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Service Delivery Agents' Perceptions of the Impact of Panhandling Policy in Virginia

Nancy Brown
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Nancy Brown

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Review Committee
Dr. Michael Knight, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Gregory Campbell, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. John Walker, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

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Abstract

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MS, Saint Leo University, 2008

BA, Saint Leo University, 2006

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Panhandling (also called begging and mendicancy) has been a problem for lawmakers. Although current crime control measures (based on the broken windows theory) have identified a perceived link between disorders (i.e., panhandling) and crime, previous attempts to ban panhandling were deemed unconstitutional. The purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of the latest attempt to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia, known as the Public Education Campaign. This phenomenological inquiry examined the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents to explore the impact of the panhandling policy on panhandling and policy enforcement. Purposive sampling was used to recruit, interview, and record 7 service delivery agents (social workers and law enforcement officers). After the interviews were transcribed, member-checking and triangulation were used to contribute to the trustworthiness of this project. Results indicated ineffective communication and duplication of services were issues. Therefore, positive social change may result from an improved screening process for the Department of Social Services personnel. Furthermore, educating the public concerning the legality of panhandling may eliminate the duplication of services for the Housing Crisis Hotline personnel.

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Dedication

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to Almighty God! Without His unfailing love and guidance, this work would not have come to fruition. Thank You for choosing me. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my son, Jaden Darius, for his love, understanding, sacrifice, patience, and encouragement. I love you more than you will ever know and pray that I am an inspiration to you. This dissertation is dedicated to my godparents, Apostle David and Elder Deloris Pettaway, for the many prayers prayed on my behalf. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family (biological and in Christ) for their support and encouragement through this long dissertation journey. Thank you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Panhandling (also known as *begging* and *mendicancy*) has been a source of contention for lawmakers (*Browne v. City of Grand Junction*, 2015; *Reed v. Town of Gilbert,* 2015; Bond, 2017; City of Hampton, 2017). Although many municipalities no longer consider begging an illegal activity, authorities continue to explore ways to discourage the practice of panhandling (Bond, 2017; City of Hampton, 2017). Historically, panhandlers solicited because they were homeless or living in poverty (Fraser, 2015). Although current literature indicates that not all homeless people panhandle and not all panhandlers are homeless, begging remains a topic for debate (City of Hampton, 2017). Therefore, authorities have dedicated many resources to help alleviate panhandling.

Officials continue to search for an effective way to discourage panhandling. The latest attempt to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was through a policy known as the Public Education Campaign. The purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of this policy to ensure the effective use of resources. This work may provide a guideline for other locations when addressing the issue of panhandling. This chapter includes background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, and definitions. This chapter also includes assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance.

Background

Panhandling (communicating a request for money or goods) is a growing concern for lawmakers (Bond, 2017) in Hampton Roads, Virginia. For example, people standing on public and private spaces asking for monetary donations has increased in recent years (City of

Hampton, 2017). Some people hold signs while others verbalize a request for public donations. Despite the abundance of people conveying a message of homelessness and hunger, authorities have determined many of these individuals are not homeless nor do they want governmental assistance (Bond, 2017).

Officials concluded that many panhandlers use public contributions to maintain a life of substance abuse or to avoid employment (City of Hampton, 2017). In some instances, panhandling has also preceded serious crimes (such as murder; *People v. Goetz*, 1986). Therefore, municipalities nationwide have either attempted to eliminate panhandling altogether or in part via policy (*Young v. NYC Transit Authority*, 1990; *Speet v. Schuette*, 2013; City of Hampton, 2017). However, these attempts violated people's rights to freedom of expression (FindLaw, n.d.; *Browne v. City of Grand Junction*, 2015). Specifically, policies that challenged the rights of panhandlers to communicate their needs and wants in a manner of their choosing proved problematic (*Speet v. Schuette*, 2013). For instance, even if a message (verbal or written) given by a panhandler was inaccurate or fictitious, the First Amendment protects that person's right to express it.

Lawmakers have also attempted to limit a person's contact with panhandlers by establishing restrictions of when and where panhandlers may solicit (FindLaw, n.d.; ACLU, 2015; Miller, 2018). Some business owners have supported such limitations, contending that they (the business owners) have the right to conduct their business affairs free from the potential threat beggars pose to the financial bottom line (Blumgart, 2018). In other words, shoppers try to avoid panhandlers, which can affect the prosperity of a business (Blumgart, 2018).

Regardless of the validity of arguments from business owners and lawmakers, the Supreme Court ruled on the unconstitutionality of favoring one type of speech or message over

another (*Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, 2015). For instance, it is unconstitutional to eliminate panhandling without also eliminating other types of speech, such as requests for political support. Through the application of *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), lawmakers have removed most panhandling ordinances from city codes because of First Amendment violations. The only exception is a narrowly tailored restriction that serves a compelling government interest (FindLaw, n.d.; *Browne v. City of Grand Junction*, 2015). Despite this setback, authorities continue to search for an appropriate resolution to the issue of panhandling: hence, the establishment of the Public Education Campaign, the latest attempt to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Because the Public Education Campaign is newly implemented in Hampton Roads, the gap in knowledge concerns its impact. This inquiry was needed to help gauge the panhandling policy's impact on panhandling and resource distribution in the quest to restrict panhandling.

Problem Statement

Panhandling is a growing concern for lawmakers (Bond, 2017). The problem is in trying to eliminate or restrict panhandling via policy. Historically, panhandlers have solicited because they are homeless or living in poverty. However, recent literature has indicated that panhandlers use public contributions in place of other employment opportunities. Although current crime control measures, based on the broken windows theory (BWT), identified a perceived link between disorders (i.e., panhandling) and crime, previous attempts to ban panhandling have been deemed unconstitutional. The latest attempt to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia, has been the implementation of a policy known as the Public Education Campaign. However, there is a gap in knowledge concerning the impact of this panhandling policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Several localities in Virginia (and other states) have launched efforts to discourage citizens from contributing to panhandlers, asking them to donate to nonprofits and government organizations instead (City of Hampton, 2017; Blumgart, 2018). Officials have determined that 75% of all panhandlers are not, in fact, homeless but used the money given directly to them by the public for substance abuse (City of Hampton, 2017). By redirecting the funding from panhandlers to reputable organizations, authorities sought to consolidate resources aligning with the national agenda to end homelessness and extreme poverty (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, n.d.).

To explore the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia, I interviewed service delivery agents, including social workers and law enforcement officers. These workers are responsible for implementing government policies (City of Hampton, n.d.; Social Security Administration, n.d.), and analyzing the perceptions of service delivery agents allowed for an exploration of the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Research Questions

- The research questions that guided this study are the following:

- RQ1: What has been the impact of the Public Education Campaign on panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia?

- RQ2: How has the Public Education Campaign impacted policy enforcement in Hampton Roads, Virginia?

Theoretical Framework

Although multiple theories could have supported this work, BWT seemed to fit best because it identified a perceived link between disorders and crime (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). Disorders (i.e., panhandling, loitering, graffiti, abandoned buildings, and public drinking), according to BWT, are visible signs of a lack of social controls (norms and laws that govern behavior). If left unchecked, disorders are likely to progress into more serious crimes (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). Because the perceived link between panhandling (a disorder) and crime provided the basis for policing strategies and legislation, it was the lens used for this qualitative investigation into the impact of the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

BWT included the combined work of Kelling and Wilson (1982), who indicated that disorders (i.e., panhandling) incited a fear of crime in neighborhood residents. This fear of crime motivated residents to either move out of the neighborhood or isolate themselves from others. Once the remaining "desirable" residents isolated themselves, they also avoided eye contact with others when they were in public spaces (Wilson & Kelling, n.d.). This change of behavior signaled a deterioration of social controls and served as communication to the criminal element that no one cares about the area. If no one cares, then residents do not interfere in the activities of others, and illegal business ventures go unchallenged. Because of the perceived link between disorders and crime, this theoretical framework identified the need for a panhandling policy while providing a context for the review of the service delivery agents' perceptions and work-related experiences in Hampton Roads, Virginia. A more detailed analysis of BWT is in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

In this qualitative study, I investigated the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia. The authors of BWT (the foundation for current crime control measures) proposed a link between disorders (such as panhandling) and crime (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). Despite this proposed link, previous policies that attempted to eliminate panhandling have been found unconstitutional (FindLaw, n.d.; *Thayer v. City of Worcester*, 2015); therefore, lawmakers are attempting to reframe the narrative concerning panhandlers (Public Education Campaign). Specifically, authorities in Hampton Roads, Virginia, noted that most panhandlers are not homeless and posted signs asking the public to donate to reputable organizations instead of directly to panhandlers (Public Education Campaign; City of Hampton, 2017). Because service delivery agents are charged with enforcing the Public Education Campaign, I interviewed seven agents to help answer the research questions. Specifically, I used a phenomenological approach highlighting the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents to investigate the phenomenon from the agents' perspectives (Moustakas, 1994).

Because the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents were critical to this project, I employed an exploratory design to answer the research questions concerning the impact of policy on panhandling. This design was flexible (Bansal & Corley, 2012) and allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Hays & Wood, 2011).

Houghton and Houghton (2018) suggested reading each data transcript at least three times over an extended period (no less than 3 days) for appropriate thematic analysis. I then coded the information using line-by-line processing to identify reoccurring or meaningful segments (Firmin, Markum, Stultz, Johnson, & Garland, 2016).

Rubin and Rubin (2012) identified the researcher's role as an active one. To reduce (or eliminate) the resulting threat of bias, a researcher must try to identify any preconceived notions and compartmentalize them so as not to interfere with the project (Hatch, 2002). Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) noted the use of mental notes to achieve this goal. Mental notes allow a researcher to consistently acknowledge previous experiences and address them as they are identified throughout a study. As an added precaution, I included the participants' words before providing the analysis to show the reasoning for the assessment. I also used member-checking and allowed the participants to access their portion of the inquiry to promote transparency and credibility (Moustakas, 1994).

Operational Definitions

Aggressive panhandling: An appeal for money or goods using threats or intimidation. It also includes solicitations within a prescribed distance of facilities (i.e., ATMs, restaurants, and banks) at certain times (before sunrise and after sunset) or under the influence of mind-altering substances (*McLaughlin v. City of Lowell;* ACLU, 2015).

Bias: An attitude or belief about a group based on race, class, or characteristic (Harper, 2010).

Burnout: Professional exhaustion resulting in substandard care, a lack of motivation, and irritability (Ginossar et al., 2014).

Content-based laws: Limitations on speech based on the message or subject matter (FindLaw, n.d.).

Content-neutral laws: Limitations on all speech regardless of the message (*Ward v. Rock Against Racism*, 1989).

Framing: Manipulating the perceptions of a specific group of people toward another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a).

Knowledge worker: An expert in a particular field (McGowan, Reid, & Styger, 2018).

Panhandling: Soliciting for money or goods from one person to another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b).

Service delivery agents: Workers charged with enforcing policies.

Social control: How human behavior is influenced by rules and norms (Kelling & Wilson, 1982).

Stereotype: A widely held image or an idea of a type of person or thing (Merriam-Webster, n.d.c).

Stigma: A mark of disgrace associated with a circumstance or person (Merriam-Webster, n.d.d).

Assumptions

In this study, I investigated the impact of the Public Education Campaign by exploring the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Although these workers have a strenuous job (Huber, Lechner, & Mellace, 2017; Spencer-Cavaliere, Kingsley, & Norris, 2018), I made two assumptions: (a) that the participants were cooperative giving open and honest responses and (b) that the participants did not suffer from burnout in their professional environment. Burnout has a detrimental effect on a worker's job performance and the quality of care provided (Ginossar et al., 2014), which could impact a participant's level of cooperation and, ultimately, the level of reliability of the data.

Scope and Delimitations

Panhandling has received increased attention in recent years resulting in increased spending to help alleviate the issue. The scope of this inquiry concerned the impact of the latest attempt to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Because service delivery agents (including social workers and law enforcement officers) enforce policy, the perceptions and work-related experiences of these agents were crucial to investigating the impact of the panhandling policy. More specifically, exploring service delivery agents' views and experiences with delivering services under the guidelines of the Public Education Campaign helped gauge the impact of the policy on panhandling. For this reason, populations outside of this group did not participate in this inquiry.

Aside from using BWT, two other theories are related to panhandlers and panhandling, the topic of concern in this study. However, these theories would have changed the focus of this study. For instance, Sen's (1985, 2009) capabilities theory measures happiness or wellness by ability to determine and pursue what is valuable for life. Sen (1985, 2004) declined to specify which capabilities were relevant, opting instead to leave the decisions to the community in question. Making enhancements to capabilities theory, Nussbaum (2000) explained that an individual thrives when they not only have rights but also can exercise those rights. It is insufficient to say that every person has the right to pursue a quality life without also examining whether everyone has the opportunity or capability to do so. Because policy administrators (and service delivery agents) support communities in need, capabilities theory could have contributed to this inquiry by helping to explore the impact (and effectiveness) of a policy on the professionals' ability to work sufficiently and effectively while promoting the rights of their clients to pursue a quality life.

The second theory that could have provided insight into panhandling, but was outside the scope of this inquiry, was Schneider and Ingram's (1993) social construction theory. This theory highlighted the perception that officials create policies that favor or punish specific groups over others and attach attributes to that population to justify favorable consequences and vice versa; for instance, linking panhandlers or homeless people with negative characteristics (i.e., lazy and untrustworthy) results in unfavorable policy changes and decreases financial support with the possibility of little to no public resistance. The social construction theory has been used to explain why specific groups benefited from advantages denied to others. Mainly, target populations fall into four groups based on their political strength and deservedness (Barrilleaux & Bernick, 2003). According to the social construction theory, politicians examine the advantages and disadvantages of creating policies that impact groups like military veterans, dependents, and beggars (or deviants). Because many of these lawmakers are motivated by the possibility of reelection, catering to the group(s) with the most significant political strength is the likely path (Arnold, 1990). An example of this is the ongoing argument for gun control and the ability of strong influencers to stall significant change (Fleming, Rutledge, Dixon, & Peralta, 2016; Hiltzik, 2016; Younge, 2016).

In this inquiry, I investigated the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Because the sample group was located in one area, the outcome of this qualitative research may not be generalizable (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Despite the lack of generalizability, this work may still serve as a guide for other areas to address the issue of panhandling. To allow future researchers to build on the findings of this study, Cavalcanti (2017) recommends transparency. For this reason, I used member-checking as well as annotation to help

ensure dependability and transferability. I also included the procedures used during the data collection process.

Limitations

In exploring the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia, other locations were excluded. Because of this exclusion, this work may not be transferable. It is also limited by a short data collection timeframe that could have detracted from the credibility of the project findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To counteract this credibility weakness, I compared the information from each participant, as suggested by Billups (2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described dependability as the ability of others to replicate a research project. This work included a detailed guide of the steps taken to answer the research questions to help attain the goal of dependability. Despite these design weaknesses, it produced valuable insight to address panhandling effectively.

Because I was the primary instrument in this qualitative inquiry, there was a possible threat of bias. To reduce or eliminate this threat, I tried to identify as many preconceived notions as possible and compartmentalized them through bracketing so as not to interfere with this project (Hatch, 2002). Chan et al. (2013) explored the use of mental notes to achieve this goal. Mental notes allow a researcher to consistently acknowledge previous experiences and address them as they are identified throughout a study. I also included the participants' words before providing the analysis to show my reasoning for assessment. I used member-checking and allowed the study participants to access their portion of the inquiry to promote transparency and credibility as well (Moustakas, 1994).

Significance

Panhandling is a concern for many authorities (*Speet v. Schuette*, 2013; Blumgart, 2018). The literature indicates multiple attempts to ban or restrict the act of panhandling via policy (FindLaw, n.d.; *Browne v. City of Grand Junction*, 2015; *Thayer v. City of Worcester*, 2015). However, through the application of *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), previous policies infringed on a person's First Amendment rights. According to BWT, panhandling can lead to increased crime rates (Kelling & Wilson, 1982) but, except in cases of compelling government interest, panhandling limitations are unconstitutional (*Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, 2015). Therefore, officials in Hampton Roads have attempted to address the public's perception of panhandling through the implementation of the Public Education Campaign (City of Hampton, 2017), but its impact has remained unknown.

Current literature indicates that blanket bans on panhandling violate a person's constitutional right to freedom of expression (FindLaw, n.d.; *Speet v. Schuette*, 2013; *Thayer v. City of Worcester*, 2015). The latest attempt to address the issue of panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia, has been through the implementation of the Public Education Campaign that reframes the public's perception of panhandlers. Because ineffective policies may incur psychological and financial costs to the individuals and organizations involved, an examination of adopted policy is crucial (Simmons, 2014; Ferrandino, 2018). This study filled the gap in understanding the impact of panhandling policy by examining the perceptions and experiences of service delivery agents in the commission of their duties. The findings of this study highlight whether resources have been used effectively and serve as a guide to authorities outside Hampton Roads, Virginia, in the quest to address panhandling.

Summary

Panhandling is a source of debate for authorities in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Current crime control strategies, based on BWT, have highlighted a perceived link between disorders (i.e., panhandling) and crime. Based on the application of the Supreme Court's decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), previous policies that banned panhandling were unconstitutional despite their perceived link to criminal behavior. Therefore, officials in Hampton Roads have implemented the Public Education Campaign, but its impact on panhandling remained unknown.

Chapter 2 will include a description of the foundational doctrine for current crime control measures that affect panhandling. It will also highlight the origin of the word *beggar* and how panhandling spread and attracted political attention. In Chapter 2, I will explain court cases that have influenced how municipalities address panhandling and the importance of questioning service delivery agents to investigate the impact of the Public Education Campaign. Chapter 3 will cover the research design and rationale, role of researcher, methodology, credibility and ethical protections for this phenomenological study on the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Panhandling (also known as *begging* or *mendicancy*) is a growing concern for lawmakers. Therefore, the purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Although the First Amendment protects freedom of expression, many jurisdictions have tried either forbidding panhandling (a form of speech) altogether or limiting where, when, and how a person may panhandle. Policymakers have argued in favor of these restrictions by labeling panhandling as conduct, instead of speech, as did Circuit Judge Scalia (*Young v. NYC Transit Authority*, 1990). However, the Supreme Court has disqualified this reasoning by clarifying the importance and difference between content-based and content-neutral laws as well as the appropriate application of both.

Major sections in this chapter include a discussion of who panhandlers are, the theoretical framework, poverty in the U.S., restricting panhandling, consequences of ineffective policy, knowledge workers, and other relevant studies. Outlined within this chapter is the origin of the word *beggar* and the road that has led to the current method of addressing panhandling (or begging) in the United States, the consequences of ineffective policies, and the resulting gap in the literature concerning the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Literature Search

Search topics included *homeless, poverty, panhandle, begging, mendicancy, mendicant, limit, broken windows, knowledge worker, Stop and Frisk*, and *Virginia*. Many of the articles I chose for this project were found in the Academic Search Complete and Expanded Academic ASAP databases. However, I did not esteem one database over another and thus did not place

any parameters for the database search. I also used the local library and Bing and Google search engines to find relevant articles if peer-reviewed literature was not found.

Identifying Panhandlers

During or before the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D.220), Chinese people who relied on the contributions of others (panhandlers, mendicants, or beggars) were referred to as *liumin* ("floating people"), *youmin* ("wandering people"), "*vagrants*," and "*vagabonds*" (Lu, 1999). According to Nielsen, Smyth, and Zhang (2006, p. 2), these terms meant that the population was not and would not become a permanent part of that community. Some members of the liumin group were farmers who, during the winter months, traveled to the more affluent cities to beg until spring when they returned home. Although some use the terms (liumin, youmin, vagrants, and vagabonds) interchangeably, there are subtle differences. Liumin was mainly used to refer to vagrants or refugees who fled their homes because of catastrophe (including war); when the areas became safe once more, this group usually returned to their homes. Some liumin were "professional mendicants" because, by the 19th century, China recognized the group's perpetual or ongoing state of poverty (Lu, 1999). According to a Qing regulation, all professional mendicants were to register into the baojia system and carry proper identification (Fairbank, 1992). This system was to prevent vagrants from different areas from mixing (Lu, 1999).

Although people in various parts of China suffered from poverty, authorities deemed the youmin in Republican Shanghai to be the worst because not only were they disadvantaged, but most were illiterate, unskilled, unemployed, and disabled (Lu, 1999). This group had also become the city's permanent vagabonds.

As mentioned above, Chinese mendicants were not always homeless. Mendicancy, also considered a job, was a way to obtain revenue for life's necessities (Baker, 2009). In other

words, skilled workers sometimes became mendicants to help make ends meet or to aid in performing their patriotic duties during wartime (Fairbank, 1992; Ho, 2006). Some became mendicants to help make enough money to become entrepreneurs (Ho, 2006). This group did not object to the label of *poor*, but they considered it disrespectful to be called *beggar* because beggars lacked two of the most critical elements in Chinese culture: a home and family ties (Winter, 2017).

According to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of China, a Christian organization based in Shanghai, the five major causes of begging or poverty were (a) natural disasters, (b) civil war, (c) handicaps and disease, (d) bad habits, and (e) family heritage (Lu, 1999). With that said, calamity does not discriminate and may encourage previously affluent people to participate in panhandling. A 1933 survey identified the wide range of previous occupations by mendicants to include not only farmers but also doctors and teachers (Lu, 1999; Ho, 2006).

In the early 20th century, *biesan* became the new word for mendicants: *bie* meant blighted and *san* was vulgar slang (Lu, 1999). Together, *biesan* referenced a begging and thieving hobo. During this time, *empty cents* or *one who has no money* was also slang used to refer to this group. Specifically, in Shanghai, the mispronunciation of *empty* became *biede*, and *cents* became *shengsi*, forming *biede shengsi*, which meant "there is not a single penny in one's pocket" (Lu, 1999, p. 10). Eventually, *biede shengsi* was shortened to *biede* meaning *beggar*; this derogatory reference became popular nationwide (Lu, 1999).

Chinese beggars had a long history of unflattering images. Some deemed them poverty stricken, while some thought them to be deceitful (Ho, 2006). Further complicating matters, in 1842, after the Opium War, Lin Yuancun watched a group of adult beggars dressed in silk and

boots as they gambled (Lu, 1999). The child beggars tended the food, which was plentiful. Around the same time, Zhu Ye observed a group of beggars equally as prosperous. Singularly, this group enjoyed many types of luxury items, including tables and chairs. The fact that this was immediately following the Opium War and the spoils could have been ill-gotten seemed to have been ignored. Also, beggars begged around the wealthy for increased spoils. Xu Ke mentioned a similar scene: beggars smoking, drinking, and cooking a large, hearty meal along the roadside (Lu, 1999). An article in Shanghai Weekly indicated that beggars took the candles and food brought by pilgrims for sacrifice in the Temple of the City God. During the festivals, some beggars preyed on people, stealing their wallets as they enjoyed the festivities. Further casting an unpleasant shadow on begging, a reporter recalled an interview where a beggar highlighted the lucrative aspects of the profession. These types of observations, along with others, over many years contributed to Shanghai's reputation of prosperity for all and the image of the gluttonous, lazy opportunist known as the *beggar* (Lu, 1999; Ho, 2006).

Another perspective rooted in Chinese tradition, religion, and folklore was that deities disguised themselves as mendicants to test humankind. Those who passed the test by showing compassion through donations received salvation or reward. A mysterious punishment was the result of failure. One of the most famous tales involved Li Tieguai (also known as Tieguai Li), a deity who appeared as a lame beggar on crutches (Lu, 1999). A restaurant owner provided free room and board to the sick and aged beggar. When the beggar recovered, he left without saying anything to the restaurant owner. A year later, the city suffered a shortage of firewood, so the owner used the straw mattress that the beggar slept on as fuel to stew pork. Once the bed went into the oven, the pork's delicious aroma caused everyone to salivate. Stewed pork became a

specialty for the owner. In memory of the beggar who was believed to be the deity Li Tieguai incarnated, the owner renamed the restaurant Lu Gaojian meaning *straw mattress*.

Another version of folklore concerning Li Tieguai was that he, as a handsome and successful young man in search of spiritual growth (Daoism), caught the attention of a deity (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). The divine Laozi returned to Earth to mentor Li in magic and spirit travel (the soul leaves the body and travels to the heavens). Preparing for one such journey, Li instructed a trusted student on how to care for his physical body. He further advised the student to return within 7 days to cremate his body. On the sixth day, after the student learned that his own mother was seriously ill, he burned Li's body. Li soon returned to discover he needed a new body, so he entered an expired beggar.

In ignoring his physical flaws and accepting his new form, Li advanced to become Eight Immortal. With this new position, he carried an unbreakable staff and a magic-filled gourd that he used to heal the disadvantaged. He was known as the wandering healer, who rewarded the worthy and punished the wicked.

Stories like that of Li Tieguai may explain why some people contribute to panhandlers or beggars. Regardless of whether one believes in reincarnation or a moral obligation to help humankind, some people feel that exercising the right to solicit donations (begging, mendicancy, or panhandling) from passersby opens the door for predators to take advantage of good-intentioned people. This belief (and the spread of stories framing mendicants as thieves) may have contributed to the ongoing presumption that panhandling (a disorder) is linked with crime (BWT) and should be banned.

Theoretical Framework: Link Between Panhandling and Crime

Panhandling is a visible sign of a lack of social controls (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). Social controls are the informal rules that govern behavior in any given neighborhood. In other words, these controls outline what practices are acceptable. Examples of social controls are the expectations of area residents to maintain their lawns.

Another example of social controls is for residents to avoid becoming drunk in public spaces. Without the visible signs of social controls (i.e., well-kept lawns, no panhandling, no public drunkenness, and no graffiti), a neighborhood could rapidly deteriorate because residents will believe that violent crime rates have risen (Wilson & Kelling, n.d.). This belief could cause the residents to fear traveling outside their homes, resulting in them isolating themselves. Once residents isolate, they become apathetic and no longer enforce social controls, making it possible for crime rates to rise.

This possible progression of crime (BWT) is the theoretical framework for this project and is the combined work of Kelling and Wilson (1982). They identified a perceived link between disorders (i.e., panhandling) and criminal activity. However, their work was based on an experiment by Zimbardo (Wilson & Kelling, n.d.). In 1969, Zimbardo conducted research surrounding a vehicle in two different neighborhoods. Both cars had no license plate and a raised hood. Zimbardo kept a detailed log of the time it took for passersby to strip the abandoned car of its valuable parts once it showed signs of neglect (i.e., no license plates and broken window). One community was lower-income and the other affluent; however, the results were the same. In the absence of the valuable elements, random destruction ensued. In both cases, well-dressed white men committed most of the vandalism. Kelling and Wilson (1982) explained that because the vehicles looked uncared for, destruction was forthcoming. Although vandalism may not

evolve into serious crimes, the attitudes and behaviors of the residents may change because of

the belief of violent crime. Mainly, the visible or aesthetic changes signal the absence of social

controls, resulting in a perceived increase in criminal activity. This perception of increased crime

may cause residents to become fearful and unsociable, preferring to isolate from their neighbors.

BWT explained this alteration in behavior as a direct result of disorders (i.e., panhandling).

In another study, Kelling and Wilson (1982) evaluated the impact law enforcement had

using foot patrols to maintain order. Although the findings concerning the foot patrol project did

not prove to decrease crime considerably, it showed an improvement in the attitudes of the

residents toward law enforcement. The community perceived an increased level of dedication by

the police presence, thus fostering an open line of communication and the development of trust.

Together, the work of Zimbardo and Kelling and Wilson contributed to the notion that a well-

maintained neighborhood (absent of disorders like panhandling and graffiti) will deflect crime

whereas dilapidated communities attract it. Despite this identified link between disorders and

crime, opponents have noted the flaw in attributing BWT alone with effective crime control.

Opposing Viewpoints

Many agree to the necessity of crime control measures without agreeing on the solution.

On the surface, faith in BWT may seem plausible. For instance, Skogan (1990), a supporter of

BWT, conducted a study confirming a causal link between disorders and crime. However,

Harcourt (1998) disagreed with his findings, noting missing data in multiple sections that

influenced the results and explicitly concluding that, while disorders may impact some crimes

(i.e., assault and burglary), they do not affect others (i.e., rape and purse snatching). Furthermore,

this relationship between crime and disorders disappeared when introducing factors like poverty

and race (Harcourt, 1998). Similarly, Taylor (2001) concluded that policing based on the belief

that disorders lead to crime (hereafter known as broken windows policing) might deter some

crimes while others required alternative policing methods.

In the early 1990s, New York City officials implemented an initiative based on BWT,

which Kelling and Bratton (1998) credited with the fall in violent crime rates. However,

Harcourt and Ludwig (2006) mentioned the value of combined contributors such as a shift from

crack to heroin use, economic changes, and an increase in the number of offenders incarcerated

for major crimes. Harcourt and Ludwig also credited the decline in crime rate with fewer young

adult men in the area.

Kelling and Sousa (2001) conducted another study in New York and reaffirmed the

effectiveness of broken windows policing. Notably, the authors pointed out that violent crime

dropped because of this policing strategy. Harcourt and Ludwig (2006) researched the same

crime data along with various initiatives and determined that the decline in crime in New York

resulted from a combination of factors, such as increased police spending and decreased response

times. They highlighted the error in crediting BWT solely without considering other influencers,

such as economic changes and an increase in the number of offenders incarcerated for major

crimes.

Broken windows policing is not without value (Kelling & Sousa, 2001). The resolution of

many violent crimes is a product of arresting people for disorders (Harcourt, 1998). For example,

law enforcement officers may arrest and obtain biometric data (i.e., fingerprints) from an

offender. Adding this information to a database allows for a comparison to evidence from

unsolved crimes. Despite the value of broken windows policing, many believe this crime control

strategy does more harm (i.e., police brutality complaints and discrimination) than good (Welsh,

Braga, & Bruinsma, 2015). Welsh et al. (2015) noted that the modest decline in the crime rate

might have been a result of community efforts, interventions, problem-solving strategies, and varying criminal opportunities. Kamalu and Onyeozili (2018) included the necessity of varying policing strategies such as giving warnings instead of arrests (police discretion) to lower crime rates.

Welsh et al. (2015) also mentioned the consequences of broken windows policing as a hostile environment, increased complaints, racial disparities, and criminalization of the poor and mentally ill. This environment of distrust widens the gap between community members and those tasked with serving it. Fritsch (2016), in association with the Security and Exchange Commission's adoption of this form of policing, also mentioned the error in relying on an empirically unproven strategy. James Kidney, former Security and Exchange Commission attorney, noted the organization "polices the broken windows on the street level and rarely goes to the penthouse floors" (Smallberg, 2014, para. 2).

Furthermore, if the "penthouse" receives law enforcement attention, diplomatic negotiations dominate the encounter, unlike the harsh zero tolerance street-level conversations (Fritsch, 2016). This analogy's foundation also governs everyday life. This application of BWT seizes low-level disorders (such as panhandling and loitering) or misdemeanors resulting in a feeling of overpolicing and excessive laws without the promise of a reduction in serious crime (Fritsch, 2016).

Zero Tolerance

Regardless of George Kelling and James Wilson's intentions for broken windows policing, it currently demonstrates a zero tolerance approach to "undesirable conduct." Its application in educational establishments, healthcare, and public spaces is the source of much contention. Specifically, BWT implementation overwhelmingly affects impoverished

neighborhoods and communities of color (Fagan & Davies, 2000; Fagan, Davies, & Carlis, 2012; Howell, 2016; Geller, 2016). Howell (2016) articulated that the core concept of BWT meant addressing hazardous situations, fixing broken windows and elevators, and replacing broken light bulbs. "We would be improving parks and schools and after-school programs in underserved communities" (p. 1059). Instead, the approach reinforces overpolicing the vulnerable (Howell, 2016). Findings indicated that the aggressiveness of policy enforcement correlated directly with the racial composition of the area. Notably, developments with a high concentration of black residents received a significant amount of police attention (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967; Fagan et al.). The increased contiguity between citizen and officer heightened the chances of frivolous contact turning into tragedy as noted in the cases of Anthony Baez, Philando Castile, Walter Scott, Akai Gurley, and Timothy Stansbury Jr. Howell (2016) also pointed out that only small amounts of police encounters receive media attention. For instance, in 2014, New York City judiciary addressed more than half a million misdemeanor arrests and summonses, which far exceeded what was reported by media outlets (Lindsay, 2014).

The Public Housing Authority also applies the zero tolerance approach to BWT. Because safety is a mandated condition for public housing, authorities instituted banishment policies to guard against drugs, violence, and other potential crimes (Torres, Apkarian, & Hawdon, 2016). This implementation of zero tolerance empowers law enforcement to arrest nonresidents indiscriminately. Police officers use their discretion when addressing violations. Instead of placing violators (nonresidents) in the criminal justice system, officers may warn of the antitrespassing ordinance. If the officer chooses to process the violator, these misdeeds constitute probable cause for arrest, which sanctions the search for other possible infringements. As Beckett and Herbert (2010, as cited in Torres, 2017) stated, "if hassled frequently enough in a

given place; the banished will get the message and simply leave" (p. 441). This method of policing (a modification of BWT) is believed to incite fear of prosecution, resulting in decreased criminal activity (Torres, 2017).

Although there are many proponents of as well as against broken windows policing, the lack of inquiries concerning the impact of factors like increased police spending and economic changes supports the notion that more research is needed concerning the effectiveness of BWT (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006). Despite this need for additional research, BWT seems to fit best because of the perceived link between disorders and crime (Kelling & Wilson, 1982) and the nations multiple attempts to ban both. BWT is also the most appropriate theory because it is the foundational doctrine for crime control. For this reason, the use of BWT helped answer the research questions.

The next section will highlight various laws that addressed disorders and how those laws impacted the poor. The section will also chronicle how politicians in the United States responded to disorders (i.e., panhandling). Although the treatment outlined below began before the creation of BWT, the underlying belief was the same: Disorders or visible signs of a lack of social controls would most likely lead to crime.

Poverty in the U.S.

Panhandling is not only a visible sign of a lack of social controls but also a visible sign of poverty, according to Lei (2013) and Antonacci (2018). Panhandlers and people living without stable housing may not be the same population; however, they both represent lack. Despite the differences, the history of treatment (or mistreatment) these groups have endured aligns with the foundational basis of BWT – disorders (or visible signs of poverty such as panhandling) most likely will lead to an increase in criminal activity (Kelling & Wilson, 1982).

A *vagrant* is someone who can work but refuses and instead, chooses to beg (Lambert, 1868). Before the Great Depression, vagrancy (tramp and hobo) laws flooded the country. These statutes allowed authorities to eject or employ in forced labor indigents to prevent crime rates from rising (Anderson, 2015). Authorities believed the group (people exhibiting visible signs of poverty) had nothing to occupy their time, so they were going to get into trouble at the town's expense. Laws (such as the Articles of Confederation) also prohibited the impoverished (and immigrants) from traveling from state to state, uninhibited, which gained the support of the Supreme Court, as in *City of New York v. Miln*. (Lindsay, 2010). It was not until the spread of poverty during the Great Depression that the perception of the group began to change. This shift was supported by politicians and everyday citizens - treatment of people exhibiting visible signs of poverty equated to that of victims because society as a whole began to acknowledge that failing schools, inadequate health care, inadequate housing, mental disorders, and racism all contributed to poverty and homelessness (Anderson, 2015). As a result of the War on Poverty, this population received increased spending towards assistance programs (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). In 1972, the Supreme Court also began to oppose vagrancy laws by citing them as unconstitutionally vague, as in *Papachristou v. City of Jacksonville* (Goluboff, 2010).

During the Reagan administration, public opinion towards poverty shifted once again, and funds diminished. The administration framed people displaying visible signs of poverty as lazy and unwilling to work, particularly in the Black and Hispanic communities (Gustafson, 2009; Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). It outlined how those experiencing poverty taxed the government resources inordinately by using multiple names, addresses, and social security numbers. Although Former President Ronald Reagan correctly spoke of some criminal activity,

he greatly exaggerated much of his speech on the subject. However, the administration did not change its rhetoric.

Furthermore, this framing of poverty led to its criminalization (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). Between 1981 and 1989, the Reagan administration also cut federal housing funds by approximately 70% further crippling the already inadequate program (Foscarinis, 1991; Jones, 2015). According to Foscarinis (1991), these changes resulted in a closed or two-year housing wait list for many major cities. Reagan also placed additional restrictions on the federal school lunch program resulting in the disqualification of millions of children from the program (Gustafson, 2009). In denying the government's responsibility to address poverty and homelessness, Reagan spoke of the importance of holding this disadvantaged group accountable for their situation. Reagan also highlighted the role government programs played in supporting laziness and dependency (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013).

Former President William Clinton encouraged an overhaul of government assistance programs known as welfare reform. Consequently, people could no longer access resources indefinitely. The policies included a ceiling on the amount of revenue available for welfare that the States then divided. The sentiment remained that the impoverished population gain independence and support themselves (Stricker, 2003). Although this outcome may be a desirable one, lawmakers may not have considered the contributing factors to poverty and homelessness (i.e., failing schools, mental disorders, and racism).

Former President George W. Bush's administration introduced a collaborative effort between the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to tackle the phenomenon of poverty and homelessness. His administration also enlisted the expertise of the United States Interagency

Council on Homelessness, a group that lay inoperative for years ("Bush Unveils," 2002). During this timeframe, the Department of Housing and Urban Development also worked with other agencies to prevent homelessness among persons reentering society after incarceration - *Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative*.

In 2009, President Barrack Obama also commissioned the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness to present a plan to Congress addressing the issue of unstable living (homelessness). This mandate resulted in Opening Doors, a comprehensive approach to ending and preventing chronic homelessness (Poppe, 2010). Opening Doors was a collaborative effort to develop programs and allocate funding to end the phenomenon. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, entities such as shelters, outreach organizations, law enforcement, and health care institutions (mental and physical) must share information to identify the full scope of poverty and homelessness and allocate funding in the best manner. In this way, communities may distinguish a more accurate number of persons suffering from a lack of permanent housing (homelessness).

During the 2014 National Conference on Ending Homelessness, Former First Lady Michelle Obama (2014) praised the organizations in attendance for their contributions to ending the effects of extreme poverty and homelessness despite financial challenges and setbacks related to a lack of support. She challenged the nation to continue showing compassion for this vulnerable population while highlighting the critical need to do more for homeless veterans.

In April 2018, President Donald Trump (2018) signed an executive order - *Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility*. The stated purpose was to highlight the need for the reorganization of government assistance programs because of its misuse. President Trump identified the consequences of many initiatives (as did the Reagan

administration) as making people dependent on public assistance and perpetuating a cycle of poverty instead of encouraging financial independence. In other words, families became trapped in the welfare system. To promote financial freedom, the President introduced the *Principles of Economic Mobility* that forced stricter work requirements and allowed local governments the flexibility to tailor their programs to achieve this goal. Trump (2018) also endorsed cutting ineffective programs, removing ineligible recipients, consolidating projects that serve similar populations, and allowing the private sector to incorporate a resolution that reduced the need for government intervention.

As mentioned previously, budget cuts, affordable housing shortages, mental disorders, inadequate health care, and insufficient schools all contributed to the spread of poverty and homelessness. Although people experiencing homelessness may not panhandle, and panhandlers are not always homeless, policing techniques (broken windows policing) bind them both. These strategies stem from the belief that poverty and small transgressions more than likely will lead to more crime (BWT). Former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani commented, "Obviously murder and graffiti are two vastly different crimes. But they are part of the same continuum and a climate that tolerates one is more likely to tolerate the other" (Francis, n.d., para. 3).

Laws created to impede the progression from disorders (also known as visible signs of poverty or visible signs of a lack of social controls) to crime may negatively influence many areas of life. For example, these laws increase an individual's likelihood of obtaining a criminal record as well as incarceration (McBride, 2012). Although panhandling or begging was a misdemeanor, fines and jail time further complicated the individual's existence. A criminal record usually affects employment and housing for those who are often struggling to maintain a quality of life (McBride, 2012; Howell, 2016). Broken windows policing in the more deprived

communities further widened the income gap because this technique erects barriers to less

affluent neighborhoods (Howell, 2009). More specifically, entrance into the criminal justice

system may cause driver's license forfeiture, denial of public assistance/housing, and ineligibility

for student loans not to mention the loss of wages for the time spent addressing the issue. In

other words, the visible signs of poverty (such as panhandling or homelessness) that garnered the

attention of law enforcement officers have made the cycle of poverty even worse by influencing

a person's ability to get an education, housing, and employment (Howell, 2009).

The information outlined above highlighted the alternating treatment of those exhibiting

disorders (the visible signs of poverty) by the various lawmakers throughout the years before and

after the establishment of BWT. Most align with the authors of this theory in the belief of a

causal link between the visible signs of poverty (i.e., panhandling and homelessness) and crime.

Many advocates have questioned the constitutionality of such strategies that punish the condition

of poverty, arguing that this population is in a perpetual cycle with no relief (Howell, 2009). The

following section will communicate the consequences of stigmas and stereotypes along with the

desensitization towards people displaying the visible signs of poverty. It will also recount the

right of equal protection that shields this and all communities.

Restricting Panhandling

Goffman (1963) spoke about the damages negative stereotypes have on spoiling a

person's identity. Gustafson (2009) elaborated on the stigma of displaying the visible signs of

poverty (i.e., panhandling and homelessness) and how it allowed not only the assassination of a

person's character but also the labeling of "less than." The authors further described how

combining the elements of stigma and stereotype seem to justify depriving the vulnerable group

of the rights enjoyed by others. Although poverty may be an uncomfortable subject and the

visible signs of poverty (such as panhandling) may not be aesthetically pleasing, mendicants and those without permanent shelter are entitled to the same constitutional protections afforded to other citizens (*Norton v. City of Springfield, Illinois*, 2015; First Amendment, 2018).

As previously mentioned, it is unconstitutional to establish regulations that target panhandlers. The following section will focus on the First Amendment rights and identify relevant court cases that indicated the lack of legal clarification for the specifics of begging or mendicancy. This section will also outline the panhandling policies for different jurisdictions and the perceived benefits of such prohibitions.

Constitutional Protections

The First Amendment of the Constitution protects a citizen's right to free speech or expression (First Amendment, 2018). Specifically, it guards against any government attempt to obstruct communication due to its idea or subject matter. Some lawmakers have argued that panhandling is not speech but conduct thus not worthy of such protections (*Young v. NYC Transit Authority*, 1990). However, in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), the Supreme Court reconciled that argument. Specifically, this case clarified the element that determined the constitutionality of a law, whether it is *content-based* or *content-neutral*.

Content-based limitations on speech are unconstitutional unless proven necessary in serving a compelling government interest like public safety (FindLaw, n.d.; *Norton v. City of Springfield*, 2015). These restrictions do not limit all messages - only particular viewpoints. For instance, a law that limited messages by Republican officials without restrictions for Democrats is content-based. Content-based legislation must apply the least amount of limitations (narrowly tailored) to accomplish that compelling government interest to survive the test of constitutionality.

On the other hand, content-neutral ordinances control the where, when, and how of speech without regard to the content (*Ward v. Rock Against Racism*, 1989). Content-neutral laws are not discriminatory in that they do not esteem one type of speech (i.e., political message) over another (i.e., a plea for donations). These laws must also be narrowly tailored to serve a substantial government interest (such as preventing traffic hazards) to maintain its legality.

Before *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), authorities had strict guidelines for posting outdoor signs. Whether a political message or event advertisement, each sign category had a specific time and size restrictions. Authorities cited Pastor Clyde Reed for posting signs directing the public to his church outside of the prescribed timeframe for that type of message. Lawmakers once considered this legislation content-neutral because the government's dissatisfaction with the message was not a contributing factor to the decision of time and size limitation. The Supreme Court disagreed and determined that the law was content-based because it favored one type of message over another. Although the *Reed* case had nothing to do with panhandling or mendicancy, the result was that people have the freedom to convey a message free from government intrusion. Therefore, courts have applied this logic to begging ordinances that target solicitation speech determining them to be content-based laws. An example of this application is that of *Browne v. City of Grand Junction* (2015). The city regulations prohibited panhandling but allowed such speech as asking for directions or soliciting political support (Connolly & Bender, 2016). This case highlighted the city's distinction between the communications (content-based) thus deeming it unconstitutional. Although the Supreme Court has yet to address the issue of panhandling directly, Pastor Reed's court case set the precedence for the subject.

Other Attempts to Restrict Begging

Before the *Reed* decision that led to interpreting panhandling laws as unconstitutional, many jurisdictions have applied creative tactics to eliminate the issue of begging. One such instance concerned James Speet. He was homeless surviving off public assistance, odd jobs, and panhandling (ACLU, 2013; Fraser, 2015). At the time, authorities addressed mendicants as "disorderly," a label set forth by the guidelines of BWT. Panhandlers and those without permanent housing (such as Mr. Speet) were guilty of a misdemeanor that carried a penalty of up to 90 days, a fine of up to $500, or both (*Speet v. Schuette*, 2013).

Simply put, the visible signs of poverty (such as panhandling) were a crime throughout the states of Michigan, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Colorado (Diaz, 2015). In fact, between 2008 and 2011, authorities enforced this statute 490 times in the City of Grand Rapids (ACLU, 2013; *Speet v. Schuette*, 2013). Although the court did not determine whether Michigan's ordinance on panhandling was content-based or content-neutral, James Speet's case highlighted its unconstitutionality because the mandate was overly broad (*Speet v. Schuette*, 2013).

Proponents in favor of panhandling ordinance often mention the possibility of dishonesty or fraud. Although there are people who rely on charitable donations to obtain the necessities of living as with James Speet, there are also fraudsters who prey on the generosity of unsuspecting citizens (Dicker, 2012; Goldstein, 2013). Gary Thompson, a man who used a wheelchair, spoke about "fak[ing] a mental and speech disability" to further his disposition (Goldstein, 2013). Woledge (2013) interviewed a man falsely claiming to be a homeless war veteran to solicit money from passersby. Michigan lawmakers attempted to establish panhandling legislation to combat this threat. However, the City of Novi's council members drafted documentation highlighting the court's disapproval stating, "Michigan's interest in preventing fraud can be

better served by a statue that, instead of directly prohibiting begging, is more narrowly tailored to specific conduct, such as fraud, that Michigan seeks to prohibit" (City of Novi City Council, 2014, para. 2). In other words, Michigan should focus on fraudulent behavior instead of outlawing all forms of panhandling because of the possibility of fraudsters.

New York, a state with less restrictive ordinances than Michigan, prohibited begging but allowed solicitation for charitable, religious, or political causes (Schreiber, 2006) on Transit Authority property. The rationale for the distinction and prohibition of asking for money (begging or panhandling) involved the need to ensure the safety and comfort of the system user's (*Young v. NYC Transit Authority*, 1990). Mainly, the subway is a confined area and passengers fear panhandlers. Therefore, system users may discontinue riding to avoid the group. The implementation of these restrictions was also to help diminish crime as in the case of *People v. Goetz* (1986). In this case, one of four Black teens asked Bernard Goetz for money. He then shot each of them, claiming self-defense. By prohibiting panhandling, authorities hoped to eliminate or reduce crime (*People v. Goetz*, 1986). Although the Transit Authority changed the restrictions for the system (it is considered public), it maintained the "nonpublic" designation for the cars (Schreiber, 2006). Simply put, panhandling is allowed on transit property except for the subway cars.

Another argument in support of restrictive ordinance for panhandlers is the impact the visible sign of poverty has on local businesses (Blumgart, 2018) and surrounding communities (Fraser, 2015). One perception (as viewed in the *Young* and *Goetz* cases) is that disorders (such as panhandling) prompt an increase in the criminal element, as suggested in BWT. Notably, the theory explained that disorders or visible signs of poverty serve as a beacon to criminals that

their dealings will thrive in the area going unchecked. If this were true, the property values could decrease as well (Kelling & Wilson, 1982; Krasny, 2012).

A second viewpoint is that tourists or visitors avoid panhandlers, as do subway users. Because business owners rely on shoppers, lawmakers acknowledged that visible signs of poverty (i.e., panhandling) might negatively influence the prosperity of the business as addressed in *McLaughlin v. City of Lowell* (ACLU, 2013) and *Norton v. City of Springfield, Illinois* (2015). Authorities also admitted that panhandling ordinances would extinguish the uncomfortable experience of being solicited by a beggar (Paul, 2010). Ultimately, the Supreme Court indicated that the right to free speech takes precedence over someone's comfort level.

Some tactics chosen by panhandlers have resulted in safety hazards including obstructing traffic, according to authorities (Williams, 2011). For this reason, lawmakers have tried to ban panhandling on traffic medians (Virginia Accident Lawyer, 2009; Anderson, 2015). However, the courts also dismantled this argument because lawmakers did not prohibit all activities performed on the median. Meaning, a person crossing the street could stand on that space, legally. Thus, the ban on public space targeted panhandling (content-based legislation), therefore, unconstitutional. Despite this finding, law enforcement is within its power to act upon a situation where someone is impeding traffic. For this reason, additional legislation is not needed.

In *Norton v. City of Springfield*, *Illinois* (2015), the court upheld panhandling regulations in the downtown district. The ordinance prohibited requesting immediate goods but allowed written and delayed requests. Initially, the law was considered content-neutral but, after the decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), the court granted rehearing and changed its analysis. Shortly after, Springfield authorities modified its panhandling regulations applying it to

immediate requests for money within 5 feet of a potential donor. The city officials declared that

the restrictions prohibited conduct, not speech. The issue with the change was that it banned

solicitations for money (panhandling), but not other forms of expression. In December 2015, the

district court held that the revisions were still content-based.

In June 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that the "buffer zones" (areas within 35 feet of

any entrance) in Massachusetts surrounding abortion clinics, although content-neutral, invalid.

The restrictions on these zones violated the First Amendment because it was overly broad

(*McCullen v. Coakley*, 2014). The significance of *McCullen v. Coakley* is in the legality of such

laws that pose restrictions on panhandling within a certain distance of ATMs and other facilities

(i.e., buffer zones).

Like the details in Norton's case, *McLaughlin v. City of Lowell* (ACLU, 2013), *Browne v.

City of Grand Junction* (2015), and *Thayer v. City of Worcester* (2015) all challenged

lawmakers' establishment of rules surrounding certain facilities (buffer zones) – like ATM's and

restaurants, citing public safety. Authorities mentioned the discomfort of those being solicited

(principally, after dark) as part of the need for limitations. The courts highlighted the lack of

evidence to support safety concerns and extinguished the importance given to the level of

comfort of the potential donors over the right to free speech.

Aggressive panhandling was a distinction given to legislation to curb panhandling by

addressing concerns for public safety. In the face of increased constitutional scrutiny,

policymakers instituted aggressive panhandling restrictions to prohibit, not the right to ask for

help, but the way one does so as in *McLaughlin v. City of Lowell* (ACLU, 2013), *Norton v. City

of Springfield, Illinois* (2015), and *Thayer v. City of Worcester* (2015). This argument would

focus on intimidation and coercion by panhandlers against the potential donors in a content-

neutral manner by attacking the conduct, not speech. The issue was that the rules included

peaceful requests for assistance if done at certain times (i.e., after sunset and before sunrise) and

in certain places (i.e., within 30 feet of a café, 15 feet of any parking pay station or entrance or

exit of any building). In other words, *aggressive* did not mean violent or intimidating but referred

to the time or place of solicitation. Nashville, New Orleans, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and Orlando are

such locations that implemented these policies (Smith, 2017).

As with many other attempts to regulate mendicancy, the aggressive panhandling laws

were eventually considered content-based and thus unconstitutional (*McLaughlin v. City of*

Lowell; *Browne* v. *City of Grand Junction*, 2015; *Norton v. City of Springfield, Illinois,* 2015).

Despite the content-based verses content-neutral argument, policymakers may want to do as the

court suggested when it addressed the panhandling ordinance in Michigan – enforce the laws that

prohibit the dangerous behavior (threats or intimidation) instead of focusing on panhandling that

might include such bad behavior.

Lawmakers have used a variety of creative tactics to restrict panhandling because of the

foundational belief that disorders (i.e., panhandling) will more than likely lead to more crime

(BWT). Within the past few years, the courts have begun to reverse previous decisions to ban or

severely restrict this method of expression, as unconstitutional. However, there are legitimate

reasons for concern, as mentioned above. The following section will highlight the most recent

attempt to eliminate panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia, through a policy known as the

Public Education Campaign.

Public Education Campaign as Panhandling Policy in Hampton Roads

Since the Supreme Court ruling in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015) and its widespread

application to mendicancy or panhandling, many municipalities have begun to educate the public

about alternative methods to serve the needy (Blumgart, 2018). Distinctly, in Hampton Roads,

Virginia, signs litter the landscape requesting that the public donate funds to nonprofit

organizations instead of to panhandlers directly.

This request was one part of a three-pronged policy to curb panhandling in Hampton Roads

(Bond, 2017) and corresponds with the federal push to consolidate resources to end extreme

poverty and homelessness (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, n.d.). According to

Hampton Human Services, more than 75% of the individuals asking for money are not homeless

(City of Hampton, 2017). This statistic resulted from outreach teams initiating contact with

panhandlers and giving advice about the availability of services (i.e., shelters) and opportunities

for employment (Bond, 2017). The work of the outreach teams and the redirection of public

donations to reputable organizations will allow for the consolidation of resources to reach a

broader audience and possibly eliminate or diminish funding to the dishonest peddlers.

      The second part of the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was the

enforcement of existing ordinances. These laws prohibit such acts as urinating in public, public

drunkenness, and trespassing (Bond, 2017). The final part of the panhandling policy concerned

the authority given to law enforcement officers to ban panhandling on private property.

Particularly, approximately 32 business owners (as of September 2017) in Hampton Roads,

Virginia, have given police officers the right to enforce a ban on panhandling on the business

property (Bond, 2017). Panhandling is constitutionally protected speech and authorities cannot

stop people from contributing money. However, it can reframe the public's perception of

panhandlers. For this purpose, this three-pronged policy (Public Education Campaign) was the

latest attempt in Hampton Roads, Virginia, to ban or restrict panhandling.

Other jurisdictions have taken a different approach to curb public generosity. In explaining the lack of long term success of contributing directly to panhandlers, Dr. Robert G. Marbut also advocated for giving to an established organization. He stated that the needy would become lazy and uninterested in becoming productive members of society if they were not required to work for their earnings (Marbut Consulting, 2010). Although Marbut's work focused on homelessness, it included the issue of panhandling because both are visible signs of poverty.

Dr. Marbut served as both the chief of staff to Mayor Cisneros and a councilperson in San Antonio and as a White House Fellow to Former President H. W. Bush (Marbut Consulting, 2017). Because of his frustrations with the lack of progress in dealing with homelessness and the disadvantaged, Marbut began touring the United States counseling officials on *The Seven Guiding Principles of Homeless Transformation*, despite its questionable success. In these principles, Marbut suggested that people do not strive to do better if the public enabled them with free money. Explicitly, he stated that panhandlers use cash for drugs and alcohol and that many are not homeless, but prey on the generosity of citizens (Marbut Consulting, 2010). Dr. Marbut further explained that persons exhibiting the visible signs of poverty required a system of rewards for positive behavior that simulated the real world. His definition of *positive behavior* meant that the community had become or was becoming productive members of society. The outcome of this productivity would be better sleeping arrangements, more privacy, and other electives (Marbut Consulting, 2010). These benefits would serve as motivation to reintegrate this population into society.

Marbut's solutions for dealing with panhandling and homelessness illustrated the belief that the experience is voluntary. Baker, Elliott, Mitchell, and Thiele (2016) cited several involuntary instances that may lead to the same condition, but it is beyond the scope of this

study. In this inquiry, I investigated the impact of the panhandling policy (Public Education Campaign) in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Therefore, the following section will include the consequences of maintaining an ineffective policy.

Consequences of Ineffective Policy

Thus far, the examination of legislation has demonstrated the various attempts to restrict panhandling in the United States. Although panhandling is protected by the First Amendment, authorities continue to search for an effective way of managing the issue. This section will focus on the cost associated with maintaining an ineffective policy to highlight further the need to fill the gap concerning the impact of the Public Education Campaign.

Some commonly known expenses associated with policy implementation may include training, materials, personnel (i.e., writer, lawyer, and consultant), and overhead (Bizmanualz, 2018). Other costs may not be as easily identified. An example of legislation with mounting costs is the Stop-and-Frisk policy. This policy allowed law enforcement officers to stop and conduct a pat down (frisk) of individuals suspected of engaging in criminal behavior (Simmons, 2014). Arguably, the policy did not prove to prevent crime; however, officials continued to enforce it (Simmons, 2014; Ferrandino, 2018).

Consequently, citizen complains resulted in multiple settled lawsuits (Simmons, 2014). To combat the negative aspects of the Stop-and-Frisk policy, Judge Scheindlin required the New York Police Department to draft and implement additional legislation, complete more extensive paperwork concerning job-related actions, attend workshops, and wear body cameras (Simmons, 2014). Judge Scheindlin also appointed an independent monitor to oversee department activities to prevent harassment and abuse. Despite these costly countermeasures, the consequences of the policy extended beyond a financial aspect. The communities negatively impacted suffered

psychological trauma at the hand of the public servants charged with protecting them (Simmons, 2014). For these reasons, understanding the impact of the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was critical. In the following section, I explain the importance of policy administrators and service delivery agents as the knowledge workers in their field.

Knowledge Workers

Policy administrators and service delivery agents (i.e., social workers) act as a median between resources and the community (Hampton-Newport News Community Service Board, n.d.). However, service delivery agents (i.e., law enforcement officer) are also charged with implementing policies in their work environment (City of Hampton, n.d.b). These workers are multi-faceted because of the various roles (such as counselor and resource monitor) they must fill (Granqvist, Hagglund, & Jakobsson, 2017; Huber, Lechner, & Mellace, 2017). Because it is unrealistic to establish laws for every possible situation, these professionals must use discretion (Granqvist et al., 2017; Jedwab, Chatterjee, & Shaw, 2018).

According to McGowan, Reid, and Styger (2018), a knowledge worker is an employee with the requisite expertise in their field. They gather, implement, and share what they have learned to remain abreast of anything that affects their duty performance. Reyt and Wiesenfeld (2015) specified knowledge workers as the key to an organization's ability to learn and adapt to changing times. For this reason, I used the experiences of service delivery agents as knowledge workers to investigate the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Aside from drug use and deception, as mentioned above, there are other perceptions concerning panhandlers. Some may believe that the abundance of government services dispels any excuse by panhandlers for not using the benefits and choosing instead to beg. In other words,

the services provided to panhandlers negate the need to panhandle. Weekly, outreach teams in Hampton Roads purposefully search for anyone displaying signs of homelessness to advise on services that are available (Bond, 2017). However, Sorrell (2016) identified some issues in accessing benefits. For instance, some people require help from mental health and housing agencies. Because these systems lack coordination, patients must try to understand how to benefit from services. Sorrell (2016) wrote about how ill-equipped some people who need these advantages were because of physical and cognitive impairments. Sorrell also mentioned the complexities of each network further separating those in need from these services. Kerman, Sirohi, Curwood, and Trainor (2017) pointed to the attempts to navigate the systems alone as barriers to accessibility. More importantly, Kerman et al. identified significant challenges to those in need of care such as ambiguity concerning agency roles and a lack of collaboration between services. Hauff and Secor-Turner (2014) also identified a lack of knowledge of resources and a lack of coordination of care (among other things) as barriers to the vulnerable seeking assistance from these government agencies.

Policy administrators support the one-stop shop effort for the consolidation of resources (government funding and donations from private citizens) in alignment with the national push to eliminate poverty and homelessness. Consolidating resources in one system allows for a more efficient way to identify and distribute revenue to those who need it. For this reason, policy administrators and service delivery agents were valuable in helping to investigate the impact of the policies they implemented and enforced. Specifically, these knowledge workers encouraged a rich exploration into the impact of the Public Education Campaign.

Other Relevant Studies

Bem (2014) mentioned the importance of researchers using accepted methods and procedures that support the aim of the project. Instances of the effective use of procedures like those used in this study include Anderson and Spencer (2002) who employed a phenomenological method of inquiry to explore the lived experiences of persons with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Using this design allowed for a focused view on what these participants experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994; Fossey, Harvey, Mcdermott, & Davidson, 2002; Patton, 2015). Likewise, Knecht and Fischer (2015) utilized the method to examine the experiences of students participating in a service learning program. Lynch, Moulding, and McGillivray (2017) also used the phenomenological approach to understand the condition of hoarding in minors (between the ages of 8 and 12) with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Each of these researchers found that a qualitative, phenomenological approach successfully supported the purpose of their studies and helped answer their research questions. Distinctly, the value of the lived experiences cannot be gained by quantitative designs, as evidenced by the previously mentioned studies. Because the Public Education Campaign is relatively new, the experiences and perceptions of the service delivery agents helped fill the gap in the literature concerning the impact of its implementation.

Summary

Politicians have vacillated in their perceptions of and approaches to panhandling. The Supreme Court has clarified the protections of the First Amendment and its appropriate application to panhandling. Although the court has declined to address begging or mendicancy as a behavior instead of speech, municipalities continue to work to eliminate panhandling. The latest method in this venture was the implementation of the Public Education Campaign.

However, there was a gap in knowledge concerning the impact of this policy. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology and procedures chosen to help fill the gap in knowledge by exploring the experiences and perceptions of service delivery agents in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Panhandling is an issue for many municipalities. Although panhandling legislation has

been ruled unconstitutional (through the application of *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, 2015), begging

is still a source of contention. As a result, the most recent attempt to curb panhandling in

Hampton Roads, Virginia, has been in the implementation of the Public Education Campaign.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of this policy in Hampton Roads,

Virginia.

BWT linked panhandling (a disorder) with crime and served as the foundation for current

policing strategies. Chapters 1 and 2 outlined this perceived link in detail, along with the various

measures different locations have implemented to eliminate panhandling. Chapter 2 also

highlighted the constitutionality of such standards and the protections afforded by the First

Amendment. In this chapter, I describe the research design and rationale, role of the researcher,

and methodology. This chapter will also include credibility and ethical protections chosen to

explore the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design is critical because it enables a researcher to answer the research

questions (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers employ exploratory designs to help understand an

issue which little is known about (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A descriptive design, as its name

suggests, helps describe a phenomenon whereas an explanatory design seeks to explain the

causal link. I chose a qualitative design with exploratory goals to answer the research questions

concerning the impact of the Public Education Campaign on panhandling and policy

enforcement in Hampton Roads, Virginia. This method allowed for a more in-depth exploration

and understanding of the meaning of a phenomenon (Hays & Wood, 2011) because it incorporated the decision-making process of the participants. Mainly, it provided a flexibility not available when using a quantitative style (Bansal & Corley, 2012).

There are five approaches in the qualitative realm (Creswell, 2013): (a) narrative, (b) grounded theory, (c) ethnography, (d) case study, and (e) phenomenology approach. For this study, I adopted the phenomenological approach because it enabled me to explore an issue from the participants' perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, I employed this method to examine the impact of the panhandling policy through the perceptions of service delivery agents. According to Thomson, Petty, Ramage, and Moore (2011), phenomenological inquiries are valuable because they allow for the examination of experiences. The interactions of service delivery agents in performing their duties highlighted elements of the phenomenon, allowing for a deeper understanding (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). This design encouraged the examination of aspects that may have been overlooked using quantitative strategies (Rice, 2011). Qualitative phenomenological projects are also instrumental in providing methods to improve current policies (Sofaer, 2002) and can pave the way for positive change (Barnham, 2012).

The purpose of this work was to investigate the impact of the Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Like the study participants, I serve those in need; therefore, I used a transcendental perspective. Husserl (1970) and Moustakas (1994) interpreted this approach as focusing on the participants' experiences instead of the researcher's interpretation of them. This approach includes trying to identify as many preconceived notions as possible to compartmentalize them so they do not interfere with the project (Hatch, 2002). Bracketing can encourage a researcher to acknowledge biases and set them aside to focus on the interviewees' experiences. Houghton and Houghton (2018) suggested that reflection tools can aid in separating

a researcher's thoughts from those of the study participants. Hatch (2002) also described the value of such tools, but Chan et al. (2013) noted using mental notes in lieu of written documentation. Mental notes allow a researcher to consistently acknowledge previous experiences and address them as they are identified throughout a study. Because bias has the potential to invalidate a research project, I remained sensitive to the vulnerabilities of the process without using a tangible reflection tool.

Role of the Researcher

Rubin and Rubin (2012) identified a researcher's role as an active one. Reflexivity is the process of continually assessing the researcher's impact on a project. This awareness allowed me to identify my biases to avoid contaminating this project (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Reflexivity is a significant concern and caused me to focus on my work with the homeless and underserved communities to avoid influencing this project. Because I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in this inquiry, I implemented measures to guard against allowing preconceived notions to interfere. One such safeguard was allowing the participants to access any information that pertained to their interview session. This step encouraged accuracy as well as transparency. Although I had no relationship with the participants before conducting this study, my work in outreach ministry highlighted the devastation for those living with the consequences of the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia. To help defend against the threat of bias, I presented a detailed record of my findings.

Methodology

Research Participant, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

Hanlon and Larget (2011) and Adam (2017) defined a target population as all persons of interest. They proceeded to state the unlikelihood of obtaining data for the target population,

instead focusing on the value of a sample group. Specifically, the sample (or accessible) group is a subset of the target population. According to Creswell (2013), research participants may or may not be located at a single location but must have experience with the research problem. The participants for this study to explore the impact of policy were seven service delivery agents (including at least two social workers and two law enforcement officers) working in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Policy administrators and service delivery agents (as knowledge workers or experts in their field) enable their organizations to learn from and adapt to changing environments (Reyt & Wiesenfeld, 2015). Therefore, this sample group was equipped to give rich information concerning the impact of the Public Education Campaign. Maxwell (2013) and Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) noted that purposeful selection (or purposive sampling) results from understanding that information is unknown and determining to find people to fill in the gap of knowledge. This technique is often used in qualitative research to locate data-rich subjects, making the best use of the resources. These subjects are also chosen deliberately to give deeper, more informed responses to a project's research questions. Because I was exploring how policy impacts one location, I chose purposive sampling to help answer the research questions for this project. According to O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner (2008), purposive sampling is useful due to time and resource constraints as well as when randomized sampling is impossible. It is also used when the aim of the study is not to generalize the results for people outside of the sampling group. Because qualitative projects are typically not generalizable, and the purpose of this work was to investigate a phenomenon in one area, I chose purposive sampling to help answer the research questions. Using purposive sampling, I also ensured that this work included at least two participants from each profession: social workers and law enforcement officers.

Cohen and Crabtree (2006) noted the appropriateness of incorporating multiple sampling techniques within the accessible population. For this reason, I included snowball sampling (a purposive sampling technique) to allow the identification of additional potential participants and aid in the ability to build a rapport with the potential participants (Patton, 2015). Despite the benefits of this sampling technique, there were disadvantages. According to Ungvarsky (2017), because most people associate with others who share their life experiences, using the snowball sampling method could result in bias. Furthermore, it is difficult to gauge how well the participants represent the population. Despite these pitfalls, this method of sampling was useful and valuable.

Sample sizes in qualitative research are not standardized. Therefore, the aim was to find information-rich participants to obtain data saturation (Etikan et al., 2016). Saturation is the point in research where the participants reveal no new ideas or information. Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2015) mentioned the value of using a small number of participants to understand the essence of their experiences more fully. Therefore, adhering to these recommendations, interviewing seven service delivery agents resulted in an appropriate answer to the research questions. The need for additional information did not arise; therefore, I did not conduct follow-up interviews.

Recruitment

I identified service delivery agents working in Hampton Roads, Virginia, (purposive) through contact with the directors of multiple agencies (i.e., Community Service Board, Department of Social Services, and police departments) or an internet search of employees in each organization. I then contacted the agents (via phone) to explain the purpose of the study and invited them to participate. I also asked the participants for additional contacts (snowball

sampling) in the Hampton Roads area to help investigate the impact of the policy. The goal was to choose a minimum of six service delivery agents. Once the information-rich participants were identified and agreed to volunteer, I sent a letter (via e-mail) explaining the purpose and requesting participation.

Instrumentation

I chose to use an existing data collection tool created by Dr. Alicia T. O'Brien, a former Walden student. O'Brien (2015) created a set of open-ended interview questions for faculty members to examine the effectiveness of an assessment policy. I gained written consent (Appendix B) from her to modify and change the order of the tool to use to explore the impact of the panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia. I chose this data collection tool because it allowed the participants the freedom to express themselves about the phenomenon (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) while supporting the aim of the project, therefore, ensuring validity (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995). Patrick et al. (2011) elaborated on the concern for validity by focusing on the importance of the participants' understanding of the questions contained in the data collection tools (interview questions). To help with this quest, I delivered (e-mail) a copy of the interview questions to each volunteer before the interview session. I also got confirmation of delivery by phone.

Data Collection and Analysis Plan

Qualitative inquiries include interviews, observations (and fieldwork), and documents (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). These data collection methods should result in rich information about the individual's knowledge and opinions (Patton, 2015). In this study, I explored stories about the participants' area of expertise. Although face-to-face interviews were the planned method of data collection, phone interviews were also used. According to Creswell (2013), telephone

interviews are best when direct access to the participant is not possible. Because Hampton Roads consists of seven cities (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, and Newport News), and I used multiple sampling methods, recruiting seven service delivery agents was not an issue.

I conducted semistructured interviews using open-ended questions to allow the participants to guide the discussion appropriately (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This style produced descriptive data while helping minimize the threat of bias from leading the interview (O'Sullivan et al., 2008). Although open-ended questions may also provide a shift in focus or an abundance of irrelevant information, I remained mindful of the topic and steered the conversation back on track, when needed. These discussions occurred in a private place and lasted no longer than 45 minutes. I encouraged the participants to mention anything they felt was relevant to the impact of the panhandling policy and, follow-up sessions were not needed.

The identification of the study participants is confidential. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to help guard against adverse repercussions associated with open and honest answers. Transcripts, as well as field notes, include the pseudonym to aid in this venture. I have maintained the participants' contact information as well as the assigned pseudonym in a locked safe with the rest of the study material to be destroyed after 5 years.

During data collection, I listened to the participants' answers, interpreted what was said, then asked follow-up questions (O'Sullivan et al., 2008). Rubin and Rubin (2012) outlined instances where asking these questions may be inappropriate. Particularly, if there is a possibility the participant may feel offended or unfairly challenged. Likewise, if the topic may be too sensitive or irrelevant to the study or if the interview is in danger of exceeding the prescribed time limit, the matter should not be mentioned. After the data collection phase, there was no need

to debrief because the methodology consisted of open-ended interview questions, and the participants could explain their responses fully (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Houghton and Houghton (2018) suggested reading transcripts of data (entirely) at least three times over a period (no less than 3 days) for appropriate thematic analysis. I then coded the information using line-by-line processing (analyzing each line) to identify reoccurring constructs or meaningful segments (Firmin et al., 2016). Houghton and Houghton (2018) acknowledged the value of allowing multiple individuals to code the data (identify common themes) to compare or solicit the participants' feedback (member-checking). I incorporated member-checking to contribute to the transparency and accuracy of this work. I would have reported discrepant information to allow the reader the opportunity to form an opinion, as suggested by (Anderson, 2010). However, there was none.

Once I coded the data, I identified themes (Saldana, 2016). Because this process may be complicated, Saldana suggested speaking with peers, experts, or friends to receive help. I could have (but did not) employed this technique (without divulging participants' identifications) because these people (peers, experts, and friends) may ask questions I may not have thought of or offer an alternate perspective to the work.

Bree and Gallagher (2016) acknowledged the use of Microsoft products (Excel and Word) to organize, store, and sort data. I chose to use these products as well. However, if I needed other accommodations, software packages (such as Zotero, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA, and NVivo) were available options.

During the data collection process, I used a smart-phone to record the interview sessions. I also used an interview protocol (Appendix A) to aid in collecting data. After each interview, I followed the advice of Houghton and Houghton (2018) and transcribed (verbatim) the

information (on the computer) as soon as possible. At that time, I added any hand-written notes to the transcription. I also saved the transcribed conversations on my password-protected computer as well as kept a copy on a thumb-drive that was held in a locked safe. Any printed interviews were also locked in the safe when I was not working on this project. I will maintain the data for this project for 5 years in a locked container at my home. After the 5 years, I will destroy the audio-tape and shred the documents. I will also delete the files on my computer and thumb-drive.

Credibility

According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), research findings must be well-founded and based on a critical investigation. They defined research *validity* and *reliability* as being dependable despite the ability to generalize the outcome. Rudestam and Newton (2015) also conceded that the terms mentioned above were inappropriate for qualitative work, instead offering *confirmability* (neutrality) and *credibility* (truth). Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Billups, 2015) acknowledged these concepts (confirmability and credibility) as a part of the framework of trustworthiness. The other contributors to the trustworthiness framework were *dependability* (replicable) and *transferability* (applicable). Polit and Beck (2011, as cited in Billups, 2015) endorsed the addition of *authenticity* (reality) to the framework.

Billups (2015) suggested that the quest for credibility meant ensuring the research findings were believable and truthful. One way to achieve this is through member-checking (Simon, 2011). Researchers may also attain credibility through triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and peer debriefing. For this study, I sought to achieve credibility by incorporating member-checking. This action allowed the interview participants access to their portion of the project to confirm or clarify their words. Some researchers believe

this additional step will corrupt the findings while some feel it helps promote transparency (Polit & Beck, 2011, as cited in Billups, 2015). According to Cavalcanti (2017), transparency promotes transferability. In other words, transparency will allow other researchers to build upon a project's findings. For this reason, I used member-checking and annotated the participants' words as well as the procedures used during the interview process to help ensure dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

I also compared the information from each different source (*triangulation*), which is another essential technique to maintain credibility and trustworthiness. Billups (2015) noted triangulation was possible by comparing methods (such as interviews, documents, and observations), researcher (multiple analysts), or theory (interpret findings through multiple perspectives). Cohen and Crabtree (2006) also mentioned data (different participants) triangulation as a viable option to gain credibility. I chose methods and data triangulation to build and maintain trustworthiness for this report.

Ethical Protections

A potential risk to this study was the violation of privacy associated with the unintended disclosure of identifying information. To help minimize this threat, I assigned pseudonyms (confidentiality) for the participants involved. The transcriptions of the interviews contained the pseudonym instead of the participant's name. This step helped protect the participant should I have chosen to take advantage of the techniques outlined in this document (peer debriefing or researcher triangulation). As an added layer of security, masking exact response quantities further protected participant information. For example, if I spoke to five people and all responded the same way concerning a particular question, I may have written that "some" or "many" reported that precise way. Using this approach helped guard against repercussions

resulting from open and honest answers. To avoid stressors or feelings of coercion, I reminded interviewees that I was conducting a research project as a student and that participation was voluntary. I initiated no further contact with those service delivery agents who declined to participate in this study. Additionally, there were no adverse events, and each participant completed a consent form before participation in this study.

I had no relationship with the participants of the research project. I met all the interviewees for the first time in connection with this phenomenological inquiry. Hence, there was no conflict of interest.

Summary

Panhandling (or mendicancy) is a concern for many. As previously mentioned, many municipalities seek to eliminate disorders (i.e., begging and loitering) because of the perceived link to crime (BWT). Outlined in Chapter 2 are the details for the latest attempt to curb panhandling via policy (Public Education Campaign) in Hampton Roads, Virginia. In this chapter, I outlined the rationale I used in selecting a qualitative inquiry to investigate the impact of this policy. Included were the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and methodology. Also included were the credibility and ethical protections that I employed to protect the participants of this project. A phenomenological approach was most appropriate to explore the impact of the Public Education Campaign because an investigation into the meaning of the service delivery agents' perceptions and experiences allowed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter 4

Introduction

Panhandling has been a source for debate among authorities. Although panhandling is no longer considered illegal, authorities continue to explore ways to restrict or eliminate the practice via policy. A recent attempt in Hampton Roads, Virginia, has been the implementation of a policy known as the Public Education Campaign. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the impact of this policy through the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents (social workers and law enforcement officers). In investigating the policy's impact, this project was guided by two research questions:

RQ1: What has been the impact of the Public Education Campaign on panhandling in Hampton Roads, Virginia?

RQ2: How has the Public Education Campaign impacted policy enforcement in Hampton Roads, Virginia?

This chapter contains the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary of this inquiry.

Setting

I obtained written approval from the director/manager of multiple police departments and social service agencies to interview two or three employees before receiving IRB approval. Once IRB approved this project, I e-mailed the consent form as well as the interview questions to the leader of each establishment to maintain transparency. I then used contact information gained from the director/manager of each agency or the internet to recruit participants. Some directors/managers appointed an employee to e-mail the request to its employees, asking for volunteers in lieu of disclosing employee contact information. I continually communicated the

need to avoid feelings of coercion and asked that all questions about the project be directed to me.

Once volunteers were identified, I e-mailed the consent form as well as the interview questions before scheduling the data collection session. Although my goal was to conduct face-to-face interviews, some participants preferred a phone interview. In both instances (face-to-face and phone), I thanked the participant for volunteering and ensured their confidentiality.

After each session was recorded and transcribed, I e-mailed transcripts to the participant, usually on the same day or within no more than 2 days, to ensure accuracy. The recordings were downloaded on a password-protected computer, and the paper copies of the transcripts were locked in a safe when not in use. After each participant was given at least two opportunities to confirm the accuracy of the transcript, I began using pseudonyms to analyze and code the data.

Each participant who participated in a face-to-face interview chose the location for the session. At the time of this study, there appeared to be no abnormal personal or organizational conditions that would have influenced the experiences of the participants.

Demographics

In this work, I explored the perceptions and work-related experiences of social workers and law enforcement officers in connection with panhandling. The participants were five women and two men. Because data were collected through face-to-face and phone interviews, no other demographical information was provided.

Data Collection

Data collection took 3 weeks and included seven participants. Each participant reviewed the interview questions to address any confusion before the session. Because of time constraints, some participants chose phone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews. During the face-to-

face sessions, the participant chose the private location. I conducted no more than three interviews per week, and each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The sessions were audio-taped with no deviations from the plan outlined in Chapter 3. The participants permitted the interviews to be recorded with the guarantee of confidentiality. I transcribed the sessions using Microsoft Word and returned transcripts to the participant for verification through member-checking. I assigned pseudonyms to the participants (Omar, Tim, Ken, Laura, Jennifer, Ana, and Liam) and did not encounter any unusual circumstances during the data collection phase. For this study, names typically assigned to women are not indicative of a female participant and vice versa with typically male names.

Data Analysis

I read the data transcripts at least three times over as many days before beginning my thematic analysis (Houghton & Houghton, 2018). I then identified reoccurring constructs by using line-by-line processing (Firmin et al., 2016) and Microsoft Excel. Line-by-line processing led to an abundance of information organized into the following coded units: (a) outreach team, (b) in-need (not homeless), (b) scam (not homeless), (c) Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing program (VASH) voucher (veteran), (d) policy met goal, (e) traffic hazard, (f) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition, (g) housing shortage, (h) funding, (i) call volume, (j) burned bridges, (k) reported, (l) less money, (m) research, (n) collaboration, (o) crisis hotline, (p) substance abuse, and (q) no impact. These units were identified as *important words* expressed by the participant. I then combined these words under themes to narrow the categories and answer the research questions. The themes consisted of (a) the person, (b) what it revealed, and (c) the machine, and there were no discrepant cases.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Each participant was given a copy of the transcribed interview session for member-checking and was asked to verify its accuracy to ensure credibility (Simon, 2011). Polit and Beck (2011, as cited in Billups, 2015) noted that member-checking promotes transparency and, ultimately, transferability (Cavalcanti, 2017). Another technique used to maintain credibility and trustworthiness was in comparing the information obtained from each interview session through data triangulation. I also annotated the participants' words to ensure dependability and confirmability.

Results

I interviewed seven participants and assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The findings from this study were organized by research question. Although the study findings are organized by three themes, each theme is described in connection to each research question.

Impact of the Public Education Campaign on Panhandling

The impact of the Public Education Campaign on panhandling is challenging to measure accurately. Although most participants in this study described a decline in the number of people panhandling (on traffic medians and street corners), they also confirmed that the policy did not eliminate panhandling altogether. The panhandling policy in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was implemented to try to discourage the public from contributing directly to panhandlers. Despite the signs that ask individuals not to encourage panhandling, panhandlers sometimes stand under these signs while asking for money. The results of this study exposed the confusion much of the public holds in understanding the panhandling policy and the role of the Housing Crisis Hotline. Notably, many people call the police department, social services, and the Housing Crisis Hotline to report incidents of panhandling. Some express concern and a desire to allow the government

agencies to help the panhandler, and others, according to Liam and Jennifer, believe panhandling to be illegal and call to expose the perceived crime. Regardless of the motives behind the calls, service delivery agents investigate to determine what actions, if any, need to be taken.

Panhandlers have also felt a decline in the public's financial generosity. Tim spoke of a call that was made describing the detrimental impact the city's efforts were having on a specific family. The family called an agency expressing a dire situation, and an outreach team was dispatched to investigate. The team found that the family was paying for hotel/motel accommodations and therefore were not eligible for help through the Housing Crisis Hotline. Despite this revelation, employees continued to search for resources to help this family but revealed that the city could not provide the level of help the family was asking for on a long-term basis.

Although monetary giving may have declined, other contributions have increased. It is unclear whether this change was due to the policy, but many citizens have begun handing out toiletries and other packaged goods to panhandlers. The results of this study did not reveal how receptive panhandlers were to this alteration in giving. On the other hand, some citizens continued to contribute financially to panhandlers directly. Some have made comments to service delivery agents such as "I don't care, if I wanna give a couple of dollars to them, I'm gonna give," according to Omar. Multiple participants conveyed this sentiment explaining the public's knowledge of its legal right to contribute the way it desires without government interference.

Although this study's findings confirmed that most panhandlers are not homeless, it also revealed other relevant aspects. Much of the city's funding to help persons experiencing a housing crisis is distributed according to the HUD definition of homelessness. Meaning, an

individual must be sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation such as a park, shelter, or

abandoned building to benefit from the resources available through the Housing Crisis Hotline.

According to multiple interviewees, some people live on a fixed income and pay for hotel/motel

rooms. Tim elaborated stating that these individuals may panhandle to "get extra money" or

make ends meet. For example, Laura explained a situation concerning a veteran and his family

residing in a hotel/motel, and because of medical issues (arthritis, etc.), the veteran "could not

gain steady employment." A person paying for a room is classified as a "self-pay." Therefore,

not homeless and unqualified to receive specific resources. "Those are the ones that fall through

the cracks," said Laura.

Table

Perceptions Concerning the Impact of the Policy on Panhandling

The person	What it revealed
"…we have seen a reduction in the number of panhandlers."	"…would be out there because the money that they received from the Social Security during the month was not enough to pay for a hotel for a full month so he would be out there panhandling to make money, but of course by our definition you're not homeless…we were trying to help him anyway, but of course, how are you going to sustain every month?..."
"I think it's also cut down on the number of folks that are approaching cars, you know, approaching citizens that are driving."	"…a lot of panhandlers were not homeless" (HUD definition) and "a lot of veterans…[with] VASH vouchers...[were] panhandling…"
"…a lot of citizens are under the impression that panhandling is illegal. …they call…"	
"…[panhandling is] easier for them to do than to have to go through the process of possibly getting other types of employment. ...but (pause) one (pause) well, actually one did give me a reason - it was just basically that he gets good money (pause) some people give him $20 here and there so (pause) you get a busy intersection and, you know, tugging at people's heartstrings sometimes you can manage to get quite a bit of money."	

"…the response that I have gotten from some is that 'you can't tell me what to do with my money' and so, 'I don't care, if I wanna give a couple of dollars to them, I'm gonna give…"	
"…the signs discourage people often times from giving them money… they were not happy with the signs…"	
"citizens called in and complained that panhandlers…were getting into $30,000 cars and driving home…"	

Public Education Campaign Impact on Policy Enforcement

The participants for this study were service delivery agents (social workers and law enforcement officers) in Hampton Roads. Because officials have implemented a policy to discourage the public from financially contributing to panhandlers, these agents are all but guaranteed to interact with people exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers). The "machine" built to manage these interactions consists of outreach teams and the Housing Crisis Hotline.

The outreach teams try to engage persons exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers) at least weekly and whenever a call (from the city council or a concerned citizen) requesting a team is received. Omar spoke about the difficulty of scheduling weekly sessions saying, "it's not always ideal that we get out and do it weekly because we have other things that we're doing…it just kind of depends." When possible, these interactions allow the service delivery agents to become familiar with many in this community. Explicitly, Omar also stated, "some of the faces that we see…we know them, or we reached out to them."

Since the Public Education Campaign to discourage panhandling was implemented, the Housing Crisis Hotline's call volume increased exponentially; the hotline became the central intake. Because the posted signs list the hotline number and much of the public is either concerned or confused about the legality of panhandling, the hotline personnel either makes a

referral to a supporting agency or clarifies the misconception with the caller surrounding panhandling.

When service delivery agents received calls for instances of panhandling, the usual response was to send an outreach team to the individual to ascertain the circumstances and try to help. As mentioned previously, much of the available resources are geared towards homelessness. Although the HUD definition of homelessness does not include couch-surfers (persons living on the couches of others), there is funding to help in these instances. The issue with this "pot" of funds is that it is less than that for rapid rehousing (funding for those experiencing homelessness). Despite these issues, the study participants expressed the goal of finding ways to help those exhibiting signs of poverty. Laura noted that "[i]t takes time because there's not enough permanent supportive housing options…so we have to use creative ways to try to get people housed." Laura also expressed the difficulties associated with people who have "been in and out of various assistance programs" because they have "burned too many bridges."

Since the national push to end homelessness and the implementation of the Public Education Campaign, the Housing Crisis Hotline personnel have access to approximately 30 agencies (including the Salvation Army, shelters, and Veterans Administration) to collaborate and effectively distribute resources. The individual's information is maintained in the system used by the hotline personnel to track resource distribution. Once someone calls the hotline and is determined to qualify for services, they are referred to the appropriate agency. Requiring people to use the hotline eliminated the ability to receive similar services from multiple agencies secretly. Using this process also forges a working relationship between agencies. Tim said that this is "part of our Continuum of Care."

The results of this study confirmed that most of the panhandlers in Hampton Roads, Virginia, are not homeless while acknowledging other relevant factors associated with panhandling. This study also confirmed that some who claim to be veterans have not served in the military, and some have family locally. Some even use wheelchairs, deceptively. Ken, as well as others, highlighted that some panhandlers "don't want [the information about available resources]" or "don't necessarily desire to be engaged." In fact, Omar articulated that some "don't want to be confined to different expenses that are associated with being housed, so some do make the choice to panhandle and get means to survive." Ana echoed this sentiment, saying that the removal of restrictive city codes along with the wording of the policy has given "them permission to beg." In some respects, a couple of the participants believed that the change in code "tied [their] hands" when addressing panhandling. These service delivery agents spoke of the benefits of restrictions to panhandling while also acknowledging the dangers of trying to restrict free speech.

Table

Perceptions Concerning How the Policy Impacted Policy Enforcement

The person	What it revealed	The machine
"…we have a resource guide that we hand out and information about…[the Crisis] hotline and they don't want it."	"…fall through the cracks" (HUD definition)	"…citizens are more conscious of the signs posted around the city, and I do think that more have started utilizing the Housing Crisis Hotline even if they don't receive services, but they have tried to at least access it..."
"…when their stories don't add up, then we start doing a little bit more digging to see what we need to get this person off the street…"	"…have to be literally homeless…not enough permanent supportive housing options…so we have to use creative ways to try to get people housed."	"…city…requested that…[we] go out and do some street outreach with the panhandlers."

"...it's not always ideal that we get out and... [outreach] weekly because we have other things that we're doing..."	"It turns out that the uncle was a veteran and he qualified for a VASH voucher…but…passed away before we could get that in place."	"Housing Crisis Hotline…[became] a central intake…"
"..and some of them were repeated people - in other words, we know them because we've encountered them before - we've encountered them quite often (pause) we've been trying to get them housed, but they weren't necessarily interested in the time as far as us trying to get them housed. So not everybody's new..."	"…[couch-surfers] potentially qualify for homeless prevention services, but the funding…is much less than the rapid rehousing component…"	"…they give us information that we can then verify because we collaborate with all of the agencies across the peninsula…"
"…we tr[y] to engage them...but they don't necessarily desire to be engaged."	"…several [homeless] have been in and out of various assistance programs in the past and have burned too many bridges…"	"...but if we get a call (pause) from city council or who have you, we do go out and make contact and see what their circumstances are (pause) but it's not just specific to panhandling; it's individuals that present as potentially homeless."
	"…claimed to be a veteran…in a wheelchair, and he never served."	"...[we] work in conjunction with the case managers at the VA."
	"…he and his wife…reside in a hotel," "he's not a veteran…[and] has family locally…"	"So there's about 25 or 30 agencies who all work together - Salvation Army, the shelters, the VA - in order to provide services to people that find themselves in a homeless situation. That's part of our Continuum of Care."
	"…but sometimes they make that choice because they don't want to be confined to different expenses that are associated with being housed, so some do make the choice to panhandle and get means to survive."	

Summary

In summary, the Public Education Campaign has caused a decline in financial contributions but has not eliminated it. It has also impacted policy enforcement by forging collaborations between agencies when distributing resources and encouraging service delivery agents to think creatively to help those exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers). Chapter 5 contains the interpretation, limitations, recommendations, and implications of this study's findings.

Chapter 5

Introduction

Authorities in Hampton Roads, Virginia, implemented a panhandling policy known as the

Public Education Campaign to discourage panhandling without impeding First Amendment

rights. The purpose of this phenomenological inquiry was to investigate the impact of the policy

by exploring the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents (including

social workers and law enforcement officers). The findings revealed that the panhandling policy

in Hampton Roads discourages some contributors from donating directly to panhandlers, but it

has not eliminated the practice. The findings also indicated that participants' work-related

experiences are guided by a collaboration among agencies to distribute resources to those

exhibiting signs of poverty effectively. Lastly, although this study's findings confirmed that

many panhandlers are not homeless, it identified relevant information to explain the reasons

some choose to panhandle further.

Interpretation of the Findings

Results of this study confirmed that most panhandlers in Hampton Roads are not

homeless. It also revealed that, although the policy was implemented to discourage panhandling,

some factors of the policy (precisely the signs) confused some members of the public.

Specifically, calls to police departments, social services, and the Housing Crisis Hotline to report

incidents of panhandling have increased. This increase indicates there is some confusion about

the legality of panhandling and the role of the Housing Crisis Hotline. I found that some

members of the public called service delivery agents and Housing Crisis Hotline personnel to

complain about incidents of panhandling. Aside from unwanted interactions and safety concerns,

I did not expect to uncover the complaints even in the absence of these circumstances. Some

members of the public not only complained about panhandlers in their neighborhoods, in the middle of the streets, and while they were shopping but complained about panhandlers in general. This behavior caused me to question how the public feels about free speech and the belief that everyone should benefit from constitutional protections.

This study's findings also revealed that many participants believed the benefits of the restrictive city codes concerning panhandling were needed. However, the downfall has been the constitutional implications. Surprisingly, this was not so clear-cut when addressing public safety. I found one story particularly distressing. One participant explained that some panhandlers could not handle "free money." Specifically, many panhandlers are not homeless and panhandle to buy drugs. In some instances, these panhandlers have overdosed in public spaces. The participant indicated a great sense of responsibility for others who may not make the best decisions for themselves. "[We] are the ones that have to go there and…see dead bodies. We're the ones that answer those calls…it's a lot of other things involved than just (pause) the panhandling." The contradiction for service delivery agents between guarding constitutional protections, treating adults as such, and protecting the public from itself was not apparent to me until this study's findings.

The findings also indicated that the number of panhandlers has declined as well as the public's level of financial contribution given directly to panhandlers. Nonetheless, despite this decline, panhandling still occurs. Thus, outreach teams are sometimes dispatched to find familiar faces. Some of the panhandlers do not qualify for services, refused to engage in conversation, or were working with an agent. Regardless of the possible outcome, service delivery agents deployed and attempted to engage and help. For this reason, I question the amount of wasted time these agents expended. How often have these teams dispatched to find people they have

approached previously, resulting in a fruitless journey? Many outreach members described the ideal situation as a weekly interaction with those exhibiting signs of poverty. They further explained the unlikelihood of such a schedule. Because a part of the panhandling policy requires service delivery agents to deploy, how much time is taken out of each day to travel to destinations only to find an individual who does not want to be housed? One participant noted, "We know them because we've encountered them before; we've encountered them quite often." How many other tasks go unaccomplished as a result of this wasted time? How does this time compare to the effectiveness of the Public Education Campaign overall?

Limitations of the Study

This study's participants were asked about their work-related experiences in Hampton Roads, Virginia, calling into question the transferability of this work. Because the data collection phase lasted 3 weeks, there were additional limitations to the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I compared the information from each participant through triangulation, as suggested by Billups (2015), to counteract this weakness. This project also included a detailed guide of the steps taken to answer the research questions to help obtain dependability.

My role as the researcher and primary data collecting instrument posed a possible threat of bias. To reduce this threat, I tried to identify and compartmentalize as many preconceived notions as possible through bracketing, so as not to interfere with this project (Hatch, 2002). I also used mental notes to consistently acknowledge previous experiences and address them as they arose throughout the study (Chan et al., 2013). I provided transcripts from each session to allow the participants to verify or clarify their words through member-checking. Additionally, I included the participants' words to show my reasoning for the assessment. These techniques were implemented to promote transparency and trustworthiness.

Recommendations

In this project, I explored the perceptions and work-related experiences of service delivery agents in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Specifically, the participants included social workers and law enforcement officers and what they perceived to be the impact of the Public Education Campaign. Future recommendations include interviewing the Housing Crisis Hotline personnel and analyzing the data collected and actions taken resulting from each call. Future research is also recommended to examine the collaborative efforts between the Housing Crisis Hotline and referral agencies to gauge the effectiveness of the policy.

Another recommendation for future study concerns comparing the time taken by service delivery agents to engage with people exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers) against the effectiveness of the policy overall. It appeared that the agents spent a considerable amount of time on calls to investigate only to find that they had engaged the persons previously. One participant said, "We've encountered them quite often." However, this is not known until the team deploys to the location coming face-to-face with the individual(s).

Lastly, the time that it takes to house an individual deserves attention. Laura said, "It takes time because there's not enough permanent supportive housing options in our region…" A couple of participants further explained about people exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers) not desiring conversations with service delivery agents because of the amount of time it takes to gain services. Laura also spoke specifically about a veteran who qualified for a VASH voucher but "passed away before [agents] could get that in place."

Implications

The Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia, supported the national push to end homelessness and extreme poverty by allowing officials to distribute resources

effectively and minimize waste. Specifically, the policy was designed to centralize resources and encourage people in need of services to use the designated "path" to obtain those resources. Along with the changes to resource distribution, positive social change may also be accomplished by addressing the duplication of services associated with the "machine" created to address panhandling - the Housing Crisis Hotline and the outreach teams.

The findings of this study indicated that much confusion surrounds the role of the Housing Crisis Hotline. Signs in Hampton Roads direct those in need to call the hotline, but members of the public also call to report incidents of panhandling. Moreover, some call to complain about panhandling while others call to obtain help for the panhandler. Hotline personnel finds themselves clarifying the role of the hotline as well as highlighting the criteria for access to services. Although findings do not indicate how much time is spent on explaining the legality of panhandling, elimination of this duplication of services (time, effort, and money spent on miscommunication) may allow personnel to find additional ways to help further support the national agenda of ending homelessness and extreme poverty.

Outreach teams deploy upon the request of city council members and concerned citizens. Often, these teams find familiar faces at the destination. Despite the demanding schedule of a service delivery agent, outreach teams sometimes deploy to approach persons who do not desire to be approached or do not qualify for services. Outreach teams waste an unknown amount of time on these fruitless ventures. Positive social change may result from eliminating this duplication of services by rethinking the process used to report people exhibiting signs of poverty (including panhandlers). Information-sharing and regular assessments must be on-going to fulfill the purpose of the Public Education Campaign and, ultimately, support the national agenda.

Conclusion

The Public Education Campaign in Hampton Roads, Virginia, was designed to discourage panhandling and encourage the use of centralized resources. Authorities stated that 75% of panhandlers were not homeless and that agencies were in place to help those experiencing homelessness. Although this information may be factual, it may be misleading. Many citizens believe that panhandlers have refused services and employment. However, this study's findings revealed that many panhandlers do not qualify for services because of the HUD guidelines. Findings also exposed the housing shortage in Hampton Roads and the creativity required by service delivery agents to provide services to individuals in need. Furthermore, findings exposed the need to address the time it takes to deliver services to people in need.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview One Protocol:

Date:

Location:

Interviewer Name:

Participant Name:

Pseudonym:

Introduction:

Hi, my name is _____, and I would like to take this time to thank you for being a part of this research project. As you know, the purpose of this interview is to talk about your perceptions and work-related experiences concerning the impact of the panhandling policy (Public Education Campaign) in Hampton Roads. This interview should last no longer than an hour, and you may stop at any time. I will use two devices to record our session, but only my team will have access to these recordings. After the interview, I will transcribe and analyze your answers. However, I will not identify you in my documents, and no one will be able to identify you with your answers.

Do you have any questions?

Are you ready to begin?

Interview One Questions:
1 Why was the policy to discourage panhandling created?

2. Who created the policy?

3. How, if at all, were other entities (public or private) involved in the policy development and implementation?

4. How, if at all, has the policy affected your clientele/people you service?

5. How has the implementation of the policy affected your daily work?

6. In what ways, if any, has the policy helped policy administrators identify what they must do and/or change in the performance of their duties?

7. In what ways, if any, has the policy met its goal?

8. What future recommendations do you have, if any, for the policy and why do you make those recommendations?

9. Do you have anything else to add?

Appendix B: Letter of Permission

↩ Reply all | ∨   🗑 Delete   Junk | ∨   •••   ✕

Re: Your Interview Questions - "An Evaluation of Math Assessment Policy Process..."

AO   Alicia O'brien
         Today, 12:16 PM
         Nancy Brown ⦀   ↩ Reply all | ∨

Inbox

You replied on 12/10/2018 3:50 PM.

Greetings Nancy,

I would be honored to have you use a modified version of my instrument. I wish you an enlightening and successful journey to completing your dissertation.

My best,