1. indicates that African Americans are requesting more shelter assistance than any other ethnic group in Atlanta. The fact that more African Americans frequently request more assistance according to the data is partially attributed to the fact that more African Americans reside in the city than any other ethnic group. (see Table 5.1.) According to the U.S. census, slightly more than 264 thousand African Americans live in the city compared to less than 130 thousand of other ethnic groups.¹

What is more, white Americans represent a large number of those persons requesting shelter in areas where their ethnic group represent a large proportion of the total population.² While whites and hispanics do request shelter in the city, they do so significantly less than African Americans. (see Figure 5.1.)
Figure 5.1. Racial Breakdown of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter. Total number requesting shelter: 16,360. Data from Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta, pg 21.
### TABLE 5.1.
HOMLESS PERSONS IN ATLANTA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 17</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 29</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and Over</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults and Children</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of persons requesting assistance: 16,360

This finding does not in its totality demonstrate that more African Americans are homeless in the city. It only indicates that more requests come from African Americans in a city that has a substantial African American population.

Age Factor

The task force provides housing to homeless populations between the ages from less than 1 year to more than 60 years of age. (see Figure 5.2.) This finding unquestionably illustrates that homeless persons in need of shelter in the city are not primarily middle-aged as expressed in the historical perspective. In fact, one cannot deny that the age composition of those requesting shelter or conceptualized as homeless has changed. Moreover, persons less likely to request shelter assistance fall within the age group of 60 and above. Yet, children under the age of 17 represent significantly those requesting assistance through the task force. It must be cautioned here, this information corresponds only to those persons requesting assistance through the task force. It is assumed that other homeless persons do reside in the city but do not request assistance. Therefore, it is reasonably argued that there is no precise way to determine the exact ages of all homeless persons in the city. Nonetheless, these findings do allow the homeless to be visibly identified by recording the ages of some individuals that are experiencing the conditions of homelessness. Such findings can be used to influence public programs and policies that cater to specific
age groups, if necessary, when addressing the ills of homelessness in the city.

Homeless Men

It appears that not only in Atlanta but also in Georgia, that men are in greater need of shelter than women. In fact, there are significantly more beds to temporarily house homeless men in Atlanta and in Georgia than there are to house homeless women. For instance, in Atlanta, more than 1400 beds are available to house homeless men whereas, less than 300 beds are available to house women.\(^3\) Furthermore, in Georgia, more than 2 thousand beds are available for men seeking shelter compared to slightly more than 5 hundred for women.\(^4\) In Atlanta, nevertheless, more men do seek assistance through the task force. (see Figure 5.3.) However, the difference between men and women requesting shelter through the task force is only 4 percentage points. Clearly, of those persons requesting shelter through the task force, the state of homelessness is not significantly experienced more by men than women. In addition, most of these men are single and only 1 percent have children with them while in search of shelter through the task force. It appears that gender bias against women who are homeless exists in the availability of shelter.

Homeless Women

Two primary classes of women can be identified when classifying those who request assistance through the task
Figure 5.2. Age Composition of Homeless in City Requesting Shelter. Total number requesting shelter: 16,360. Data from Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, *Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta*, pg 21.
force. They are either single or single with children. (see Figure 5.4.) Females requesting shelter fall eight percentage points shy of the 50th percentile rank. Of that number, less than 15 percent are single. On the other hand, and which happens to be the largest group, 42 percent of the women requesting shelter are not only single or coupled but have children with them as well. In fact, according to the task force, single women with children are the fastest growing subgroup of homeless people in metro Atlanta.5

Homeless Children

Another sub-population of homeless persons in Atlanta are children. It is only possible to determine the number of homeless children by examining data that indicates the number of children requesting shelter. The task force indicates that approximately one-third of the 16,360 individuals that seek shelter in the city are children. (see Figure 5.5.) This finding undoubtedly indicates that children are also at risk of becoming homeless in the city. In addition, nearly 43 percent of children in the city live in poverty, which could contribute to them becoming homeless.6

Length of Stay in City

In order to determine how long persons who request shelter assistance through their office have been residing in Atlanta, task force hotline operators, including me, simply asked them. Consequently, the least amount of persons
requesting shelter indicate that they have lived in Atlanta less than 10 years. (see Table 5.2.) On the other hand, most of the individuals (54%) who request shelter report that they have been living in the city for less than 10 years. Indeed, the greatest number in this group have been in the city less than six months, indicating a more frequent occurrence of homelessness among the city's new migrants. Nevertheless, the next highest group of persons (46%) who experience homelessness and request assistance through the task force claim that they have lived in the city more than ten years; however, this finding does not demonstrate that these people have been living in Atlanta for ten consecutive years.

In order to gain more insight pertaining to the profiles of homeless persons residing in the city, demographic data on persons having to appear in Atlanta's dispossessory court were complied. This process, of course, was performed to actually determine who is legally being forced out of their homes.

After numerous visits to the civil division of government, it was observed that persons evicted from their homes were overwhelmingly African American. (see Table 5.3.) It was also determined that women are more likely than men to be evicted. Additionally, it was observed that virtually all of these individuals (98%) were without legal representation at the time. In sum, the homeless population in the City is irrefutably diverse. Individuals differ not only according to
Figure 5.3. Gender Profile of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter. Total number requesting shelter: 16,360. Data from Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, *Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta*, pg 21.
Figure 5.4. Family Status of Homeless in City of Atlanta Requesting Shelter. Total number requesting shelter: 16,360. Data from Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta, pg 21.
FIGURE 5.5. Adult and Children Make-up of Homeless in City Requesting Shelter. Total number requesting shelter: 16,360. Data from Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta, pg 21.
### TABLE 5.2.
ADDITIONAL CALLER INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length Of Stay In City</th>
<th>Veteran Status</th>
<th>Hungry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months: 44%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 10 years: 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years to life: 46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Reasons Stated For State Of Homelessness

- Eviction: 30%
- Jobless: 08%
- Family Breakup: 22%
- Relocation: 18%
- Other: 10%

race and age but gender as well. The marital status of persons requesting shelter through the task force paints a contrasting portrait. However, it was observed that women with children are the most increasing sub-population of individuals that are requesting shelter through the task force. Lastly, most of the homeless in search of shelter have lived in the city less than a decade.

Causes of Homelessness

It is vital that an understanding of what causes homelessness is provided in order to effectively address this social disaster by means of public policy. It has already been explained that these persons are without money to secure permanent housing due to their economic conditions.

Economic Explanations

The task force indicates that a substantial number of the individuals requesting shelter from its office claim that their state of homelessness is the end result of an economic crisis. (see Table 5.2.) For instance, of the more than 16 thousand persons seeking assistance through its office, 30 percent acknowledge that they became homeless due to their inability to pay rent. Another 8 percent state that as the result of having lost their jobs, they were not able to purchase or maintain permanent housing. Thus, according to the task force, nearly 40 percent of those requesting assistance
TABLE 5.3.

PROFILES OF INDIVIDUALS IN DISPOSSESSORY COURT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Reasons Not Able To Pay Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American: 89%</td>
<td>Inadequate Income: 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: 11%</td>
<td>Loss of Job: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bankruptcy: 02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Decisions Of The Court</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male: 42%</td>
<td>Case dismissed: 05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female: 58%</td>
<td>Reset Trial: 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 days to move: 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement with landlord: 01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Represented By Attorney</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 02%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 98%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of people observed: 132

could not withstand economic pressures. What is more, nearly half (46%) of those observed in dispossessory court indicate that they were unable to pay their rent due to economic related problems. Mental problems, nonetheless, could also be associated with one becoming homeless in the City of Atlanta.

Deinstitutionalism and Noninstitutionalism

Although the homeless requesting shelter through the task force did not directly indicate that they were victims of deinstitutionalization, the State of Georgia adopted such a policy in 1973. In fact, it is difficult to determine or identify the proportion of Atlanta's homeless population that are actually suffering from serious mental disorders. Nevertheless, previous research indicates that since the creation of Georgia's policies of deinstitutionalization and noninstitutionalization, admission to any of Georgia's ten state mental hospitals has dramatically decreased. In addition, of those who are treated in these hospitals, the proportion of the individuals treated has remained constant. Since 1973, the number of patients treated in these hospitals normally is slightly less than 25,000 a year due to cuts in the budget.

Government Cut-backs

It is compelling to look at both national and sub-national spending in regards to determining whether public spending has increased, decreased, or remained about the same
when addressing the homeless issue. It is also critical to highlight that the national government's answer to the conditions of homelessness is mainly expressed through the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act created in 1987. Its primary purpose, up to this point, has been to fund numerous emergency assistance programs to aid the homeless within the confines of the U.S., (including Atlanta). For instance, monetary support is allocated for the creation as well as maintenance of shelters and soup kitchens. With this program, one must acknowledge that the role played by the federal government manifests no more than a provisional one.

Additionally, federal housing programs do indeed exist to aid the homeless secure permanent housing. Research indicates that the objectives of these programs include establishing or subsidizing housing at minimal cost. Nonetheless, recent research acknowledges that federal funding for these housing programs have been cut by 75 percent during the decade prior to the 1990s. What is more, evidence of current research presents a confusing role portrayed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For example, between 1977 and 1993, mortgage interest and property tax deductions dramatically increased for homeowners. Money used by HUD relative to low cost housing programs decreased significantly during the periods of 1980 and 1992. In 1992, HUD funded up to $23 billion for low income housing programs. In contrast, more than twice as much ($50) billion was spent by HUD for
similar programs in 1980. It must be noted that these figures are expressed in what economists define as constant dollars.

National welfare benefits, furthermore, have been dramatically cut during the 1970s and the 1980s. In 1993, data indicate that federal welfare benefits were less than two-thirds of the level of benefits in 1970. These data also indicates that welfare benefits reductions, although adjusted for inflation, occurred in every state of the union, with the exception of Alaska, during this period. The national government's role has not only been that of providing temporary solutions to homelessness; it has reduced its funding that once helped more individuals acquire permanent housing.

According to local government records, cutback practices by the City of Atlanta are similar to those as practiced by the U.S. government. Research Atlanta, Inc. indicates that per capita expenditures by the city for housing and community development decreased significantly between 1972 and 1990, which impacted the availability of low cost housing.

Lack of Affordable Housing

Findings also indicate that when examining the affordability of housing, the role of the national government cannot be ignored. In fact, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the lack of affordable housing nationally is clearly one of the major causes of homelessness. If one were to also examine federal criteria
in regards to housing, it would show that the cost of housing should not exceed 30 percent of a household's income. Nevertheless, current research indicates that nearly two-thirds of destitute renters spend at least 50 percent if not more of their income on housing.

In Atlanta, a similar observation is prevalent. For instance, task force hotline operators state that the average person requesting shelter state that he or she was spending at least 70 percent of his or her income on rent prior to becoming homeless. Furthermore, a large proportion of the families that request assistance are actually receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits. Even so, they are not able to maintain permanent housing. In fact, 61 percent of single women with children indicate that they were receiving AFDC benefits before becoming homeless. However, they still could not afford to pay rent due to local governmental practices including urban renewal.

Urban Renewal

In order to fully understand urban revitalization in Atlanta, one must first look at its history. Urban renewal has been defined and discussed widely by numerous scholars and politicians. Nonetheless, the definition employed here, although borrowed from Jeffrey R. Henig, more adequately relates to the city government's structural manner of conducting business. Urban redevelopment is seen as a joint venture exercised by not only the public sector of city but
TABLE 5.4.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING DECREASES IN ATLANTA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Housing Costs</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 - $199</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200 - $249</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250 - $299</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300 - $349</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$350 - $399</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400 - $449</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$450 - $499</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 - $599</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600 - $699</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$700 - $799</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$800 - $999</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 - 1,249</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,250 - 1,499</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500 or more</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Cash Rent</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median (excludes no cash rent)</td>
<td>487 dollars</td>
<td>530 dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the private sector as well. Local government is public whereas non-governmental business are considered private. In fact, according to Henig, the only way in which private urban renewal can take place is with undeniable endorsement from government. Assistance provided by municipal planning departments such as changes in zoning, taxing abatement, governmental grants, and designated landmarks are some of the methods used to promote private redevelopment.

Herbert Gans, moreover, puts forth a very interesting but important question pertaining to urban renewal. He implicitly challenges his readers to identify the group that urban revitalization is most advantageous for. Is it the public community, which it is commonly cited? Or, is it primarily private enterprise? Gans maintains that urban redevelopment is more beneficial for private enterprise. Clarence Stone, furthermore, in Economic Growth and Neighborhood Discontent: System Bias in the Urban Renewal Program of Atlanta, states that while the business community actively influences urban renewal, the public community has little voice if any in the process. He goes on to claim that the public community's voice is primarily reactionary to the renewal projects that have already been designed by government and private industry.

During the latter part of 1965, the Atlanta Journal, reported a story based on survey research that detailed municipal governmental activities that contributed to the
displacement of Atlanta families living in poverty. The creation of additional low-income housing to counter the demands of low-income families was not met. In fact, governmental activity displaced 15,500 families between the beginning of January 1956 and the ending of June 1965. Between 9,000 and 12,000 residents in the city, moreover, were categorized as economically eligible for public housing. Yet, during this unchanging period, "only slightly more than 4,000 new low-cost housing were made available." Basic mathematics informs us that this process contributed to at least a 5,000 (unit) housing shortage. It is reasonably argued that the consequence of this process had a negative impact on the housing concerns of Atlanta's poor population.

Construction activity and urban renewal during this earlier period in Atlanta also played vital roles in the displacement of poor families. For instance, nearly 7,300 people were displaced due to expressway construction. Another 6,000 were forced from their homes due to urban renewal projects. However, one of the primary problems encountered by the public community relative to urban renewal was that of locating or receiving relocation low-cost housing.

Furthermore, in 1966, the stadium used to co-host the 1993 World Series was constructed in a neighborhood that once concentrated over 5,500 low income African American families. Even so, low-income African Americans still live in this area, which is commonly known as Summer Hill. The result of building
the above-mentioned stadium is that 5,500 Summerhill residents were displaced.41 In 1988, when the Democratic National Convention convened in the city, Atlantans and the world watched and listened as Jesse Jackson and others gave astounding political speeches. However, before and after Jackson and his family and other families arrived, police arrested persons who appeared to be living on the streets to make Atlanta look "great".42 This activity is better known as a police sweep. Clearly a practice such as this raises a civil liberties violation question.

Other governmental activity in regards to the displacement of poor renters could be viewed when examining other practices, such as those that led to the creation of the Civic Center. In addition, one could probably view similar processes that led to the building of the infamous Georgia Dome. However, only a brief historical portrait is necessary here. Instead, lets focus our attention on the 1996 Olympics.

1996 Olympics and the Homeless

It has been stated, by many, that Atlanta's successful bid to host the 1996 olympics would undoubtedly bring economic progress to Atlanta and its residents. Nevertheless, there is another side to the 1996 olympics. According to the task force, the arrival of the Olympic Games contributes to the homeless crisis.43 In addition, the Atlanta Journal Constitution published an article in June of 1991 that highlighted the dominating role that the Central Atlanta
Progress (CAP) played in the campaign planning process. CAP is known throughout the city as an upscale business organization. This finding leads us back to the Gans and Henigs perspective that the true benefactors of urban renewal are the commercial elite.

A closer look reveals that low-income African American residents of the nations oldest public housing project are also being displaced. In fact, Techwood homes, which is the oldest housing project, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A proportion of Techwood homes is being used to build an olympic village that will house 15,000 athletes and officials during the 1996 olympics. However, when the olympic games are over, Georgia State University students will be allowed to occupy this space and not the low-income residents who presently live in the Techwood community.

We must acknowledge that the profiles of the homeless population in Atlanta are different. Reasons cited by the homeless for their conditions of homelessness are not the same. The structural roles that the federal and local government in Atlanta have played through governmental activity have also contributed to persons becoming homeless.
ENDNOTES


3Georgia Housing and Financing Authority, Profiles of Homelessness in Georgia (Atlanta, Ga: Georgia Housing and Financing Authority, January 1994), 2.

4Ibid.


8Ibid.

9Ibid.


11Ibid.

12Georgia Housing and Financing Authority, Profiles of Homelessness in Georgia (Atlanta, Ga: Georgia Housing and Financing Authority, January 1994), 14.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.


26 Ibid., 14.

27 Ibid.


29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.


34Ibid.


36Ibid.

37Ibid.

38Ibid.

39Ibid.

40Ibid.

41Ibid.


43Ibid.


45Ibid.


49Ibid.
Public policy is one of the basic avenues that is taken by national and local governments to confront social problems that negatively affect American people. Nonetheless, before policies are created to positively affect its targeted population, governmental as well as non-governmental forces influence the establishment of such policies. In fact, this chapter has been designed to examine the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances in the City of Atlanta. These ordinances were created in hopes of protecting the general public from "stray persons", whereas homeless persons view these policies as connotating the limitation of economic opportunity.

It should be noted that the intent of this study was to interview all 18 city council members. However, only one third (6) of the council members responded in writing to the questionnaires. For instance, two council members directly and refused to fill out the questionnaires. The remaining ten failed to return phone calls within the course of two and a half months. Nonetheless, the study was able to incorporate the attitudes of some of the council members regarding to the above mentioned policies.
According to the six council members interviewed, there is unquestionably a homeless problem in the city. Nonetheless, they indicate that the homeless problem in Atlanta is not the most important problem affecting the city. Instead, they highlight that economic development and crime are the most pressing problems having significant impact on the city. However, they did indicate that the conditions of homelessness in the city are being addressed through policy.

When voting on homeless issues, moreover, they indicate 5 to 1 that they consult with others, homeless advocates and homeless agencies. (see Table 6.1.) Likewise, they also indicate 5 to 1 that they use their best judgement when deciding on homeless policies, as well as other polices. In addition, only 3 of the 6 members interviewed indicated that they voted on the 1991 Anti-Panhandling ordinance. On the other hand, only 2 of the 6 indicated that they voted on the Window-washing ordinance. Only half, moreover, consulted external sources for information prior to voting on these ordinances.

1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance

The essence of the Panhandling ordinance maintains that if a person asks or begs for clothing or money by accosting or forcing oneself on another individual, he or she is in violation of city law. Accosting or forcing oneself on another person is associated with placing fear within the heart or mind of the person being approached. The intent of
TABLE 6.1.
ATLANTA COUNCIL MEMBERS INTERVIEW RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Problem in Atlanta</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with Homeless Advocates and Homeless Agencies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Best Judgement When Deciding on Homeless Policy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted on 1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted Other External Sources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted on Window-washing Ordinance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Council Members: 6

Source: Interview with Atlanta City Council members, 1995.
this fear may be influenced by written or verbal language. In addition, forcing oneself upon others includes constantly begging for material assistance in close proximity to the person assistance is requested from after this person has refused to offer aid. A person found in violation of this law as well as the Window-washing ordinance can be sentenced to 6 months in prison.

**Window-washing Ordinance**

The Window-washing ordinance is designed to protect not only Atlanta's public streets but citizens as they commute back and forth on these streets. The ordinance also seeks to prosecute individuals who attempt to wash cars on public streets. The practice of washing car windows to earn money in public streets is viewed as placing other citizen's lives in physical danger.

**Homeless Persons**

Of the 35 homeless persons interviewed regarding the aboved mentioned policies, they expressed various opinions. For instance, 77 percent stated that people should not be prohibited from begging for food, money or clothing. In fact, 86 percent of them stated that prohibition from asking one repeatedly for money, food or clothing is a violation of the right of free speech. In addition, 63 percent indicated that they disagree with the statement that it should be a crime for individuals to wash car windows on public
streets to earn money. In fact, 76 percent indicated that they consider panhandling a job. Another 73 percent stated that they disagree with the thought of one possibly having to serve 6 months in jail for violation of one of these laws. Lastly, and most importantly, 92 percent of the homeless interviewed indicate that they disagree with the statement that city council is doing a good job in helping homeless persons.

It is evident that the 1991 Anti-Panhandling ordinance and Window-washing ordinance were created with the public interest at heart in order to provide a sense of physical security for the public against strangers. However, homeless persons interviewed indicated that these laws legally prevent them from earning a specific type of living. Most of the homeless interviewed also acknowledged that they not only disagree with the tenets of these ordinances but also with the overall performance of city council relative to homeless issues.
TABLE 6.2.
VIEWPOINTS OF THE HOMELESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should Not Be Prohibited From Begging For Food, Money or Clothing</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe That Prohibition From Begging Repeatedly Is A Violation Of The First Amendment</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Be A Crime To Wash Car Windows On Public Streets</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider Panhandling A Job</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should Serve A Six Month Jail Sentence For Breaking The 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing Ordinances</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council Members Are Making A Good Effort To Assist Homeless People</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Homeless Persons: 35

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS

This research project has provided an indepth investigation on the conditions of homelessness in Atlanta. The data observed on the homeless population in Atlanta clearly indicate that a homeless population does exist. The data also indicate that the demographic profile of this homeless population includes individuals of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. However, the data illustrate that blacks and women with children are the fastest growing category of the homeless population requesting assistance through shelters. In fact, it appears that the African American homeless population in Atlanta are powerless in terms of getting government to not only listen to their concerns but also in locating low-income housing. It also seems as if local government is addressing only the needs and demands of the commercial industry. These findings also show that age, race and gender are increasingly more important variables when determining who may become homeless.

Findings also indicate that the major causes of homelessness in Atlanta are structural. The data proves that homeless persons within the city are experiencing homelessness due to economic reasons including cutbacks in government
funding for social programs to aid the homeless population. The homeless community in Atlanta are also living in the state of homelessness due to other governmental practices including deinstitutionalization and non-institutionalization. Lastly, urban renewal practices within the city, according to the data, contribute to persons becoming homeless. In fact, the research shows that urban renewal practices carried out by the city have a history that exist over two decades and that contribute to explanations why some become homeless.

Finally, although the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances were created to protect the public at large from strangers that constantly beg for money, clothing or food, the homeless indicate that their continuous acts of begging is a way of survival. In fact, the research shows that some homeless persons view panhandling and washing car windows on public streets as a job.

In sum, the research indicates that the conditions of "homelessness" in Atlanta have been primarily induced by the political system. The solution to this problem is found at its source: city and federal government policy. That is, solutions to Atlanta's homeless problem can only occur by altering some of the city's current practices and public policies. Federal intervention (via increment subsidized housing) is also extremely critical in moving people into a safe and comfortable home environment.

In addition, urban scholars who possess an interest in
studying the homeless population in America should first examine practices by the political system regarding enterprise zones and government grants. A starting point for urban scholars would be to investigate federal cutbacks in social programs, practices of urban renewal, availability of affordable housing, and policies of deinstitutionalization and noninstitutionalization. Urban scholars should also consider race, age, and gender when seeking to identify the profiles of those who are homeless.
APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

For Interviews With Homeless Persons

Clark Atlanta University

Investigator: Robert Wilkes, Jr., Masters Candidate
Political Science Department
847-9019

Purposes and Benefits

This is a study about five city ordinances that may or may not have a direct impact upon the City of Atlanta's homeless population. These policies include the 1991 Anti-Panhandling and Window-washing ordinances. Although I have information about these policies, I do not know how homeless persons view these policies in terms of alleviating the conditions of homelessness.

To obtain the information that I am looking for in regard to the above mentioned policies, I will be asking you some questions. You should be able to complete this questionnaire within 30 minutes.

This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of requirements for a graduate degree in Political Science.

Participation in this study is not only voluntary but you are clear to skip any question or to quit at any time.

The results of this research will be placed in the thesis section of the Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center.

Your answers will be kept confidential. Only the researcher listed above will have access to the interview information.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. I voluntarily consent to participate. I understand that future questions I may have about the research will be answered by the researcher listed above. I understand that I can withdraw...
from participating at any time and may skip answering any questions that I choose.

Signature of Participant

____________________________________

Signature of Interviewer

____________________________________

Shelter_________________________  Date________

Please check if you would like a copy of the survey results

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION
Interview Form For Homeless Persons

Please circle only one number as it corresponds to your answer choice.

1. What type of shelter is this?
   1. public
   2. private
   3. unspecified
   4. soup kitchen
   5. other

2. Who is served?
   1. men
   2. women
   3. families
   4. children
   5. other

3. Identify shelter operation hours:
   1. 24 hours
   2. night shelter
   3. day shelter
   4. other

4. Do you think people should or should not be prohibited from begging for food, money or clothing?
   1. should
   2. should not

5. Do you think that it should or should not be a crime for someone to sleep in a public park?
   1. should
   2. should not

6. Do you think that a person should or should not be able to be arrested prior to an unlawful act is committed?
   1. should
   2. should not

7. Do you agree or disagree that the prohibition of someone from asking strangers repeatedly for money, food, or clothing to be a violation of the right to free speech?
   1. agree
   2. disagree

8. Do you think that police officers should or should not have the power to enter a vacant building at their discretion and arrest persons who look as if they are not suppose to be there?
1. should
2. should not

9. Do you agree or disagree with the fact that a police officer can arrest anyone for remaining in a parking lot in which he does not have a vehicle parked?
   1. agree
   2. disagree

10. Do you agree or disagree that the commission of a single criminal act on the premises of a shelter could prompt the revocation of the shelter's operating license?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

11. Do you agree or disagree that the thought of losing a operator's license by the commission of a single criminal act on a shelter premises would cause an operator who would fear license revocation to refuse a room to someone who looks as if he is a trouble maker?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

12. Do you agree or disagree that the thought of losing an operator's license by the commission of a single criminal act on a shelter premises would influence investors who finance these shelters to withdraw support if the license could be easily revoked?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

13. Do you agree or disagree that a person should be able get a maximum of 6 months in jail for sleeping in a park?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

14. Do you agree or disagree with a public hearing being held on all issues relating to the homeless?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

15. Do you agree or disagree that it should be a crime for individuals who wash windows on public streets?
    1. agree
    2. disagree

16. Do labor pools recruit from this shelter?
    1. yes
    2. no

17. Do you think that a person should or should not be able to operate a labor pool without first obtaining a license?
18. Do you think that labor pool operators should or should not be required to keep daily records consisting of the names of every person assigned a job for the day?
   1. should
   2. should not

19. Should or should not operators of labor pools be able to charge workers for usage of equipment to perform duties?
   1. should
   2. should not

20. If operators do not comply with the rules outlined by city hall, should or should not their operators license be revoked?
   1. should
   2. should not

21. Should or should not operators of labor pools be able to charge workers for transportation to and from work?
   1. should
   2. should not

22. Should or should not labor pools provide workers with a pay stub?
   1. should
   2. should not

23. Do you agree or disagree that a person should be able get a maximum of 6 months in jail for washing a car windshield on a public street?
   1. agree
   2. disagree

24. Do you consider panhandling a job?
   1. yes
   2. no

25. What would help a homeless person most in attempting to escape the state of homelessness?

26. If city council could design a policy to prevent homelessness in the City of Atlanta, what should it be?
27. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that City council is doing a good job in helping homeless persons?
   1. agree
   2. disagree

28. Do you have any specific recommendations for council members?
   1. yes
   2. no

If yes, what are they?

29. Are you a shelter director or a homeless person?
   1. shelter director
   2. homeless person

30. If a homeless person, why are you homeless?
   1. eviction
   2. loss of job
   3. disagree from psychiatric hospital
   4. other
If other, what?
APPENDIX 2

Interview Form For
City Council Members

Council person________________________ District number____

1. What is the most important problem that confronts the City
   of Atlanta that you must address as a councilman?

2. What is the second most important problem that confronts
   the City of Atlanta that you must address as a councilman?

3. Please use the space below to list other important
   problems that confront the City of Atlanta today that you must
   address.

4. When you make decisions on issues relative to the
   homeless, do you use your best judgment, even if it means
   doing something unpopular, or do you do what the majority of
   those who elected you want even if you disagree?
   (circle only one answer)
   1. use own best judgment
   2. both about equally
   3. do what majority wants

5. Do you consult with other organizations or persons when
   deciding on homeless policies?
   1. yes
   2. no

6. What groups and individuals do you feel it is necessary to
   consult when resolving homeless issues in the City of Atlanta?
   1. Metro Task Force for the Homeless
   2. Georgia Coalition to End Homeless
   3. The Southern Regional Coalition
   4. The National Coalition for the Homeless
   5. homeless persons
   6. homeless shelter directors
7. Is there a homeless problem in the City of Atlanta?
   1. yes
   2. no
   If so, what is it?

8. What led to the creation of the five ordinances?
   a. 1991 Anti-panhandling Ordinance
      1. safety of public at large
      2. getting tough on criminals
      3. other
      If other, what?

   b. Hotel/Motel/SRO Ordinance

   c. Six Month Ordinance
      1. safety of public at large
      2. getting tough on criminals
      3. other
      If other, what?

   d. Window-washing Ordinance
      1. safety of public at large
      2. getting tough on criminals
      3. other
      If other, what?

   e. Labor Pool Ordinance
9. What is the intent of each ordinance?
   a. 1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance
   b. Hotel/Motel/SRO Ordinance
   c. Six Month Sentence Ordinance
   d. Window-washing Ordinance
   e. Labor Pool Ordinance

10. Would you vote to have one of the ordinances repealed?
    1. yes
    2. no
    If so, which one(s) and why?

11. Did you vote on one the ordinances listed below?
    a. 1991 Anti-Panhandling Ordinance
       1. yes
       2. no
    b. Hotel/Motel/SRO Ordinance
       1. yes
       2. no
    c. Six Month Sentence Ordinance
       1. yes
       2. no
    d. Window-washing Ordinance
       1. yes
       2. no
    e. Labor Pool Ordinance
       1. yes
       2. no
12. Did you consult other organizations or persons prior to voting on the five ordinances listed below?
   a. 1991 Anti-panhandling Ordinance
      1. yes
      2. no
      If yes, who?
   b. Hotel/Motel/SRO Ordinance
      1. yes
      2. no
      If yes, who?
   c. Six Month Sentence Ordinance
      1. yes
      2. no
      If yes, who?
   d. Window-washing Ordinance
      1. yes
      2. no
      If yes, who?
   e. Labor Pool Ordinance
      1. yes
      2. no
      If yes, who?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

Please check if you would like a copy of the survey results

If you have additional comments in regard to the questions asked; feel free to use the space below.
APPENDIX 3

Profiles of Individuals in Dispossessory Court

Date: __________
Time: __________
Judge: __________

1. Race of defendant: __________

2. Sex of defendant: __________

3. Reason for person not able to pay rent:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. Decision of the court:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Is defendant represented by an attorney: __________

6. Is plaintiff represented by an attorney: __________

7. Is defendant living by himself: __________

8. Is defendant living with other occupants: __________

9. Is defendant married: __________

10. Are children involved in this case: __________, If so, how many __________

Completed by: __________
# Task Force for the Homeless Intake Form

**Name:** ___________________________  
**Who referred you to the Task Force?** ___________________________  
**DATE:** __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race: African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Other:</th>
<th>Sex: F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Age: ___ years</th>
<th>Veteran? Yes No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What assistance do you need?**  
- Shelter
- Clothing
- Employment
- Furniture
- Housing
- Food
- Legal Assistance
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Mental Health Assistance
- Request from other agency
- Other: ___________________________

**What happened that you need assistance?**  
- Abuse
- Discharged from Detox
- Eviction
- Family Breakup
- Discharged from Hospital
- Jail Release
- Job Loss
- Relocation
- Discharge from Psychiatric Hospital
- Other: ___________________________

**Partner's Name:** ___________________________  
**Partner's Sex:** F | M  
**Partner's Age:** ___ years  
**Partner's Race:** ___________________________

**Have you ever been in a shelter before?** Yes No  
**If YES, please list which ones, when you stayed there and if you can go back:**  
**Name of Shelter:______________________________**  
**When Stayed:** ___________________________  
**Can you return?** Yes No  
**If no reason can I return:** ___________________________

**Are you pregnant?** Yes No  
**If yes, how many months?** ___ months

**Please list sex and age of your children:**  
**Sex:** ___________________________  
**Age:** ___________________________  
**Is anyone with you?** Yes No  
**If not with you, where? Friend, relative, etc:** ___________________________

**Have you had a meal in the last 24 hours?** Yes No  
**Where are you staying now?**  
- Shelter
- Private Housing
- Public Housing
- Friend
- Relative
- Car
- Street
- Other: ___________________________

**How long have you been in the above city or town?** ___________________________  
**What city have you lived in for most of the past 5 years?** ___________________________

**Have you applied for public housing?** Yes No  
**Pending**  
- Kidnapped
- Out
- Denied
- Left

**Last time you paid rent/mortgage, how much did you pay?** $_______/month  
**What was your income at that time?** $_______/month

**What is your income/month now?** $_______  
**Food Stamps:** $_______  
**Job:** $_______

**Income Sources:**  
- Home
- Job
- Child Support
- AFDC/Welfare
- Social Security
- SSI/Disability
- Food Stamps
- Unemployment
- VA Benefits
- Other: ___________________________

**Status:**  
- Single
- Couple
- Total Adults: ___ 2  
**Marriage License (if applicable)?** Yes No

**Do you have picture ID?** Yes No  
**If no, list any ID you do have:** ___________________________

**Do you have any money with you?** Yes No  
**Do you have transportation?** Yes No
Where was the client placed?

Was this a walk-in? YES NO

NOTES:

Name of intake worker:
REFERENCE LIST

BOOKS


______. *American Housing Survey For the Atlanta Metropolitan Area in 1987*, 1990.


REPORTS

ARTICLES


Shlay, Anne B. and Peter H. Rossi. "Social Science Research and Contemporary Studies of Homelessness." Social Annual
ORDINANCES

