

LONG-TERM MOBILITY PATTERNS OF THE
VISIBLY HOMELESS IN DOWNTOWN
AUSTIN, TEXAS

THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Purpose	
Rationale/Justification	
Literature Review	
Hypothesis and Research Questions	
II. HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES.....	10
III. METHODS.....	22
Definition of Homeless	
Study Area	
Data	
Sampling	
Limitations	
Analysis	
Summary	
IV. RESULTS.....	31
V. CONCLUSIONS	46
Appendix 1	52
Appendix 2	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Homeless Study Group, by Sex.....	31
2. Homeless Study Group, by Race.....	32
3. Percentage of Study Group with Family.....	32
4. Composition of Study Group by Age.....	33
5. Where Individuals in the Study Group Became Homeless.....	34
6. Average Number of Days Homeless.....	35
7. Average Number of Days Homeless, Without Upper Extreme.....	36
8. Average Number of Days Homeless, by Race.....	37
9. Number of Days in Austin of Those Not Becoming Homeless in Austin.....	38
10. Reasons for Coming to Austin.....	39
11. Method of Getting to Austin, Those From Outside Austin.....	40
12. Method of Getting to Austin, Those From Outside Texas.....	41
13. Percentage of People Who Do Not Plan to Leave Austin by Where They Became Homeless.....	42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Downtown Austin.....	24
2. View of the ARCH and Salvation Army.....	26
3. Congregation of Homeless on Neches Street.....	27
4. Homeless in Downtown Austin.....	28
5. Location Where Homelessness Began of Those Who Moved Directly to Austin.....	44
6. Location Where Homelessness First Began of Those Who Did Not Move Directly to Austin.....	45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There have been homeless people all over the world for centuries. In the United States, approximately 3.5 million people experience homelessness over the course of a year (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2004). There have been homeless people in this country since its founding. In fact, many of the laborers and servants sent by Britain to the New World were homeless people from Britain (Snow and Anderson 1993, 12). It could be said that the foundation of this country was built by homeless people. There have been homeless people in the United States since the beginning but studies aimed at understanding the human condition of homelessness were not conducted until much later. Not until the twentieth century were studies conducted at a large scale. Over the past couple of decades, research involving the homeless has increased dramatically as our nation's homeless situation has changed due to neoliberal state politics and the homeless have become more visible (Davis 1990). Most research has focused on the structural causes of homelessness and the problems the homeless face but very few researchers have studied regional mobility in the homeless population from a geographical perspective (Wolch, Rahimian, and Koegel 1993; Wolch and Rowe 1992).

Statement of Purpose

This research will trace the locational histories of the homeless over space and time in order to better understand the long-term mobility patterns of the homeless who are currently living in Austin, Texas.

Rationale/Justification

At the conclusion of this research, I hope to provide a better understanding of the homeless who are living in downtown Austin, where they first became homeless, and where they have lived in between that location and Austin. I will also look into the push/pull factors of why they left their previous location and chose to come to Austin as well as determining if there is any relationship between those that moved around a lot as kids and those that move more today and by what means they traveled to Austin. The findings of this study will contribute directly to the geographic subfield of human geography. While geography, perhaps, cannot explain the causes of homelessness, it can aid in the understanding of homelessness by studying the movement of the homeless through a spatial-temporal perspective.

Literature Review

Little scholarly research has been undertaken on the homeless from a spatial analysis perspective, including the focus of this study: examining where people became homeless and tracking their paths to their current location. Homelessness has been a social issue in the United States, as well as the rest of the world, for decades. Much has

been written on homelessness and issues of the homeless in a wide variety of disciplines including geography. Articles have been about homeless families, women, youth, and problems of the homeless including mental illnesses, alcoholism and drug abuse (Nunez and Fox 1999; Piliavin, Sosin, Westerfelt, and Matsueda 1993; Rowe and Wolch 1990; Fox and Roth 1989; Wright 1986).

While most people think of a homeless person as someone without a home, homelessness has been defined in many different ways and indeed can be very difficult to define (Bogard 2001; Kissoon 2000; Lindquist, Lagory, and Ritchey 1999). The definitions of homelessness vary greatly. When you hear the word homeless, most of the general public envision people who live on the streets or in a shelter, but definitions of homelessness go much deeper than that. Some researchers have split the homeless into two groups: those who sleep in free shelters (the “shelter homeless”) and those who sleep in places not intended for human habitation (the “street homeless”) (Jencks 1994, 4). Most studies focus on the visible homeless and not the hidden homeless, or those who are living with relatives or friends. The hidden homeless or persons that are “doubled up” can be a big part of the homeless community as well but often do not take advantage of services as they are already living with someone that is willing to help them (Lee and Price-Spratland 2004). Some researchers go so far as to say that the homeless are not only people without a home but they often have no job, no societal function, no role within the community and that they are often penniless and without support (Baum and Burnes 1993, 11). While many or all of these things may be true of some homeless, not every homeless person will demonstrate all of these traits. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a broad definition taken from the

United States Code (42USC11302) that defines a person as being homeless if “an individual lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (HUD 2001). A person must meet the HUD definition of homelessness to receive HUD funded services. The Community Action Network (CAN) of Austin/Travis County uses the basic HUD definition along with some of their own parameters to define homelessness (Community Action Network 2006). In order for a city to receive federal funding, they must count their homeless using HUD’s definition, which does not count those that are “doubled up.”

Obtaining representative samples of the homeless is a controversial issue in researching the homeless, and there are many different ways to do it. Many studies do not even give their methods of obtaining samples, though this has been addressed in recent years as more attention has been drawn to studying the homeless (Toro et al. 1999). Many studies are not comparable with one another because of the total lack of consistency in the way the homeless have been studied (Lee and Price-Spratland 2004; Toro et al. 1999). Shelters have provided the most popular location of sampling for many reasons, the most prominent being that they are convenient for the researcher (Kissoon 2000; Toro et al. 1999). Many studies have also shown that the researcher can focus on less time-consuming sites, those where there is a high concentration of homeless and omitting the scattered homeless persons, and still obtain a reasonably representative sample of homeless people (Toro et al. 1999; Robertson et al. 1997).

Sample sizes range anywhere from 30 (Kissoon 2000) to several hundred or more (Toro et al. 1999). Sample size is determined depending on the purpose of the study and how involved the sampling procedure is. Researchers prefer to get the largest sample possible to allow for the smallest margin of error, however, time and money limitations

generally control the sample size. The more time one has to study the homeless, the more likely one can obtain a larger sample. For example, Kissoon (2000) sampled thirty people in a relatively short period of time while Toro et al.'s (1999) study took two and one half years and had a sample of over seven hundred.

When studying any special segment of the population it is also important to understand the characteristics of that segment. This is true especially of the homeless population, (Lee, Price-Spratlen, and Kanan 2003; Snow and Anderson 1993; Wolch, Dear, and Akita 1988). Mental illness is one specific area of homeless research that has received a lot of attention over the years, however, mental illness among the homeless appears to be more myth than truth (Rossi 1989; Snow et al. 1986). A sample of nearly one thousand homeless adults found that the most common homeless person on the street is not mentally impaired but someone stuck in a cycle of low-paying, dead end jobs that do not provide the means to get off and stay off the street (Snow et al. 1986). However, Wright (1986) questioned the results of Snow's study arguing that their results should indicate approximately a two to three times higher incidence of mental illness. While both researchers argued that the other did not sample correctly, a third group of researchers argued that they were both correct in stating that the numbers of mentally ill homeless had previously been highly overstated (Piliavin, Westerfelt, and Elliott 1989). Prior to Snow et al.'s (1986) paper, the mentally ill homeless had been estimated from 33 percent up to 90 percent, a huge variation in estimation numbers (Wright 1986).

There are still many issues facing the research community that need to be resolved when studying the homeless, for example, the enumeration process (Bogard 2001; Rossi et al. 1987). Counting people that are not reliably in one place is very

difficult. Unlike people who live in their home, the homeless usually do not have an address where you can find them, or even mail them something. Many studies have focused on determining the best way to count the homeless, whether it is nationwide, statewide or citywide (Bogard 2001; HUD 2001; Rossi et al. 1987). The 1990 Census tried to enumerate the homeless in its S-night (shelter and street) operation (Martin 1992). This data has been heavily utilized but it has also been extremely criticized. The problem with counting the homeless at a point in time is that you get a static count of a population that is always in flux (Lee and Price-Spratlen 2004). The Census data are also heavily criticized because many paid “observers” who were supposedly counting the homeless were not always doing their job plus the fact that it is impossible to comb an entire city to count every single homeless person (Lee and Price-Spratlen 2004, 7). One common way of measuring the number of homeless is by counting the number of occupied beds in a shelter over a year but this method does not account for people unable to get into shelters, people sleeping on the street, or those who choose not to use a shelter (Rossi et al. 1987). While enumeration methods have improved over the years, we are still far from getting a truly accurate picture of just how many homeless there are in this country (Bogard 2001).

Finding out how long and how many times a person has been homeless is not as easy as some expect. While some homeless individuals may consider themselves to have been homeless for years, they might have in fact lived with a relative or a friend at some time, been in prison, or served in the military where they might not have been considered literally homeless (Burt et al. 2001). This discrepancy is often overlooked and may be unavoidable in large-scale point-in-time studies that can possibly miscount the total homeless population. These studies are still important as they often include people who

do not use services as most long-term studies use data obtained at shelters and homeless service organizations that keep track of who uses their services.

There has been little scholarly research into the mobility behavior of the homeless. Of the studies that have been conducted, most focus on intracity mobility patterns (Wolch and Rowe 1992; Wolch, Rahimian, and Koegel 1993). Wolch, Rahimian, and Koegel (1993) concluded that people move to increase their accessibility to daily needs like food, shelter, jobs, family, friends, and social services. Most people are pushed because of a lack of opportunities in their current location or pulled by chances to have more opportunities somewhere else. Mobility is motivated by the desire to maintain access to resources (Wolch, Rahimian, and Koegel 1993, 167). Due to the geographic distribution of facilities, or location of family and friends, most homeless are forced to move if they want to receive any kind of services.

A few studies have focused on prior addresses of the incoming homeless to shelters (Culhane, Lee, and Wachter 1996; Lee and Culhane 1995), but they are classified into census tracts and focus on where the homeless come from within one particular city (intracity). Even studies that look at prior addresses of the homeless only look at the most recent address and not all previous addresses or locations since a person became homeless. Geographies of the homeless have been studied in terms of the daily lives of the homeless (Rollinson 1998; Wolch, Rahimian, and Koegel 1993) but again, the historical perspective of where people became homeless and how they got to their current locations has not been adequately explored.

A national study conducted in 1996 found that 54 percent of homeless men lived in the community where they originally became homeless. Of those that had moved, 50

percent stayed within the same state. Another study, The National Survey of Homelessness Assistance Providers and Clients, found that 56 percent of homeless clients were living in the same city where their current episode of homelessness began (HUD User 1999). The most common reason for leaving was a lack of jobs (18 percent). The most common reason for moving to a town was having friends or family there (25 percent). The study also found that almost half of all homeless clients had been homeless for at least one year, while just over a quarter had been homeless for less than three months. A study by Kuhne and Culhane (1998) concluded that only 10 percent of shelter-using homeless in New York and Philadelphia should be considered long-term homeless. People experiencing first time homelessness made up around 80 percent. A study (Lindquist, Lagory, and Ritchey 1999) in Birmingham, Alabama, showed that 50 percent of migrant homeless reported living most of their lives outside of the state of Alabama, however, 69 percent of those surveyed were born in Alabama. A 1998 study in Toronto, Ontario, revealed that 47 percent of homeless people in overnight shelters there had a last permanent address outside of Toronto (Kissoon 2000). More locally, a study previously completed in Austin found that approximately 50 percent of the homeless people surveyed were not from Austin (Troxell no date). In another local study completed by the Community Action Network (2006), it was found that 41.2 percent of the homeless have lived in the Austin area more than five years. Looked at another way, more than half of the homeless population in Austin moved to Austin within the last five years, whether homeless when they moved or not.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

My primary research question is: What are the long-term mobility patterns of the homeless who currently live in Austin? Secondary questions include: Where did people first become homeless? Where did they go between there and Austin? Why did people move from their previous location to Austin (push/pull factors)? I hypothesize that the homeless who have not spent their entire homeless life in Austin will come to Austin for one of two major reasons: 1) they come to Austin for economic reasons including better services for the homeless, and 2) they come to Austin for seasonal reasons, for the mild winters and perhaps go north during the summer months to escape the heat and humidity.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

In order to understand the homeless situation in the United States today, it helps for one to understand how the homeless and the general population's views of the homeless have changed throughout U.S. history. Although homelessness is most often thought of as an American problem, it is not something unique to the United States. Almost all developed countries, as well as developing countries, have a similar situation pertaining to homeless people. Homelessness has been around for centuries and will undoubtedly continue to be well into the future. This chapter gives a broad background of homelessness in the United States focusing on public perceptions of the homeless, movements of the homeless and laws regulating the homeless.

Many laws and regulations pertaining to the homeless originally stemmed from early English laws. English Vagrancy Laws not only had influence on early American laws but still have some influence on many laws and views today. These laws came across the Atlantic with settlers into the 'New World' even though many were poor themselves. Elizabethan poor laws that governed colonial New England towns placed responsibility for the care of the poor upon the towns themselves (Rossi 1989).

Historically, in the United States, there has been some major event that has led to the increase of homeless persons. In colonial times, Indian uprisings such as King Phillip's War of 1675-76, The French and Indian Wars of 1756-63, and the Revolutionary War all caused disturbances in people's lives and forced some people off of their land (Kusmer 2002, 14). During colonial times the homeless were referred to as "the wandering poor," "sturdy beggars," or simply vagrants (Kusmer 2002, 3). Their numbers grew significantly after 1820 when urbanization and industrial development started transforming the country. By the 1850s, municipalities had already started setting aside rooms in police stations for night shelter of the homeless, and charities began making efforts to deal with the growing problem.

Along with wars, economic downturns have also played a role in creating the homeless. Fluctuation of prices and trade periodically created hard times. In 1744, New York City built its first public building for the poor. During the 1700s, the arrival of poor from other countries led to an increase in homelessness (Kusmer 2002). Servants, slaves or former slaves, and apprentices led to a larger population of the homeless in the latter half of the eighteenth century after upward mobility became increasingly more difficult due to more mechanization after the Industrial Revolution. Relief for the poor in early Colonial America was left up to the local parish, county, or town. "Warning out" was a way for a town to deny all responsibility to a newcomer if he/she ever needed aid. The town formally warned the newcomer when they arrived and the town was no longer responsible for them. In the seventeenth century, towns started banishing people and in the eighteenth century, banning became a legal maneuver to keep their town's poor rates

down. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, towns also started passing laws that dealt specifically with the homeless unemployed.

In the 1820s, views that poor relief only attracted idlers and vagrants from nearby towns began to emerge. This view was soon offset by those who set up soup kitchens to help the homeless and the poor. These are the same conflicting views that continue today. During the Civil War, large numbers of people used the railroad for the first time. The Civil War also set a precedent for tramping by having soldiers forage around for food and other necessities during the war. The parallels of army life during the war and life on the road after the war were numerous (Kusmer 2002). Physically wounded ex-soldiers often received assistance from charities, friends, or other places, but those that had been wounded mentally and those who found civilian life hard to adjust to received less sympathy. Some reenlisted in the army to serve in the west but many could not join the now much smaller army. As a result, many slid into a life of vagrancy.

The rail lines saw vast expansions from 1865-80. Small towns were now accessible to the homeless by railroads. The rise in homelessness along with easier travel by rail made the homeless issue much more noticeable to many more people. Homelessness was no longer confined to just the large cities. The rails were not the safest way to travel and as many as a thousand men lost their lives from riding trains each year (Kusmer 2002, 145). In the 1870s, the “tramp” emerged. The tramp is what many people think of when they think of the historical homeless, people who moved around by hopping on and off trains without paying (Kusmer 2002, 3). After the Civil War, homeless people were viewed as being in one of two different categories, those who went on the road and those that stayed in one place. During this era, the homeless were more

aggressive and were even known to commandeer trains to take them where they wanted to go. This, however, only brought a more aggressive response from the public. That was also a period of great public outcry and disdain over homeless, tramps, and vagabonds. Newspaper articles frequently printed stories about how evil they were and how to “get rid” of them. The homeless were often dehumanized or perceived as subhuman. Some people even portrayed the homeless as an organized movement “that threatened the very life of the nation” (Kusmer 2002, 49). During this movement, others did find ways to sympathize with the homeless noting, after all, “Christ was a tramping vagabond” (Kusmer 2002, 50). Many people admitted that there were some bad homeless people but most agreed that not all of them were.

In the mid 1800s, the homeless were not concentrated in a single area. By the 1880s, they were usually found in the poor areas of town. Most homeless services were then set up in or near slums. After the 1880s, homeless people became more concentrated and skid rows started forming. By the 1890s, Chicago was referred to as the “hobo capital” of the United States because of its importance as a rail center as well as offering many seasonal trade jobs. Omaha and Minneapolis were also important hobo cities while San Francisco was the most important center in the west.

New Jersey passed the nations first “antitramp” law in 1876. By 1880, many other states had done the same (Kusmer 2002). Jails soon filled with homeless people and many cities stopped following the law even though it was still on the books. Most large cities continued to allow overnight lodging in police stations until at least the 1890s. Many smaller cities allowed the homeless to stay overnight until the 1930s. The rooms, in general, were very bleak. People were usually only allowed to stay one or two nights a

month “thus the “revolver” was born, a person who passed in pilgrimage from one station-house to another, and in the course of a month returned to the point from which he began,” (Kusmer 2002, 56).

From the 1880s onward, there was less public hostility toward vagabonds as well as less aggressiveness by vagabonds. The aggressive vagabonds of the 1870s were mostly gone by 1900. New, younger homeless took their place, those that did not serve during the Civil War. Trainmen also changed their views of vagrants over time and became much more lenient in dealing with them. Beginning in the 1880s, some trainmen started allowing tramps and hobos to ride on their train for a small fee or payment of some kind. This practice became increasingly popular. By the turn of the century, city officials as well as the general public, were much less interested in arresting tramps. By then, the homeless were viewed more as a nuisance rather than a menace. By 1915, sympathetic statements about the homeless were the norm, not the exception as they had once been.

Throughout the early history of U.S. homelessness, the homeless were mostly contained in the Northeast. Some did go south, however, especially in winter. New Orleans, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine were favorite places for homeless persons to go. The South did not have as many homeless because it was still largely rural and less ethnically diverse unlike the post war, industrializing north. Southern cities also had harsher laws against the homeless and pursued the homeless more frequently.

The Salvation Army opened its first shelter for the poor in New York in 1891. Unlike the Charity Organization Society (COS) and other organizations of that time that required work for services, the Salvation Army provided assistance to the poor no matter

what the circumstances. They did not try to distinguish the “worthy” poor from the “unworthy” poor and there were far fewer restrictions to taking advantage of services (Kusmer 2002). After the turn of the century, the views of liberal, young social work graduates of Columbia, Bryn Mawr, and the University of Chicago along with organizations with views similar to the Salvation Army, the homeless began being perceived less as a threat to society and the public’s view gradually changed toward them.

Injuries from work-related accidents played a factor in the amount of homeless. It was not until after 1910 that states started passing workmen’s compensation laws. Even after the laws were passed, the payments were usually far less than the wages they would have earned. Most employers would not hire physically handicapped people for permanent jobs. These people would often fall into homelessness.

During the late 1800s, homeless women were less acknowledged. Irish women made up a large part of that segment, often times either widowed or left behind by their husbands. Women usually stayed in the city where they had always lived while men traveled around receiving more attention. After the Civil War, women had made up over forty percent of the homeless. That number gradually declined to less than two percent by the 1890s, as measured by police ledgers (Kusmer 2002, 111). By that time though, more facilities had been made available to women that they preferred to use. The total female homeless population was probably between ten and twenty percent of the total homeless population at that time. After 1910, “mother’s pensions” policy of state support for impoverished widows with dependent children spread and helped alleviate the problem of homeless women and orphaned children.

“No group, however, was immune from falling into the homeless class, because no one was completely safe from the uncertainties of a largely unregulated capitalist economy. Whether black or white, immigrant or native-born, the homeless were drawn from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and occupations. Given the right combination of unfortunate circumstances, homelessness was a condition that could happen to almost anyone” (Kusmer 2002, 121).

In the early twentieth century, many people chose to be hobos or vagrants mainly due to industrialization and the monotonous jobs most people had. Many would travel around, work a job for a month or two, and then leave again. Some would work seasonal jobs part of the year and bum around the rest of the year or travel around working seasonal jobs throughout the year.

Before World War One, migratory or transient workers probably comprised a majority of the residents of skid row. The hobos often followed a regular pattern that included logging work in the early spring, large-scale construction jobs and railroad work in the spring and summer, and harvesting wheat, fruit or vegetables in the summer and fall. Some worked as loggers in the winter but most went back to the city at that time.

Between 1890 and 1915, the number of black vagrants expanded in size and became more segregated (Kusmer 2002, 165). Skid Rows around 1920 were almost all white. Blacks stayed closer to the black ghettos that had now formed in cities. By the 1920s, skid row populations were shrinking as the numbers of transient workers declined due to increased mechanization eliminating jobs in agriculture, timber and other sectors of the economy, but the number of older skid row dwellers increased. To outsiders, the men who now lived there seemed more pathetic than dangerous.

Famous and affluent people had an impact on the way the homeless were viewed throughout history. During the 1920s and 1930s, Norman Rockwell's painting “The

Hobo” helped to alleviate negative thoughts about the homeless, as well as the writings of Jack London and other authors of the time. The perception of the homeless was more romanticized during that time more than ever before. Charlie Chaplin also brought the perceptions of the homeless to a higher level with his comedy films.

The first time the federal government stepped in to help with the homeless situation was during the Great Depression. The Great Depression saw unprecedented levels of homelessness in this country. A conservative view accounted for 1.5 million homeless in 1933 (Kusmer 2002, 194). Trains began to be overcrowded with homeless and detectives found their tasks impossible. The Federal Transient Service (FTS) gave federal assistance to the homeless for the first time in 1933. By the end of the year, 40 states had established transient relief programs. Eventually all of the states except Vermont would participate in these programs. These federally funded service places generally had better conditions and more to offer than other homeless services of the time. They also had fewer restrictions on who could stay and for how long. The situation became so bad for the services that operated without federal funds that most of them were forced to become better or provide more services to more people in order to compete with the federally funded services. If they did not become better, they risked losing the people they were trying to help to the places that did receive funding.

During the 1930s, families made up a larger proportion of the homeless population more than ever before. The proportion of African American homeless also rose during this. An estimated one million people passed through the New Deal’s transient program during its short existence. However, the program was abruptly terminated at the end of 1935. After the federal program was discontinued, homeless

shelters became flooded once again. After 1935, the homeless would again become a problem exclusively for the states and local communities, neither of which had the resources or the will to effectively improve transients' lives. The end of the FTS was particularly devastating in the south.

After the FTS was discontinued and homelessness rose again, police turned back to using more force. Shantytowns were torn down as soon as they started going up. Two states, California and Florida even created border patrols to try to keep indigent people out (Kusmer 2002). Works by Carey McWilliams and John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* temporarily renewed public sympathy for the homeless when they were written in 1939 but soon the nation's focus would be on World War Two. After World War Two, the number of homeless riding the trains rapidly declined and the aging population of homeless were more confined to urban skid row areas of cities. Forced layoffs, economic depressions, automation, and industrial accidents have all led to homeless situations in the past. In addition to those that had no alternative to be homeless were those that chose to. Many young workers chose to leave their jobs or rebel against the rapidly modernizing social systems and take to the rails. After World War Two, the homeless remained largely forgotten until the late 1970s when the unexpected emergence of a younger, more racially diverse population of "street people" drew attention again to the problem that had never even gone away.

After the war and into the 1950s, city skid rows largely declined and the services for the homeless declined with them. These homeless, however, were more educated than the homeless of previous decades. They were not much different from the non-homeless in terms of education. The homeless population was also less mobile. Fewer

and fewer homeless rode the trains each year. It was more popular to hitch rides or take a bus. In effect, the skid row now became the focus of attention for the public and once again, the homeless took on a negative view of unemployed, uneducated, alcoholic, diseased people (Kusmer 2002). Arrests deterred the homeless from moving beyond well-defined boundaries. The police did not want to see the homeless outside of the skid row areas. In the 1960s and 1970s, skid rows had been neglected by city repairs and became rundown. Due, in part, to “Urban Renewal”, a federally funded program, a move was made to abolish skid rows and renovate the areas for middle class or elites. The skid row inhabitants had no political influence to organize on their behalf. By the 1980s, skid rows were no longer a significant part of urban landscapes as many had been destroyed and redeveloped but destroying them did not take care of the homeless “problem” and would once again emerge as a major social problem in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The late 1970s saw an increase of homeless in downtown areas of many cities. The homeless population grew during the recession of the early 1980s but did not subside during the economic recovery and continued to grow. While President Reagan is credited for the economic growth during his two terms in office, that growth was not uniform among the entire population. The wealthy benefited the most during his terms in office and the income gap between the rich and poor widened (Dreier 2004). One of the most dramatic budget cuts that President Reagan authorized cut low-income housing subsidies, which hurt those who were already on the fringe of homelessness.

By 2000, an enlarged homeless population was apparently becoming a permanent feature of postindustrial America. Panhandling, which had been largely limited to skid

row areas, was now common in downtown areas. Deindustrialization and the shift to a high-tech and service economy eliminated many unskilled or semiskilled jobs. Factory workers and young individuals without an adequate education were faced with disastrous effects as they were unable to obtain jobs in the new service-based economy.

Government assistance was also cut back in a conservative backlash against welfare.

Homeless women, children, and families increased rapidly during the 1980s, not to mention the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill during the 1960s and 1970s. Many of the chronically mentally ill homeless today would have been admitted to mental hospitals in the 1960s but find it hard to get help today and find themselves on the street or in shelters (Rossi 1989). The 1980s also saw an increase in people becoming homeless due to unaffordability of housing. This targeted low-income people and was spurred along by gentrification. African Americans, women, and families were often the ones being priced out of their homes (Bogard 2003).

While the Reagan Administration did not think the homeless situation required federal intervention, President Reagan did sign into effect the Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1987 near the end of his presidential term. This act provided funding for emergency homeless relief. The McKinney Act was a broad response to homelessness that brought together seven different federal agencies to work together on the issue. The Act did not address the number of homeless but it did recognize that homelessness was on the rise.

The homeless of the 1990s were younger than the skid row inhabitants of the past. The typical skid row inhabitant in the 1950s or 1960s was a white male in his 50s. By the mid-1990s, half the homeless population in the country were black (41%) or Hispanic (11%) and usually in their 20s or 30s (Kusmer 2002, 241). Under Reagan and Bush,

assistance for the homeless was outstripped by the growing numbers of homeless needing that assistance. Clinton recognized the need but was unable to do much about it with the Republican dominated Congress. Social activism on behalf of the homeless has hit unprecedented levels recently and much of the progress in aiding the homeless can be credited to local organizations and the increasing number of citizens donating time and money to help the destitute. However, the 1990s also saw the return of ordinances against the homeless in an increasing number of cities. Even Mayor Giuliani passed a “quality of life” ordinance in New York City that allowed police to arrest homeless persons for trivial misdemeanors like sleeping or sitting on sidewalks.

In summary, as the history of homelessness in the United States shows, there have always been homeless in need of help. Economic cycles, wars, and industrial improvements eliminating jobs have caused the greatest negative effects on the homeless population. The general population’s perception of the homeless has gone through cycles as well. At times, there was mostly sympathy, at other times the homeless were thought of nothing more than a nuisance to society. Like the public’s perception of the homeless, homeless mobility has gone through changes over time. Trains were once the best way for a homeless person to travel where today it is much different. Today, much of the general public believe the homeless are not able to move around because they cannot afford it but there are many ways for a homeless person to move around from hitchhiking to driving their own car. The homeless today, no matter how they are perceived, are as mobile as ever or at least have the means to be mobile if they truly wish to move.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Definition of Homeless

As mentioned before, definitions of homeless can vary greatly. For the purposes of this study, I am going to focus on the visibly homeless or chronic cases, those that are not staying with friends or relatives. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of a homeless person as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" provides the backbone for my definition (HUD 2001). Most people receiving assistance in the form of shelters and soup kitchens fit into this definition. The definition also includes people of all ages as well as people in families. I obtained data from individuals regardless of whether or not they were with a family. This research did not focus on any one particular segment of the homeless population nor did it exclude any truly homeless people.

The homeless are often separated into three different subgroups determined by the duration of homelessness: chronic, cyclical, and temporary. The Canadian government succinctly summarizes these three terms as follows:

"The Chronically homeless group includes people who live on the periphery of society and who often face problems of drug or alcohol abuse or mental illness. The cyclically homeless group includes individuals who have lost their dwelling because of some change in their situation, such as

loss of a job, a move, a prison term or a hospital stay. These include women who are victims of family violence, runaway youths, and persons who are unemployed or recently released from a detention centre of psychiatric institution. The temporarily homeless group includes those who are without accommodation for a relatively short period of time. Likely to be included in this category are persons who lose their home as a result of a disaster...or loss of job” (Government of Canada 2002, online).

Study Area

The study area is Austin, Travis County, Texas. Austin, being the state’s capital and the home of the main campus of the University of Texas, is considered a cultural oasis in Texas. Between 1975 and 1985, Austin grew from 250,000 residents to 450,000 (Snow and Anderson 1993). The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) estimates the 2005 population in Austin to be 690,252. The Austin-Round Rock metropolitan statistical area’s population was 1.3 million in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). Over the last couple of decades, Austin’s economy was booming, but as the city grew so did the homeless population. Austin, lying on the interstate connecting Dallas with San Antonio and being connected to Houston by several highways, seemed to attract homeless from three of the ten largest cities in the country (Snow and Anderson 1993).

Over the twelve-month period from September 12, 2005 to September 12, 2006, 6,242 unique individuals received services from Austin-area homeless service providers (Community Action Network 2006). On any given day, there are four thousand homeless individuals in Austin. Approximately 1,900 of these are located in downtown Austin (Community Action Network 2006).

Because downtown Austin has such a large homeless population, this made it a perfect area for the focus of my research. As I interviewed homeless people on my own, the downtown area was small enough to cover by myself (Figure 1). The downtown

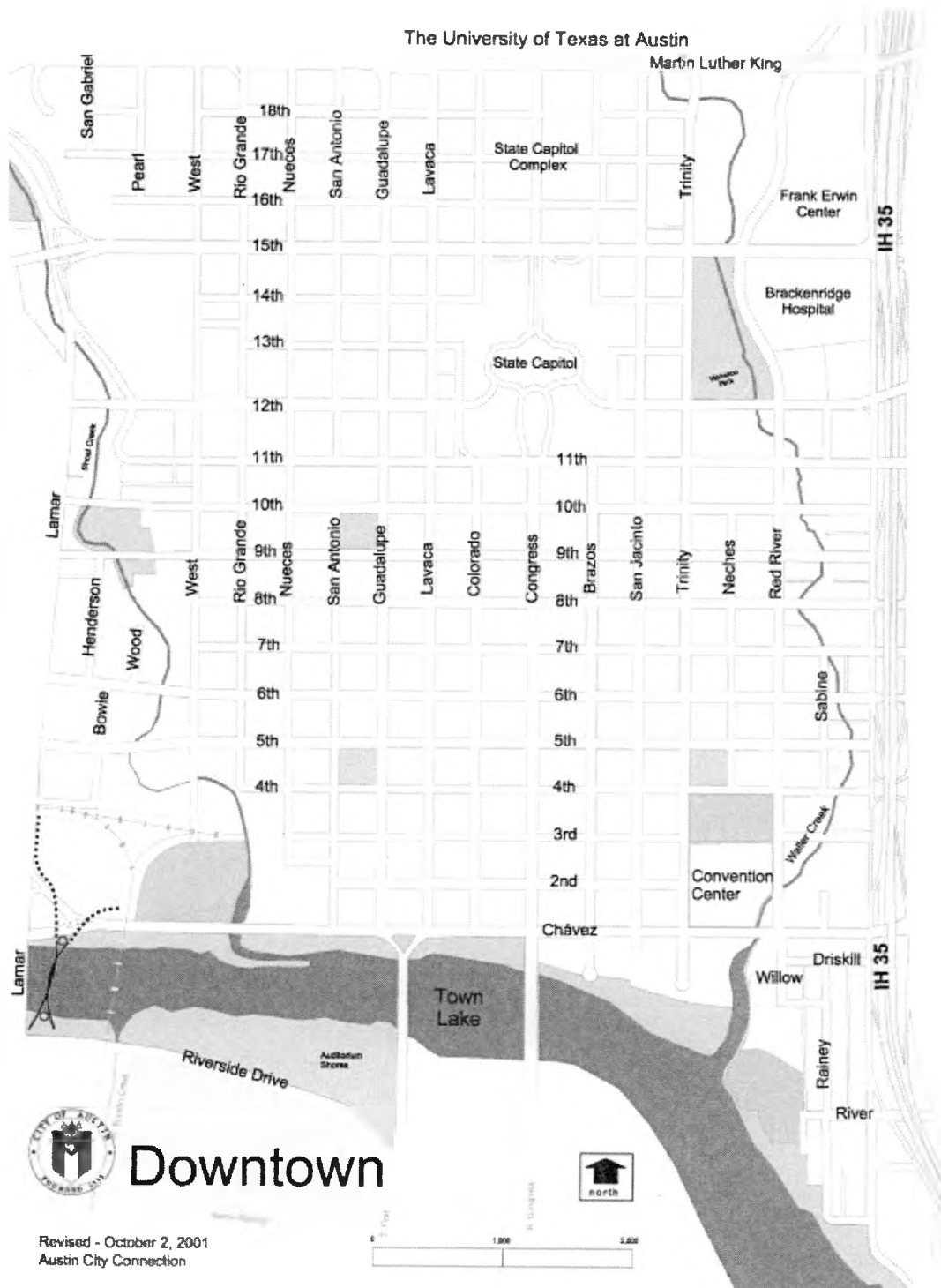


Figure 1: Downtown Austin

Austin area is roughly 16 blocks, from Interstate 35 to Lamar east to west, by 17 blocks, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to Cesar Chavez north to south (Austin City Connection 2001).

Data

I obtained primary data for this research project. One popular method of finding out where the homeless are is by using key informants (Toro et al. 1999). A key informant is someone very familiar with the homeless and where they are usually located. Examples of key informants include shelter employees, employees at soup kitchens, community organizations and police officers. I talked to many people that work with the homeless to get an idea of where the homeless are concentrated to help determine my sampling procedure and how to go about interviewing them. I was advised to conduct interviews during daylight hours, when it was safest for me to be interviewing people by myself. Homeless authorities also recommended excluding panhandlers from my sample as they are often not homeless but panhandle to support an addiction or for some other reason not necessarily related to being homeless.

One popular method of interviewing the homeless is by using the “known locations” methodology proposed by Burt (1992). This method first identifies locations where homeless are known to congregate. Once those sites are determined, the surveyor(s) will focus their efforts on these areas. The “known locations” methodology is not only good at producing an unduplicated count for teams of surveyors who cover an area but it is also efficient at gathering data from a large number of respondents. When talking to key informants, they also suggested focusing my efforts where homeless

people tend to congregate. In downtown Austin, there are four major service centers that offer resources for the homeless within two square blocks. The Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) and Caritas are both located at 7th Street and Neches. The Salvation Army is next door to the ARCH at 8th Street and Neches while the Trinity Center is one block west at 7th Street and Trinity. As most homeless persons come by one of these services, this area is where I focused most of my interviewing efforts (Figures 2, 3, and 4). While not all homeless individuals who reside in the downtown area will necessarily come to use the services offered, Toro et al.'s (1999) study showed that a reasonable representative sample could be obtained by focusing on shelters and soup kitchens.

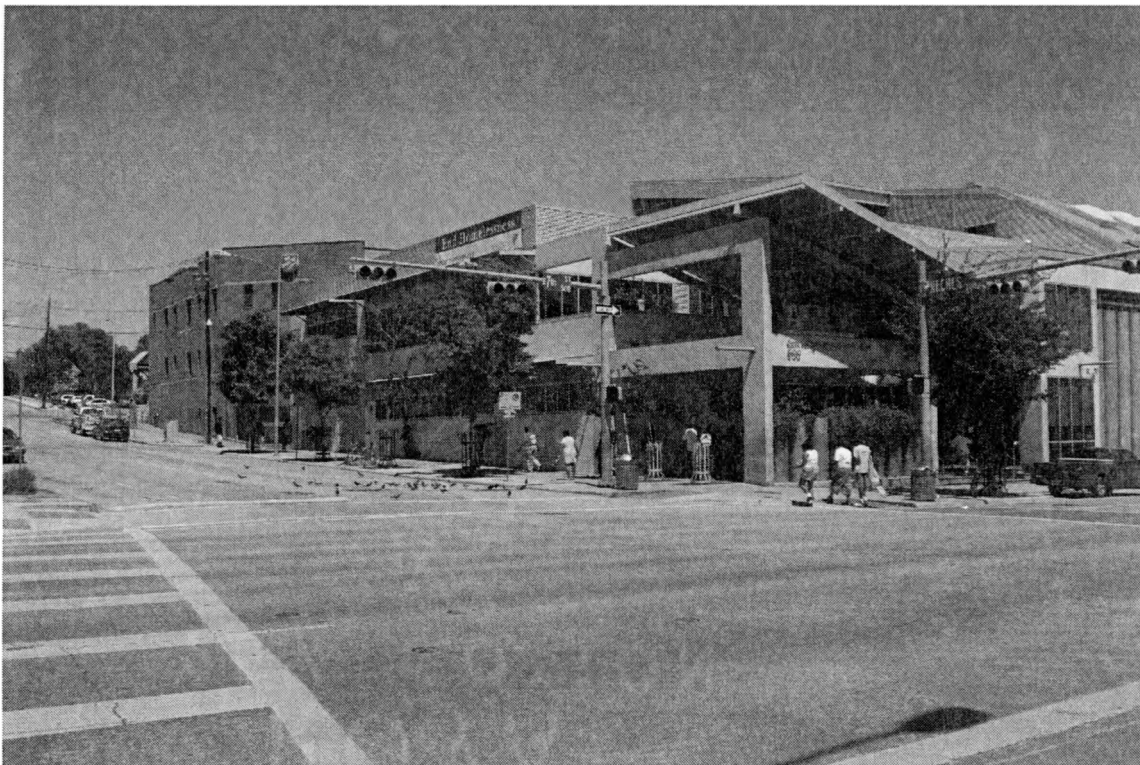


Figure 2: View of the ARCH and Salvation Army



Figure 3: Congregation of Homeless on Neches Street

I obtained data by interviewing individual homeless people (Attachment 1). The method used in this research lets the interviewer get the most information possible, as it can be adapted to collect all the necessary information as the interview proceeds. The survey I used consisted of twelve questions, both structured as well as open-ended. I chose to use open-ended question as it allowed the respondent to give answers that they wanted to give instead of being influenced by a limited number of choices. Because of this, some responses included two different reasons, or responses, to one answer. I chose to use a short survey that would get the answers that I needed in the shortest time possible to allow me to interview as many people as possible to get a representative sample.

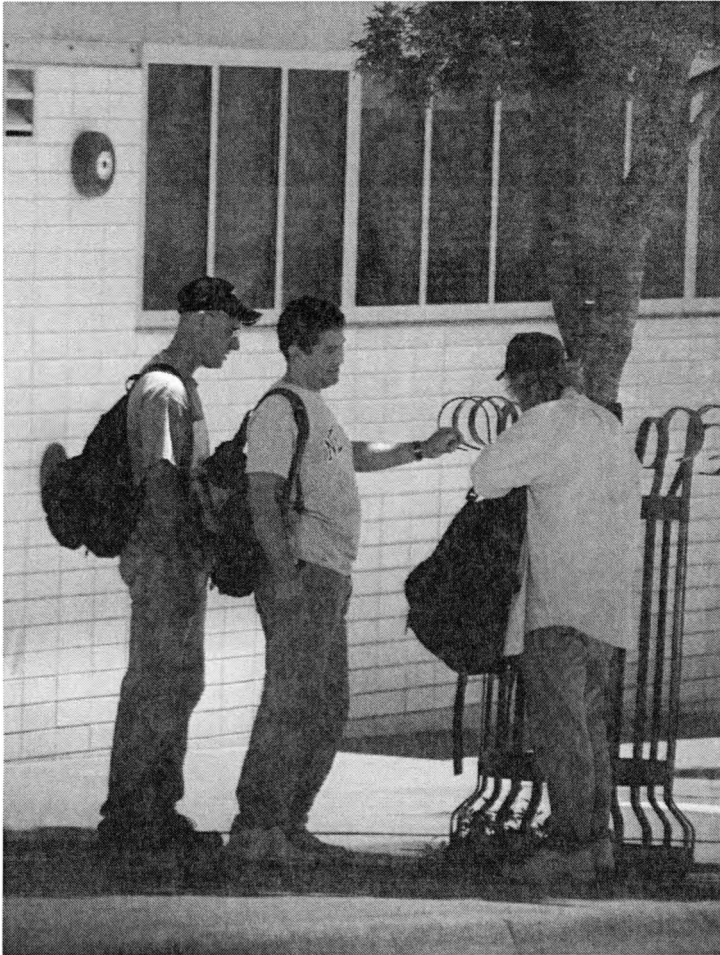


Figure 4: Homeless in Downtown Austin

Sampling

Researchers (Kissoon, 2000) have had difficulty in obtaining access to homeless people inside shelters. This is due to the need to protect the privacy of clients. I conducted all of my interviews on the streets and not inside shelters. I used a random sampling method in order to determine whom to interview. When I encountered homeless individuals, I flipped a coin to determine if I interviewed the first person or the second (if it was heads, I interviewed the first person). After the initial interview, I interviewed every other person in that location and started the process over in each additional location. Ideally, I would have interviewed all of the homeless in Austin,

however, that was impossible within the scope of this research. Due to time constraints, I obtained 83 interviews over a time-span of 17 days. Each interview took between two and five minutes depending on how long the interviewee had been homeless and how many times the person had moved. Some people loved to talk and we continued to talk after the initial interview, which went well beyond the standard two to five minutes of actual interview time.

Limitations

The biggest limitation of my research is a sampling bias. One can never get a truly representative sample of a demographic group that is always in flux. One cannot obtain a truly accurate sample of something that cannot be completely counted. Another limitation to my research is the seasonal variation in the homeless population. This research was conducted in the winter (January and February, 2007). Austin has a mild winter and a hot humid summer. It is likely that many homeless come to Austin for the mild winters and then head north during the summer. Due to time limitations, my research was not able to take place over the course of an entire year to account for any seasonal variation.

Another possible limitation is the fact that I do not speak any languages other than English. The main secondary language in this area is Spanish. There are homeless people in Austin that do not speak English. The majority of these people are immigrants from Mexico or other Latin American countries where Spanish is the dominant language. Because I do not speak Spanish, I had to exclude these people from my study. They may be an important part of the homeless society in Austin, indeed, and a study on just the

non-English speaking homeless would provide interesting results but is beyond the scope of this research.

Analysis

Once I collected all the necessary data from the interviews, I compiled it and analyzed the results. I ran some descriptive statistical analyses to calculate average age, percent male/female and percent breakdown by race, and other demographic information. Once that was done, I investigated the number of moves per year by each person, the number of moves a person has taken over his/her lifetime, the distance per move, the geographic scale of different moves, where the last permanent home was and if they have plans to move in the future and if so, where. The push/pull factors were examined and separated into groups that included economic, seasonality, and family.

Summary

Although there have been hundreds of studies done on the homeless, the vast majority of them have not focused on where the homeless come from. This research will help to fill that gap. In order to completely understand the homeless it is important to understand where they come from and why they chose to be where they are. This research will specifically give more insight into the homeless in Austin, provide a better understanding of the long-term mobility patterns of the homeless, and lead to a better understanding of why they are in Austin.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To examine the demographic profile of my sample population I sub-divided the sample by gender, race, and age. Of the 83 respondents, 68 (82 percent) were male, and 15 (18 percent) were female (Table 1). Racially, 61 percent of all respondents were white, 24 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic, 1 percent Asian, and 2 percent considered themselves two or more races (Table 2). Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed said that they had family somewhere (Table 3). However, while many had family in the area, others no longer had any idea where their families were.

Table 1: Homeless Study Group, by Sex

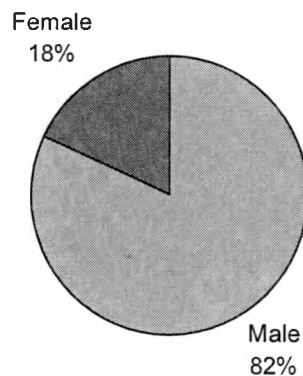
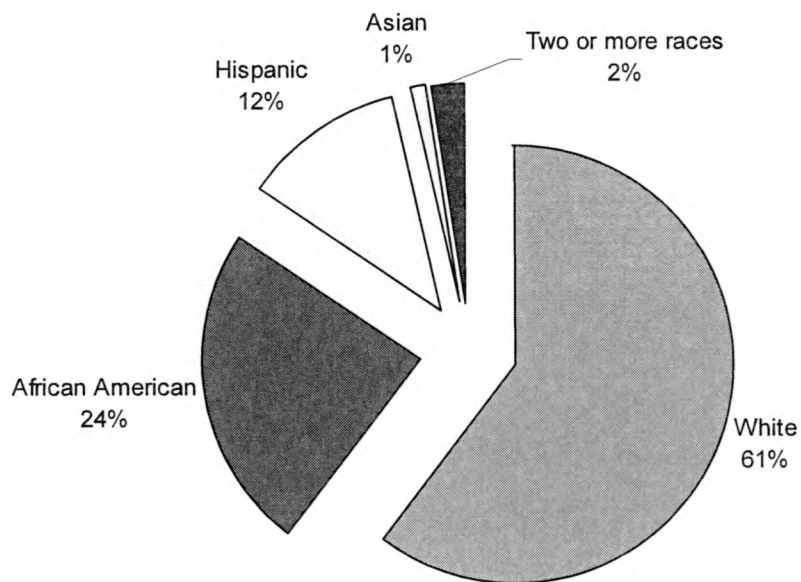
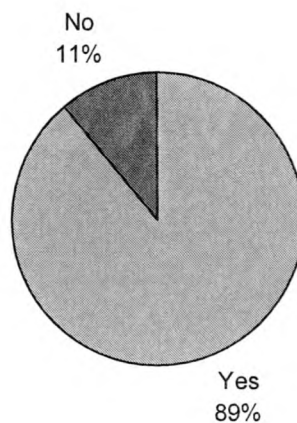
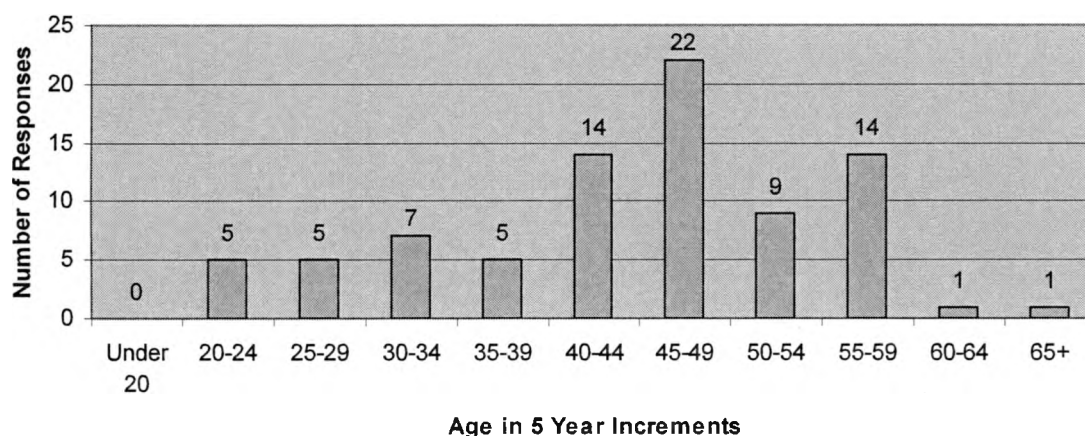


Table 2: Homeless Study Group, by Race**Table 3: Percentage of Study Group with Family**

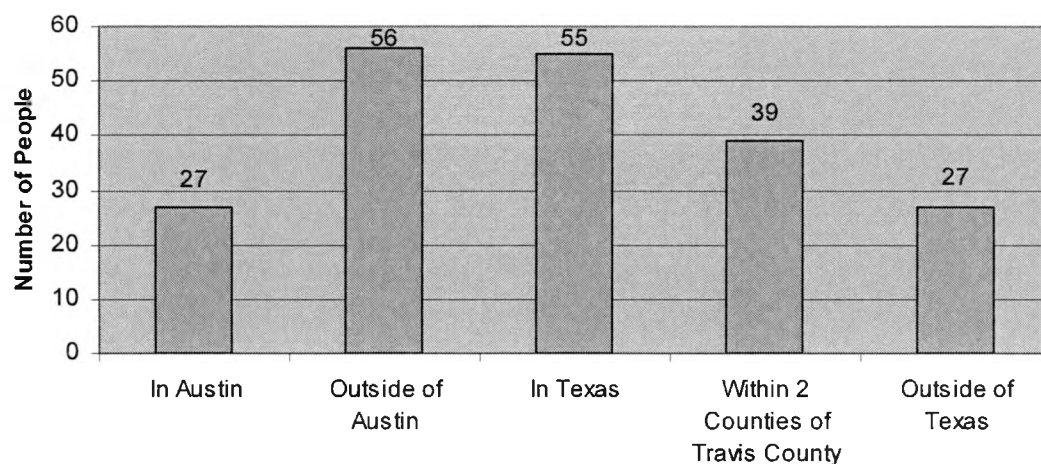
The age of those surveyed ranged from 20 to a high of 65 years with a mean age of just over 44 years. The females were slightly younger than the males with an average of 42.3 compared to the average male age of 44.6. The median and mode age were both 46 years.

Seventy-one percent of respondents were between 40 and 59 years of age and over 25 percent were between 45 and 49 years of age. The 45-49 age category contained the highest number of respondents with 22 (Table 4).

Table 4: Composition of Study Group by Age



Looking at where people had their last permanent home, 27 (33 percent) of all respondents had last lived in Austin, 39 (47 percent) had last lived in Travis County or within two counties of Travis County. Fifty-five (66 percent) of the respondents had their last permanent home in Texas (Table 5). All but one person lived in their last permanent home in the United States. The lone person who had a last permanent home outside the United States got out of the military in Japan and came back to his hometown of Austin.

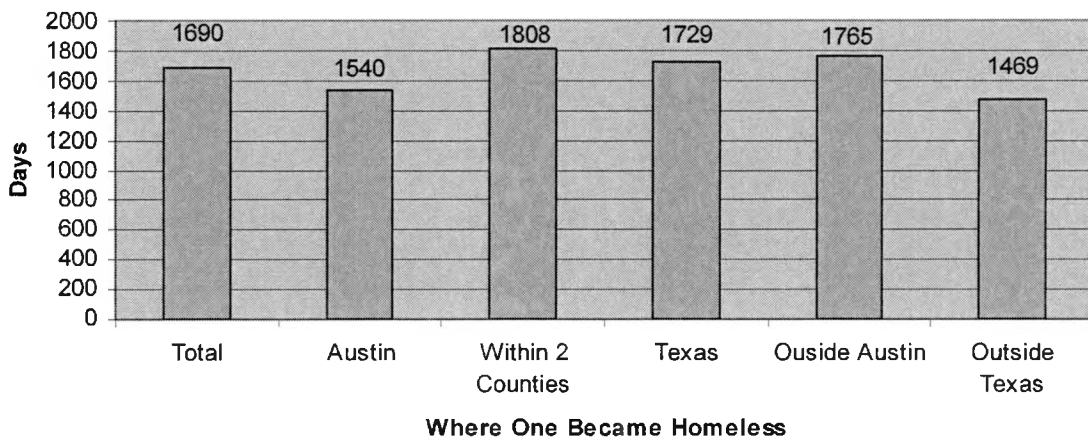
Table 5: Where Individuals in the Study Group Became Homeless

One question I asked during the interview was “when did you last live in your last home?” Some people were able to give me exact dates of when they became homeless while others would give me answers like 9 months ago or in 2004. To be able to compare answers, I converted all responses into numbers of days homeless. If the person did not give me an exact day as an answer and gave me an answer of a month, for example, August 2006, I used the middle of the month as a starting point and counted the number of days since then up until the interview date.

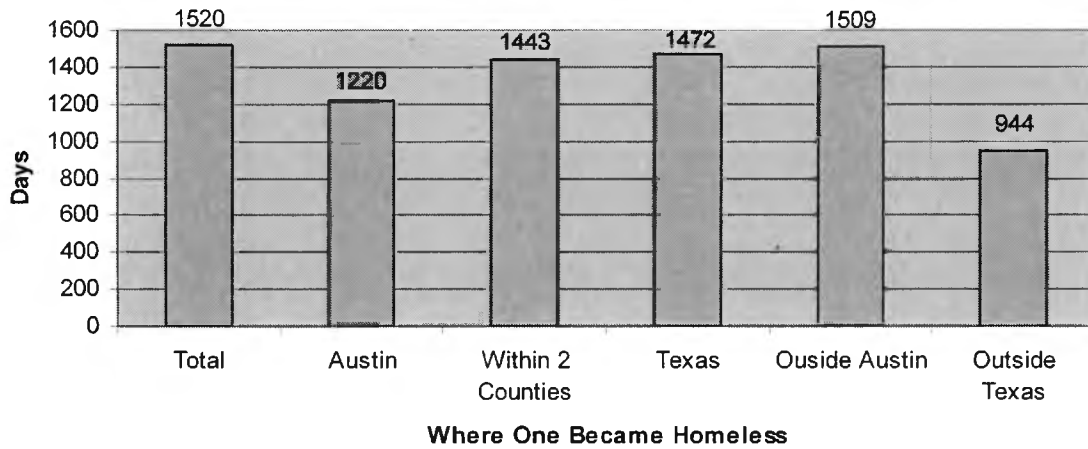
The average number of days a person was homeless for the whole sample population was 1,690, equivalent to 4.6 years. The average days homeless for females was 1,226 compared to 1,796 days for males. Thirty-three percent of women in the study had been homeless for one year or more while for men that number jumped to 58 percent. The average number of days a person was homeless broken down by where they became homeless, shows almost a 20 percent variation from the highest to the lowest average (Table 6). People who became homeless outside of Texas have the lowest average at 1,469 days while those who

became homeless in Travis County or within two counties of Travis County were the highest at 1,808 average days homeless. Those that became homeless in Austin were also below the overall average at 1,540 days.

Table 6: Average Number of Days Homeless

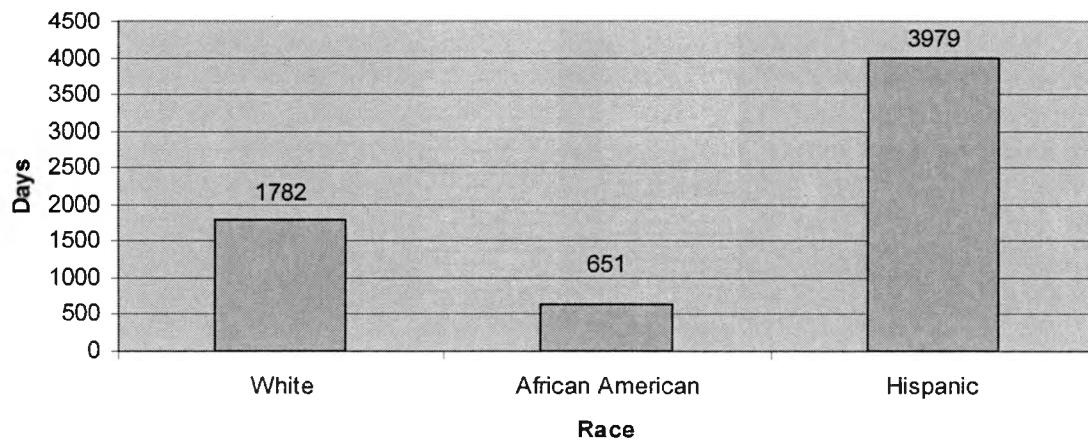


One person who had been homeless for 40 years was definitely an outlier in the data. Taking the upper extreme out of each category, the results vary by 38 percent from the highest to lowest average, almost twice that of what it was using all the data points (Table 7). While the Austin average declines, the average for those who became homeless outside Texas falls even farther.

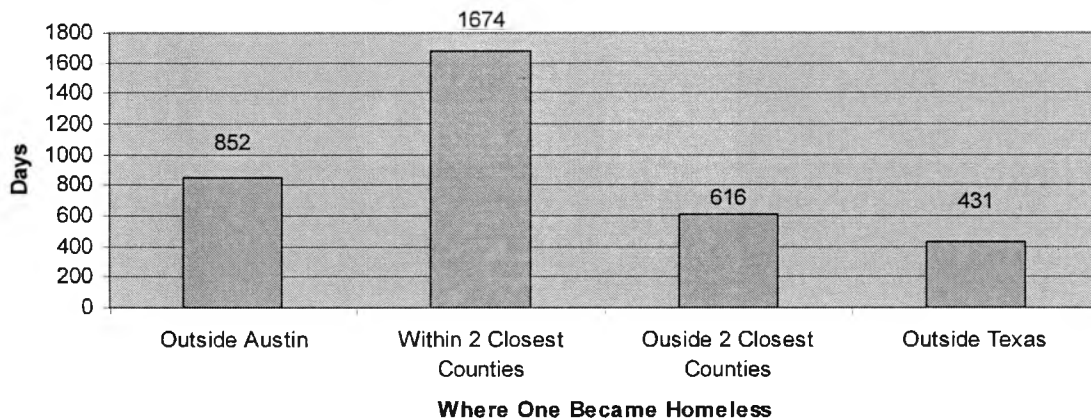
Table 7: Average Number of Days Homeless, Without Upper Extreme

The average number of days homeless broken down by race proved to show some interesting results. Hispanics, on average, had been homeless 3,979 days compared to 1,782 for whites and 651 days for African Americans (Table 8). Hispanics had been homeless over twice as long as whites and more than six times as long as African Americans. Even whites had been homeless 275 percent longer than African Americans.

As it is interesting to compare these results, they may be skewed due to the small sample size of Hispanics only containing nine responses compared to a sample of 20 African Americans and 49 whites. The small sample of Hispanics also included the outlier mentioned previously who had been homeless for 40 years. Without the outlier, the average number of days homeless for Hispanics would have been 2,651, still 50 percent longer than whites and three times longer than African Americans.

Table 8: Average Number of Days Homeless, by Race

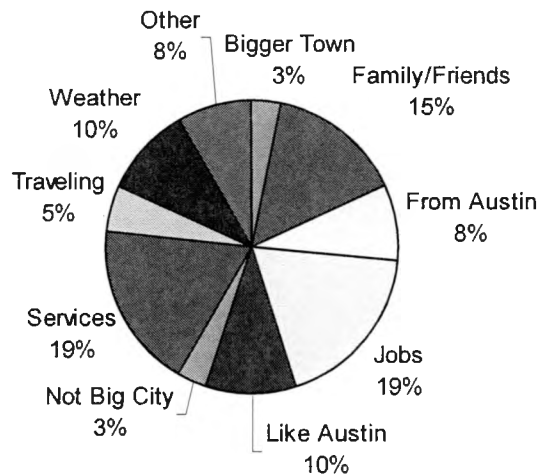
Of those who did not become homeless in Austin, I also looked at how long they have been in Austin (Table 9). Those that became homeless anywhere outside Austin have been in Austin for an average of 852 days. If they became homeless outside Austin but within Travis or two surrounding counties, their average time in Austin was much longer at 1,674 days. Those that became homeless outside of the surrounding two counties had been in Austin for an average of 616 days. Those that became homeless outside of Texas had been in Austin for an average of 431 days. Such numbers are interesting as they show that the farther from Austin that someone became homeless, the less time they have been in Austin. At first glance, this pattern seems to make perfect sense. It would take someone longer to get to Austin from outside of Texas than from inside, therefore, they would have been here a shorter period of time. It does not explain whether these people are more mobile and perhaps that is why they are here less time or whether or not they have come to Austin to stay.

Table 9: Number of Days in Austin of Those Not Becoming Homeless in Austin

There were 60 total responses to why people came to Austin. Answers varied widely and included 15 different responses. There were nine categories with at least two separate responses (Table 10). The “other” category contains five different responses including: Austin was clean, Austin is cheaper, good music scene, better transportation, and “I just got out of prison and had nowhere else to go”. As expected, job opportunities and services were the categories with most responses, both with 19 percent. Family and friends was also a major reason why people came to Austin with 15 percent of respondents stating this answer. Perhaps the reason that stands out the most was the fact that people moved to Austin purely because they liked it. Ten percent of people responded that they came to Austin because they had previously been here before and liked it so much that they decided to come back. Another ten percent came to Austin because they were living somewhere with a colder climate and wanted to go somewhere warmer. Eight percent of people interviewed were originally from Austin and decided to come back here once they experienced homelessness and five percent were just stopping here in Austin as they were traveling around. Interestingly, three percent came to Austin because they wanted a smaller city while another

three percent came to Austin for the exact opposite reason, because it was a bigger city than where they were previously living.

Table 10: Reasons for Coming to Austin



Another area explored during this research was how people who were not living in Austin when they became homeless traveled to Austin once they were homeless. Much of the general public perceive the homeless as not having means of transportation when in fact there are many ways one can move around at a limited cost. There are services, from churches to homeless shelters, that can provide bus tickets to those who cannot afford them. In fact, just over half of all people that came to Austin from another city came by bus (Table 11). The next most popular method of getting to Austin was to hitchhike (12 percent), followed by getting a ride with a friend or acquaintance in a car (9 percent). Other methods include trains, walking (part of the way), driving their own car, and one person flew here from Japan when he got out of the military.

Examining the methods of travel to Austin for those who became homeless outside of Texas (Table 12), there are a few differences when compared to the results of those who became homeless within Texas (Table 11). A higher percentage of people used buses but the bigger differences show that a higher percentage of people drove their own car or took trains, while a smaller percentage of people got a ride with friends or family, walked or hitchhiked. These responses make sense because these people lived farther away from Austin and chose methods more commonly associated with longer traveling distances.

Many homeless do in fact have their own cars. Some may just use them to live in because they cannot afford housing while others use them to drive around and move to different locations. Those that have come from farther away to get to Austin were more likely to have their own car while those that had lived closer to Austin were more able to get a friend or family member to drive them to Austin. People who became homeless

Table 11: Method of Getting to Austin, Those From Outside Austin

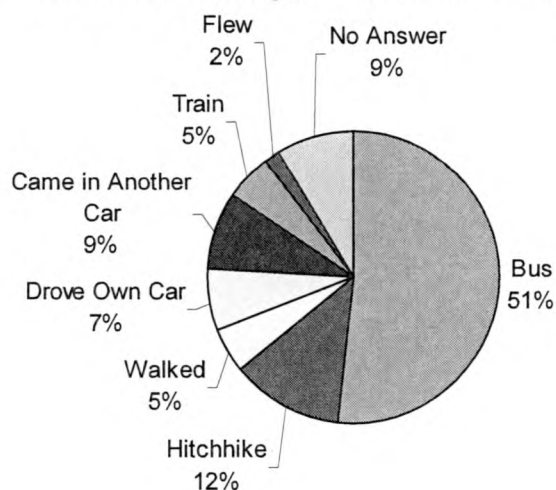
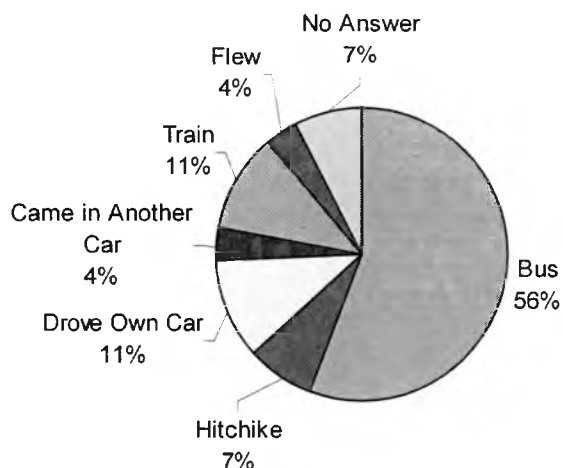
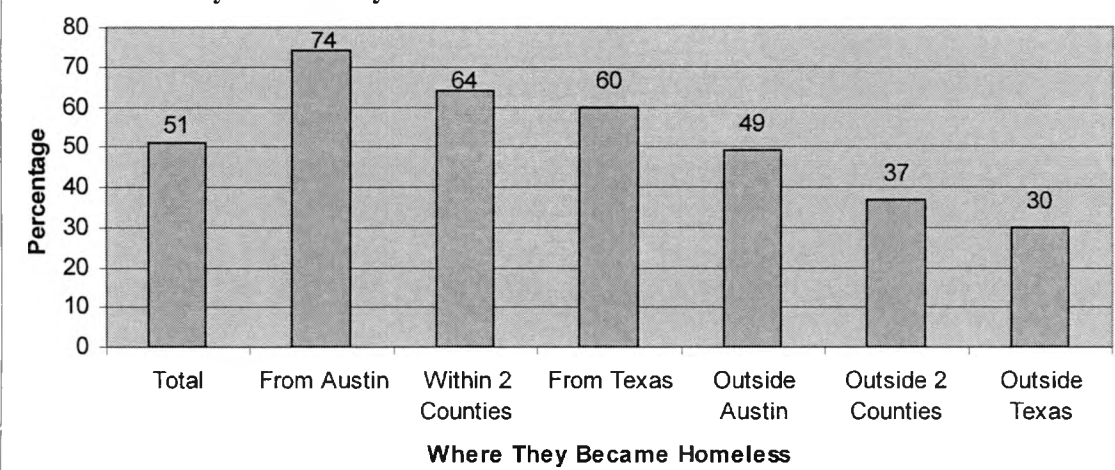


Table 12: Method of Getting to Austin, Those From Outside Texas

outside of Texas were twice as likely to take a train to get to Austin compared to those who became homeless within Texas. These results prove how different transportation methods are used to travel different distances and that many homeless people are able to find the means necessary to travel to where they want.

One of the last questions I asked was “Do you have any future plans to move out of Austin?” Fifty-one percent of all respondents do not have any plans to leave Austin. However, of the people who became homeless in Austin, 74 percent do not have any plans to leave Austin while only 30 percent of those from outside Texas do not plan to move. There is a clear trend that the farther away from Austin that someone became homeless, the more likely he/she are to leave Austin in the future or that they at least plan to leave in the future (Table 13). Without probing this further, it was hard to tell if the people who plan to move do not like Austin or if they just like to keep moving around.

**Table 13: Percentage of People Who Do Not Plan to Leave Austin
by Where They Became Homeless**



Of the respondents who became homeless outside of Austin, 54 surveys were deemed reliable. Of those, 31 people came directly to Austin from where they became homeless (Figure 5). Without the minimum and maximum outliers, the average distance a person traveled to get to Austin was 633 miles. Twenty-three people moved at least one other place before they eventually moved to Austin (Figure 6). The average distance that they became homeless was 679 miles from Austin, just 7 percent farther than those that came directly to Austin. Using median values, those that moved at least one time before coming to Austin had a slightly lower value of 297 miles compared to 305 miles for the people who moved directly to Austin. These results show that people who moved one or more places before moving to Austin did not become homeless farther away from Austin than those who moved directly to Austin.

Roughly 50 percent of people from both groups became homeless in Texas (Attachment 2). Seventeen people made more than two moves, while eight people made three or more moves and five people made four or more moves during homelessness. The more moves that a person made, the less they were able to remember where and for how long they

lived at each location. This made it very difficult to trace an accurate path of movements through space and time and compare one person's movements to others.

The interviewee was also asked if he/she had moved around a lot while growing up. Fifty-four percent of all respondents answered "no" to this question. Fifty percent of those that became homeless in Austin replied "no" to this question while 65 percent of those that became homeless outside of Texas replied "no". This is the exact opposite of the result that I expected to get from this question. Those people that had moved during their homelessness had moved much less as a child than those who had not moved during homelessness. I also compared these results for those with multiple moves and those with only one move. Of the people that had made only one move, directly to Austin, 55 percent did not move a lot as a child. Of the people that had moved two or more times, 60 percent had moved a lot as a child. There is not a large difference between these two groups.



Figure 6: Location Where Homelessness First Began of Those Who Did Not Move Directly to Austin

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Although studies of the homeless have increased rapidly over the last several years, geographical studies of the homeless are still just a small portion of those studies overall. This study along with others in the geographic subfield of homeless research offer different perspectives and can enhance our understanding of the homeless and their situations.

In general, the basic findings of this research coincide with past studies of the homeless. A white male in his forties was the most common person encountered on the street. Almost 40 percent of the people interviewed were white males who were at least 40 years old. While most recent studies show that homeless women and families are on the rise, only 18 percent of my sample population were women. I did, however, talk to several individuals who were homeless with their significant other but found only one person who was there with children, a woman who was with her young daughter.

Like previous studies on the homeless, the main reasons a person came to Austin were very similar. The two most usual reasons as to why people came to Austin were to find jobs or to receive homeless services. In this study, weather also played a role in determining why people came to Austin as 10 percent of people surveyed gave weather

as their response. Several people came to Austin because it was warmer here than where they had previously lived. Seasonal conditions did not play as large a factor as I previously thought they would and no seasonal patterns of movement were determined. Those that had come to Austin for warmer weather did not have a history of moving due to seasonality. There was one person who had moved to Austin on his second move because of the weather and he had moved farther south each time. Two people had moved many times prior to coming to Austin, but with no clear pattern of movement. The rest who came to Austin because of the weather were all on their first move since becoming homeless.

The primary research objective of this study was to determine if there were any long-term mobility patterns of the homeless. Even though no clear pattern of homeless movement was uncovered during this research, patterns do indeed exist. Many people move around looking for better economic opportunities and decide to move somewhere by word-of-mouth. Some people who made multiple moves did get closer to Austin with each move while others seemed to move around randomly. In fact, one person did tell me that he chose where to go next by throwing a dart at a map on the wall. Some people just like to travel and decide to move somewhere new when the “travel bug” bites them. There were 27 people in this study that had moved at least once before coming to Austin. Many of them had moved so many times and had been homeless for so long that they did not even remember all the places that they had lived or for long they had lived there. These were very interesting cases and we could learn a lot from them if we were able to extract the information needed but unfortunately, they did not provide this study with enough information to determine any patterns of movement. A more comprehensive,

large-scale study, in a structured setting where people have more time to answer questions should reveal more than what this study showed. A larger study would be able to distinguish if there were, perhaps, several different patterns of movement among the homeless and be able to group people together with similar movements. Although this study was unable to find a clear pattern of movement, other interesting results were discovered and this study could be used as a stepping-stone for further investigation of the homeless.

For example, one interesting finding was that the farther away from Austin that a person became homeless, the more likely he/she was to move in the future. It would be interesting to expand on this to see why this is the case. Are the people who became homeless in Austin more interested in staying home while others are searching for something to call home, or are they just people who like to move around?

Most previous studies that focused on the location that people became homeless showed that roughly 50 percent of the homeless stayed in the city where they became homeless. That may be true but this study shows that only 33 percent of homeless individuals living in Austin became homeless in Austin. That means that Austin is a destination for more people than many other cities as 75 percent of the homeless living in Austin have come from other cities. It is difficult to tell if these results are just an oddity or if more research into this subject is necessary to determine the actual numbers. This difference could also be due to other reasons such as seasonal variations, an economic downturn, word-of-mouth that Austin is a great city for the homeless, or some other reason. A study done over the course of a whole year might be able to determine a pattern of seasonal migrants. A study designed to see how many people who become

homeless in Austin actually stay in Austin would be difficult as the ones that leave would be hard to track down. I do believe, however, that Austin would have a higher retention rate of homeless individuals than other cities. A multi-city study would also be useful to determine if Austin receives more out-of-town homeless than other cities or if the homeless just move around more than what studies currently show.

The study had an overall average length of homelessness of 4.6 years. That number seems high compared to previous studies that show most people go in and out of homelessness within much shorter time frames. As people with longer periods of homelessness were better for my study because they had more time to move around, I did not seek them out. I interviewed random people with all different types of situations.

Another issue that would be worth delving into more is the length of homelessness by race. The results of this study show that African Americans experience the shortest duration of homelessness followed by whites and then Hispanics. Hispanics had a much longer duration of homelessness than the other groups in this study but their sample size was very small. A study looking into this issue more intensely along with finding the reasons behind why this is the case would be a very interesting study.

One thing that became very clear during this study, is that the homeless like living in Austin. By using open-ended questions, I was able to talk to people and let them freely talk to me about anything they wanted to say, while at the same time getting answers to the questions I needed. Over 50 percent of the people interviewed plan to never move out of Austin. Of those who do plan on moving out of Austin, the majority of them were planning on leaving for reasons other than that they did not like Austin or Austin did not have what they came here for. Many had family elsewhere and they

wanted to move back close to them while others just liked to travel. Ten percent of interviewees even decided to move to Austin just because they liked Austin. Many of the people interviewed mentioned how much they liked the people in Austin or how nice the local people were, while others mentioned how much better the homeless were treated in Austin compared to other cities they had been to or lived in before. The winters are mild, the services are better than most other cities, there are more job opportunities, and Austin, being a liberal city, is generally more tolerant and kinder to the homeless population than other cities. If you are homeless, Austin is not a bad place to be.

While this study did not completely find what it attempted to, the long-term patterns of movement within the homeless population in Austin, it did show that the homeless are mobile and can find ways to move if they really want to. It also proved that the homeless population like living in Austin and like being in Austin. People have moved to Austin from all over the country. Three quarters of the homeless in Austin who became homeless in Austin never plan to leave the city while 65 percent of the homeless who are in Austin came from another city. These two statistics show just how appealing Austin is to the homeless population. While the homeless who are from Austin never plan to leave, the majority of the homeless people in Austin are not from Austin. This indicates that people from Austin love Austin but that Austin is also a destination choice for people who have become homeless anywhere in the country.

This study has helped lay a foundation for future studies to expand upon the ideas explored within it. Homelessness will not disappear anytime within the near future and much can still be learned by studying this sub-population. If a pattern could be determined of where the homeless plan to move and why, cities would be able to budget

and plan more efficiently on how to deal with incoming and outgoing homeless. The homeless may never be fully understood but every step closer that we can get, the better we, as a society, will be able to properly deal with them.

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

I am a student at Texas State University San Marcos. I am conducting a study to see how far you have come to live in Austin. This survey will only take a few minutes. Your participation is completely optional. Individual personal information will not be shared with anyone. Your name will not be collected. Thank you for your help.

Location of interview:

Date:

Time:

Race/ethnicity:

Sex

Age:

Family:

- 1) Where was your last permanent home?
- 2) When did you last live in your last home?
- 3) What caused you to leave?
- 4) When did you come to Austin?
- 5) Why did you come to Austin? PULL
- 6) Why did you leave your last location? PUSH

7) Where did you live between _____ and Austin?

8) How long did you live at each location?

9) Did you move a lot as a kid? With your family?

10) Do you have any future plans to move?

11) If you could move, where would you go?

APPENDIX 2

Where One Became Homeless, by Miles From Austin

Moved Directly to Austin

Creedmoor, TX	17
Spring Meadows, TX	30
San Marcos, TX	31
Bastrop, TX	33
Taylor, TX	36
Copperas Cove, TX	87
Waco, TX	102
San Saba, TX	113
Houston, TX	165
Houston, TX	165
Huntsville, TX (in prison)	168
Fort Worth, TX	187
Abilene, TX	229
Wichita Falls, TX	304
Kilgore, TX (Gregg Co)	305
Shreveport, LA	374
Gulf Port, MS	464
New Orleans, LA	513
Searcy, AR	563
St Louis, MO	885
Denver, CO	962
Denver, CO	962
Minneapolis, MN	1174
St Pete Beach, FL	1176
Toledo, OH	1321
Detroit, MI	1380
Traverse City, MI	1445
Fresno, CA	1599
Salinas, CA	1683
Poughkeepsie, NY	1808
Spokane, WA	2147
Median	305
Average	651
Average Without Minimum and Maximum Values	633

Made at least one move before Coming to Austin

Round Rock, TX	19
Cedar Park, TX	21
Lockhart, TX	32
Spicewood, TX	38
Lampasas, TX	76
Marlin, TX	104
Houston, TX	165
Willis, TX	176
Baytown, TX	190
Murchison, TX	215
Tyler, TX	255
Marshall, TX	339
Tucson, AZ	895
Champaign, IL	1031
Knoxville, TN	1039
Deland, FL	1115
Columbus, OH	1236
Charleston, WV	1246
Camp Hill, Pa (prison)	1576
Harlem, NY	1753
Portland, Maine	2070
Bend, OR	2200
Median	297
Average	718
Average Without Minimum and Maximum Values	679

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