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Homelessness in Brattleboro: An Examination if a Poor Community in Brattleboro, Vt, What Services are Available, and how the Community Could Benefit From Sustainable Development Practices.

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HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR COMMUNITY
IN BRATTLEBORO, VT, WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE, AND HOW THE
COMMUNITY COULD BENEFIT FROM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES.

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Development at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

November 11, 2012

Advisor: John Vogelsang

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Abstract

Decades ago the Federal Government created a system of systems to assist in eradicating extreme poverty, however in 2011 the poverty rate was at its highest rate in almost two decades leaving millions of families and individuals searching for assistance. Given today's statistics it should not come as a shock that more and more families and individuals have accessed the system and government spending has significantly increased. The deterioration of the safety net has left many lost, looking for answers and for change to happen.

This research study focused on a small community in Brattleboro, Vermont and asked: What are the current service systems within a poor rural North American community and how might sustainable development practices be beneficial? The research conducted focused on information gathered from individuals who were participants of the system as well as individuals who worked in the system.

Participants found the current system helpful but they were mostly frustrated with how the current system was not meeting their needs. This study looked at suggestions made to modify the current system and also looked at practices of sustainable development. The system set in place has proven to be complicated, intricate, and difficult to navigate but it has created a foundation in which sustainable change can grow and take shape.

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Introduction

Over the past nine years I had the opportunity to work with two very different and diverse communities, yet when taking the time to peel away the layers of labels and pre-conceived notions there was an emergence of two very similar communities with similar needs.

The first community I worked with is located in Mali, West Africa. It is a small village, not found on a map, of about 300 residents. The population fluctuates depending on the time of year and who in the community is answering the question. The second community is a homeless shelter found in a small town in Southern Vermont. The shelter is able to house upwards of 35 residents at any given time, but over the course of a year it will see 100 plus individuals walk through its door.

One community is labeled as a third world community in need of sustainable development and the other community is labeled a poor community in need of government assistance. Both communities have labels that describe the situation in which they find themselves. Although both situations are very similar their labels are very different and they create different reactions and assumptions from individuals who do not live within their communities.

It was shortly into my 27 month tenure as a Peace Corps (PC) volunteer in Mali that I began to really question what I was doing there and what my role was as a volunteer, and how truly beneficial was it to have me infiltrate a community in which I had little understanding. I was sent under the guise of being an “expert” on agriculture. The most I had ever done was gardening in an urban North American community where abundance and ease are taken for granted. Sure I received some training upon my arrival, but my collegiate background was in international business management. The community I was assigned to did not need “schooling”

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from me; it was I who needed “schooling” from them. I was very fortunate in the fact that they accepted me into their family, their community, and their lives and were patient with my naivety. It was through their acceptance and teaching that I began to question who really benefited from being sustainably developed.

Four months after my return from Mali hurricane Katrina ravished the Gulf Coast communities. Peace Corps put out a call to former volunteers to join Crisis Corps (CC) (currently known as Response Corps) in being deployed to the devastated area. It was the first time since the inception of Crisis Corps that they were offering domestic assistance. I answered that call as I was lost in a world where I no longer knew where I belonged or how a formidably changed person navigated old, safe, unchanged waters. I was stationed in Bogalusa, Louisiana working for FEMA as a Disaster Assistance Employee. The questioning that began in Mali did not subside, if anything it increased with voracity. Here I was in an industrialized community in North America, completely decimated by the storm. The neglect, destruction, and hopelessness was apparent and what became even more apparent was its established existence well before Katrina surged.

A few years after my return from Mali and Bogalusa I decided to attend SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont and study Sustainable Development. Through my studies and reflections of both my PC and CC service I began to ask what the purpose of Sustainable Development really was and why was it being used on Southern countries and not the “industrialized” North.

After completion of my on campus phase at SIT I interned at Morningside Shelter in Brattleboro, VT and eventually became a case manager and worked there for three years. During my tenure at Morningside Shelter I had the privilege to work with some of the strongest most

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tenacious people I had ever met. They lived in the face of ridicule, poverty, torment, and suffering each and every day and yet each day they were able to get up and tackle it all over again in order to reach the “American Dream” that had been alluding them for years and possibly generations. Through it all they were able to smile and laugh and look on the bright side of things. Believe it or not they do not want their life to be their children’s lives and so they fought. The will and strength of those individuals mirrored the will and the strength of the community in Mali.

It was because of them and realizing that both communities had similar underlying themes that I began to question why they were labeled differently and why theories of sustainable development were created for communities located in what the West refers to as Second and Third world countries, but those theories were not used on the supposedly developed Western World nor were theories created for them. With that thought in mind the following capstone question was developed: What are the current service systems within a poor rural North American community and how might sustainable development practices be beneficial? In order to better assist with understanding the question the following secondary questions were established:

1. What is the understanding of the current service system by the target population and those working with the target population?
2. To what degree do the current services in place meet the needs of the target population?
3. How does the target population view the current services set in place to meet their needs?
4. How successful do workers within the current services find their services?
5. How could the services be modified to better serve those living in poverty?
6. What sustainable development theories and processes could be applied to mitigate poverty in Brattleboro, VT?

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Literature Review

Poverty has been a part of every society for centuries. It is part of an institutional hierarchy that has been passed down from generation to generation spanning across all peoples and cultures. As countries' wealth increases those living in poverty within the countries' borders are in a race to the bottom. In the United States, when poverty and the issues around it are remembered, it becomes a political and moral hotbed of who is to blame and what courses of action need to be taken. Often times those living in poverty are forgotten about until there are elections. For a few months, each electoral season, poverty is given a face, a name, a place in the spotlight, but the reality of it is that they are the forgotten few. Only the few may be multiplied by tens of millions. It is common for the middle and upper classes to think that those living in poverty do not exist or that the situation is not of critical importance. If it cannot be seen then it must not exist or at least it is not present in their community then it is none of their concern. The truth is that it is present in every community whether it is the people who work in or people who live in the community (Meltzer, 1986). Michael Harrington (1962) perhaps said it best in *The Other America* when he wrote "Clothes make the poor invisible too: America has the best dressed poverty the world has ever known...It is much easier in the United States to be decently dressed than it is to be decently housed, fed, or doctored" (p.5). Harrington points to the broader issue of if it is unseen or if those living in poverty do not fit into the stereotype that has been constructed by popular society than indeed poverty is not the issue some make it out to be.

Research clearly states that there is a problem of poverty in this country and that it is growing. Terkel (1992) focuses on race, Hooks (2000) focusses on class and many other sources designate a chapter or two to race, gender, and class. The common theme that is acknowledged by all sources is that poverty is an issue that does not discriminate. It affects all people no matter

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race, gender, or geographical location. Shipler (2005) states it best when he writes, “Poverty is like a bleeding wound. It weakens the defenses. It lowers resistance. It attracts predators” (p. 18). However, Hooks (2000) points out that though there may always be poverty it does not mean that those living in poverty cannot gain a better life or find contentment and fulfillment. Many sources discuss how those living in poverty are defeated and how their self esteem is torn down. Terkel (1992) describes how people who access welfare begin to feel less than a human being and that it tears down dreams. Coll (1969) discusses how those who needed public assistance were seen as morally deficient, meaning they were viewed as ignorant, lacking discretion, unemployed, not doing anything to help themselves, alcoholics, etc. Harrington (1962) writes “the poor can be described statistically; they can be analyzed as a group. But they need a novelist as well as a sociologist if we are to see them” (p. 17). He discusses new poverty and how it is constructed to destroy aspiration. He talks about those living in poverty being alone and forgotten about. He talks about how they are sunk in their poverty and deprived of hope.

Coll (1969), Katz (1986), and Piven and Cloward (1971/1993) all discuss the history of welfare in America. They talk about the poorhouses, almshouses, and what public relief and charity relief looked like and how it evolved into what today is known as public assistance/welfare. Coll (1969), however, discusses in further detail the relief given to the poor and how centuries ago they were dealing with the transition from feudalism to capitalism, bringing attention to the Elizabethan Poor Law which greatly influenced the way the United States offered relief to the poor, i.e., poorhouses and almshouses. He states public works programs in the United States represent an inheritance from the past, particularly the English past. He discusses how even in colonial times there was a share of people who were dependent on public assistance or voluntary charity.

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Both conservatives and liberals, as they are the dominant viewpoints in politics, agree there is poverty what they do not agree upon is the reasoning behind the existence of poverty in this country, the extent of poverty, and how it should be eradicated. Much of the debate is around the implementation of the welfare system by the United States federal government. Katz (1986) and Wolpert (1996) describe the conservative viewpoint as those living in poverty are rewarded for being lazy. It erodes the work ethic because people would rather eat and not work than eat and work. Wolpert (1996) goes on to say that conservatives believe if welfare were scaled back or eliminated private charity would step up and fill in the gap left by the exiting of the federal government. Liberals, they say, view the system as incomplete and inadequate. Katz (1986) points out that these criticisms are not new and have been echoed for nearly two centuries. Coll (1969) shows that the conservative view has been passed down through time. In the early 1800s people believed the cause of pauperism was due to such things as ignorance, idleness, hasty marriages and the existence of numerous charitable institutions. Conservatives insist that the federal government should pull its funding from programs created to alleviate poverty (Wolpert, 1996). They think states, localities, and nonprofit organizations should take on the responsibility of maintaining the nation's safety net including the welfare system. Edelman (2012) discusses how the safety net needs to be woven into a sturdier safety net. He goes on to say "the American safety net is much more fragmented than that of every other industrialized country, and its biggest hole is its deterioration with regard to the utterly destitute" (p. 81).

With all of the programs and changes in the welfare system rural poverty is perhaps the most forgotten about poverty that exists in the United States. Rural communities are most often thought of as farming communities or communities of industries such as mining, fishing, etc. No matter the face of the community rural poverty is rarely addressed. Harrington (1962) brings

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focus to rural poverty as being in the farm fields and in the Appalachian Mountains. He describes it as being “the harshest and most bitter poverty in the United States.” He discusses how technological advancement in agriculture created the persistence of poverty and that larger industry came to rural America as an answer to people’s quest to get out of poverty but in reality it provided a cheap and docile labor market for them. In discussing the history of almshouses and what society did with the poor, Coll (1969) points out that people were sent to rural communities to work on farms or if people were in debt they could send a family member or they themselves to work on a farm. The root of the problem was never taken care of; it was simply transplanted to an already impoverished community. At the time when small farms and family run farms were more common this might have seemed like an easier solution to a problem, but as the years past and rural America grew progressively poorer and large industry farms moved in, those who worked on farms and lived on farms were displaced and those who were meagerly living above poverty line found themselves slipping below the line.

Harrington (1962), Jensen (2004), O’Hare and Johnson (2004) all discuss lack of education as being a cause of rural poverty in rural America. Jensen (2004) and O’Hare and Johnson (2004) talk about how the working poor are less educated in rural communities than in urban communities. It’s not just that adults are less likely to have a college degree it’s the fact that rural educational systems are often substandard . O’Hare & Johnson (2004) agree that lack of education and work are causes of poverty and like many sources feel creating and providing education and work are two prominent paths out of poverty but they feel neither of them work as well in rural America as they do in urban America. They feel the socio-economic environment faced by those living in rural poverty needs to be considered before policies and programs designed with the urban poor in mind are implemented. In fact Jensen (2004) also feels

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antipoverty policies must be flexible enough to address the socio-economic environment that varies within each location and region. Many sources say that rural poverty is forgotten about because it is often the victim of neglect or it has been lumped in with agricultural policies and therefore overshadowed by it.

Another cause of rural poverty discussed by Jensen (2004) and The National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) is the lack of adequate infrastructure. Lack of public transportation, reliable private transportation, adequate child care, and information technology greatly hinders what opportunities might be available as well as deters potential industries from moving into a community.

Underemployment is a cause of poverty everywhere but it is most greatly felt in rural communities. The National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) discusses how fewer job opportunities, lower wages, and longer periods of unemployment contribute to the disparity between rural poor and urban poor. Jensen (2004) and The National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) point out the reasoning for underemployment can be due to the lack of economic diversity because they rely on a limited number of industries such as extractive industries-- mining, timber, or fishing. Liebow (1993), although his focus is on homeless women, discusses how the major failure of the system is its inability, even in the best of times, to provide jobs for everyone who is willing and able to work.

Housing is seen as another issue in which the needs of those living in poverty are not met. Harrington (1962) talks mostly about housing projects in urban areas and that the state of the projects is a direct result of the federal government's neglect of the poverty issue and that it runs deep along race and class lines. He believed the federal government was capable of eradicating the problems with housing projects. He also discussed how poor housing remained one of the

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most important facts about the other America, as he referred to those living in poverty. Many current sources continue to write and discuss the issue around the lack of affordable livable housing which illustrates that Harrington's analysis of the system still holds true today. Meltzer (1986) looks deeper into poverty and discusses extreme poverty and in this case homelessness. He points out that the inefficiencies with housing and the federal government's involvement with it. He discusses the struggles experienced for those without a home and those who are precariously housed and hanging on to what they have. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty are the trends largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years. They discuss how poverty and homelessness are inextricably linked and that it's housing that requires the largest percentage of income and therefore it is the first to be dropped. Declining value and availability of public assistance is one of the factors that accounts for the increasing poverty ("Why Are People Homeless" 2009). As with poverty, homelessness is difficult to define and public officials are reluctant to consider inadequate housing and doubling up as forms of homelessness, as is prevalent in rural poverty. Instead officials prefer to use the term precariously housed (Zawisza, 1996).

Lack of affordable health care plays a significant role in the lives of those living in poverty. It can be a catalyst for many of their struggles and eventually homelessness. Individuals struggling with a serious illness or disability, without proper medical care, may become unemployed. Once becoming unemployed they have to rely on their savings, if they have any, which would become a quickly depleting source of income to help pay for their care and could eventually lead to eviction ("Mental Illness and Homelessness", 2009). The latest data

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from the US Census Bureau indicate that some 50.6 million Americans lacked health care coverage in 2009 (“Health & Nutrition: Health Insurance”, 2012).

Harrington (1962) felt progress was a leading cause of poverty and the reasoning behind why the United States saw millions of people move back into poverty. He wrote about the gains in technology during the fifties and sixties and the development of American cities as the means of retrogression for many to where they had been before the gains of the welfare state were made. Small family farms were hurt by farm programs, mom and pop stores started closing, mines and plants shut down leaving entire poor communities even more impoverished. He even said “many of the poor view progress upside-down, as a menace and a threat to their lives” (p.14). He was outraged and believed it to be a scandal that the technology available could provide every citizen with a decent life yet there was such social misery.

Semantics and definitions can also be problematic for people living in poverty. The intentional use of words can either qualify or disqualify a person from accessing programs created to help alleviate their struggle. The United States’ government today uses a definition created in the early 1960s by Mollie Orshansky. She and others working on developing a measure of poverty used the cost of the economy food plan as their cornerstone and from there developed a formula for figuring out where people lie on the poverty line (Edelman, 2012). Edelman (2012) points out that some of the issues with the formula are that it is patently inadequate. It leaves out some categories of income, it is based on pretaxed income and the cost of living is understated by the Orshansky methodology. He believes full accounting for the real cost of a minimal living would prove to be more accurate and it would raise the poverty line, but it would also increase those living in poverty. Over 25 years ago Meltzer (1986) pointed out that experts said there were far more living in poverty than what was measured by Orshansky’s

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methodology and that it was not accurate and it understated the facts. No matter the definitions or the methodology used to figure out those living in poverty it is relative according to Payne (1996). She believes poverty or wealth only exists in relationship to known quantities or expectations. It is more about other resources than it is about money. Meltzer (1986) echoes Payne's sentiments. He believes poor are poor because they lack not just cash income but they lack other things of value. He believes writer, Peter Townsend would say "poverty is not an income level; it is a condition of life" (p.12). Terkel (1992) goes further and states if you are poor you are poor. It doesn't matter what color. Poverty takes a toll. Many of the sources echo Harrington's (1962) definition of poverty in the United States as a culture, an institution, a way of life.

Today poverty is looked at and discussed from two different schools of thought. The first is pre 1964 and the second is post 1964. In 1962 Michael Harrington refocused attention on the poverty that existed then and how it was forgotten about. Meltzer (1986) wrote "it took one book to shock Americans out of their complacency...Harrington rediscovered poverty in America. In a passionate outcry, *The Other America*, he laid bare the misery of a new poverty that crippled the lives of 40 to 50 million people" (p. 94). Politicians began to take notice of what Harrington wrote and along with the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Americans became aware of the inequality that existed among them as noted by Edelman (2012) and Hooks (2000). President Lyndon Johnson answered Harrington's call to combat poverty with the "War on Poverty" program. This ushered in a new era of programs and services to help the 40 to 50 million people living in poverty under what was called the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) (Orleck & Hazirijian ,2011). Meltzer (1986) reasons the War on Poverty was launched in order to

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encompass individuals who were not included in the Social Security Act and created categories in which they could now receive public assistance.

Harrington (1962) quoted Professor John Dunlop of Harvard as saying, “in the thirties, he [Professor Dunlop] notes, there was mass unemployment; in the postwar period there has been class unemployment” (p.30). Edelman (2012) describes how under Reagan’s administration and even more so when Clinton signed the 1996 welfare law the safety net began to fall apart. Wolpert (1996) discusses further how relying on charities will produce a patchy system because they lack the resources to sustain the poorest even at minimal safety net levels. He also believes the other issue of relying on charities as a solution is that there will be a competitive scramble to increase donations, which will in effect reduce staff and programming. Smith (2005) believes better policy would provide a better safety net. He believes welfare reform is needed, not removal. Coll (1969) believed it to be “impossible for the United States to develop an adequate and comprehensive system of social welfare services and benefits as long as public assistance, the foundation of the whole structure, is neglected” (p. vii). At the time of his writing he felt the problem America faced was either making public assistance adequate to need and humane in administration or replacing it with a program of guaranteed income maintenance. In 2005 Shipler continued to describe the issue similarly to Coll. He said the systemic problems ran along macro and micro levels in the structure of political and economic power. However he concedes that nobody needs government more than the poor and nearly poor. Edelman (2012), Harrington (1962), and Shipler (2005) discussed how the poor were politically invisible and that they had little influence on its policies. Edelman (2012) discussed how their political voices, if heard would have been able to have influence on elections such as the elections of 2000. However, he

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notes that they are made to feel as if they do not count or that they do not have a voice and so they do not bother.

Many of the sources looked at concede that attempts have been made to try and alleviate and even eradicate poverty from the United States. Coll (1969) acknowledged that many changes in public assistant programs and legislation have been made over the years but the changes have not been proportional with fundamental shifts in the economic and social structure of life. Edelman (2012) carefully pointed out what worked over the last five decades and what did not work but concedes that solutions provided by the federal government had their issues.

Through all of the debates on what is proper aid to those living in poverty and who are worthy or unworthy of it one thing seems to have been forgotten. The people. Government, media and society have slowly dehumanized the people who live in poverty and battle it daily. Coll (1969) and Hooks (2000) both write about how poverty became shameful to those living in poverty as well as those of the affluent society. They discuss how the government painted them as lazy predators wanting hand outs. This sentiment continues to this day and is discussed in many other sources. Shipler (2005) visits with and writes about the working poor and their struggle to survive and maintain a sense of dignity and to not let their lives demoralize them.

Many sources identify lack of education, employment, health care, and housing as major needs not being met. Meltzer (1986) discusses how it is widely admitted that poor are deprived of other things of value such as occupations, education, and political power. Wolpert (1996) discusses the cut in funding as a reason why needs are not being met:

...In the last decade or so we have gone backwards: the number of citizens who live below the poverty line because of income stagnation has increased. And over the same period, we have reduced many, if not most, federal programs that assist low-income citizens. (p.4)

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He goes on further to discuss how organizations try to increase revenues from other sources, due to budget cuts, but when you throw them into a competitive scramble for increased donations from limited revenue sources, the outcome is they must reduce their staff and programming (Wolpert, 1996). It is easy to see how the needs are not being met in the grand scheme of things but how does it affect people on the micro level, how does it affect individual communities?

Through all of the writings it is easy to see what the overlapping needs are for those battling poverty. What seems to be missing are the view points from those who access the system and their understanding of it. Outside generalized views and feelings are expressed about how people living in poverty feel about the current set up. Shipler (2005) comes close when he discusses the midset of former welfare recipients and their views on the system:

Many former welfare recipients who go to work just say good riddance to the bureaucracies that would provide food stamps, medical coverage, and housing. Some think wrongly that they're no longer eligible once they're off welfare; others would rather forfeit their rights than contend with the hassle and humiliation. (p.41)

He also discusses how if you are someone teetering on the poverty line it is easy to lose your balance having one foot planted tentatively in the working world and the other still entwined in the denseness of red tape (Shipler, 2005).

Most of the research looks at those living in poverty and those who work in organizations that help those living in poverty on a small scale and at a macro level. Kris Zawisza, who in 1991 was the director of the Washington Low-Income Housing Network, discussed how the resources available to help people cope with homelessness were very limited in rural areas. A fraction of the federal funding available for homeless-assistance programs reached those communities and the small local governments within those communities could not support these services ("Homelessness Is Serious in Rural Areas", 1996). According to Coll (1969) much of the outcry against public assistance came from recipients of relief who wanted more money and less

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invasiveness into their personal lives. It also came from welfare workers who wanted to help rather than to investigate and interrogate the poor. Shipler (2005) discusses a personal account with one of the individuals he interviewed. The interviewee was told by officials that the best way she could get benefits and subsidized housing was to move into a homeless shelter.

Critics of those who live in poverty believe the problem can be fixed by employment. Many sources point out that work alone is not enough for those living in poverty to pull themselves above the poverty line and be sustainable. Shipler (2005) states how work helps at the low end of the pay scale only when everything else works. He discusses what happens to people when they find employment and lose benefits but the income from employment is not enough to sustain them. In answer to the critics he believes there is no single variable that can be altered to help working people move away from the edge of poverty. Hooks (2000) writes similarly but puts more emphasis on the effects of classism on the poor and that as a nation we have become passive and refuse to act responsibly to those living in poverty.

Liebow (1996) looks at homelessness in America but points out the same critique as the above mentioned sources. He believes the inability of the system to provide jobs for all able bodied individuals, even in the best of times, is a major failure. The failure at the lower and sometimes middle levels of our wage-labor hierarchy has a direct connection between homelessness and poverty. He points out, like Shipler (2005), that people who are working continue to remain poor.

Coll (1969) and Smith (2005) discussed ending poverty generationally. The latter discussed ending extreme poverty in one generation. Although Smith's attention to poverty in the United States is minimal, his discussion on escaping poverty traps, which is geared to the Global South

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may be useful in looking at ways in which poverty in the United States may be diminished. His eight keys are as follows:

1. Health and nutrition for adults to work and children to grow to their potential
2. Basic education to build the foundations for self-reliance
3. Credit and basic insurance for working capital and defense against risk
4. Access to functioning markets for income and opportunities to acquire assets
5. Access to the benefits of new technologies for higher productivity
6. A non-degraded and stable environment to ensure sustainable development
7. Personal empowerment to gain freedom from exploitation and torment and
8. Community empowerment to ensure effective participation in the wider world.

(Smith, 2005, p. 31-45)

In the late 2000s the United States had the highest rate of people living in poverty among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and among those the highest rate of children living in poverty. 17.3 percent of the U.S. population lived in poverty and the child poverty rate was 23.1 percent in 2009. This figure means that more than one in five children in the United States lived in poverty (as measured by the share of children living in households with household income below half of median household income). Relative to other OECD countries it is almost five times as high as the country with the lowest level, and over two times higher than the (unweighted) peer-country average of 9.8 percent (Gould & Wething, 2012).

Harrington (1962) and Smith (2005) believe those who live in poor nations are usually much poorer than the poorest in the United States and are not impoverished in the same sense. Harrington (1962) acknowledges that the United States contains an underdeveloped nation and although the extreme suffering is not the same as in poor nations the mechanism of the misery is similar. Shipler (2005) believes being poor in a rich country may be more difficult because the skills of surviving in America have been lost. Payne (1996) believes poverty occurs in all countries and that the percentage of the population that is poor is subject to definition and

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circumstance. Moyo (2009) writes about aid to Africa and how it has helped make the poor poorer and that it is a myth to believe that aid can alleviate systemic poverty. Maathai (2009) sentiments run along the same lines as Moyo. She discusses how it is up to the African leadership and people to make sure the resources are used as intended. They both talk about the voice of the people of Africa needing to be heard and that they should not fear speaking up and that aid and development from the Global North is detrimental to the health of Africa.

Not everyone is opposed to sustainable development practices. Some groups, such as women in the Global South, have decided to look at feminist theory and transform it to make it geared toward their voices. Barriteau (2000) discusses how the feminist theory has had various effects on the creation of new policies, and the formation of women's Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). She further discusses how at the international level women from southern countries have unified and found a voice. Many feminists in the South are attempting to redefine the various discourses by "ensuring that the historical perspective of women's movements and women's organizations in the South becomes an integral part of the discourse" (Barriteau, 2000, Overview, #1). They try to challenge and correct the assumptions made by women's movements and organizations in the South during the United Nation's First Development Decade. One organization, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), is working on challenging and correcting those assumptions.

DAWN is a network of feminists, researchers, activists, and policy makers from the South. It was formed in 1984 and later in 1985 held a number of workshops at the NGO Forum in Nairobi. It "questioned the impact of development on poor peoples, especially women, in light of current global economic and political crises. The group's agenda focuses on the themes

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of environment, reproductive rights, population, and alternative economic frameworks” (Barriteau, 2000, Overview, #3).

Through DAWN women from southern countries have used the theories and the various feminist schools presented to them and worked to make them relevant and to make sure the correct views are being heard and seen. Barriteau (2000) discusses the benefits of DAWN. She believes it is because of DAWN that women’s NGOs and feminists in the North are incorporating their research concerns with those of feminists in the South. With the constant evolution of the feminist theory through cooperation and mutual understanding among the southern and northern feminists, the practice of the theory will be more feasible and more beneficial to the people the theory is trying to encompass.

Many believe it will take more than just programs to raise individuals out of poverty; it will take a shift in mindset. Shipler (2005) wrote about holistic remedies being vital to fight poverty and that the first step is to see the problems, and the first problem is the failure to see people. Hooks (2000) believed solidarity with the poor was the only path that would open the nation to a vision of community that would be the force that could create change in the system and while work was being done on that we would have to work to resist the dehumanization of the poor.

Many of the resources discussed the system as whole and the disadvantages to it and some of the advantages to it and how it morphed over time. Many of them looked at the history of the system, how it was marketed and to whom it was marketed. The data changed over time but the system analysis has remained constant. What Harrington saw as systemic issues were discussed by Edelman in 2012. Research shows the major theories of the causes of poverty have remained consistent since the War on Poverty began. Much of the research does not focus

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poverty on a global level, meaning the focus is either on domestic poverty or international poverty. They do not look at the various implementations from across the world that are used to battle poverty as possible solutions for battling poverty in the United States. Most importantly the theories and practices of sustainable development are never mentioned nor are they used as a tool or a solution to combat poverty in the United States. Many of the sources write from an outside perspective and look at the fundamental benefits, difficulties and neglect of the system that was set up to assist those living in poverty. Many lack the human voice, the personal accounts of those who both work in the system and live by the system.

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Research/Practitioner Inquiry Design

In order to answer the question and looking at the possibility of using theories in Sustainable Development on communities in the United States I decided to conduct an in-depth phenomenological study of poverty services in Brattleboro, Vermont, a rural community in North America. The three forms of data collection were observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Some of the information found in the Capstone came from my undocumented observations when I was working with the individuals and by working in the field of human services for three years in Brattleboro.

Questionnaires were sent to 11 professionals working with or within the social services field in Brattleboro, VT. Eight of the 11 individuals filled out and returned the questionnaires. The average number of years worked in Social Services by the participants was 18 years. Two males and six females filled out the questionnaires. The difference in number between genders is indicative of the gender divide in the human service field as a whole. The agencies represented by the participants were Morningside Shelter, Youth Services, and the Vermont Agency of Human Services (VAHS), within VAHS various departments were represented. The roles of the participants ranged from case workers to executive directors. Individuals were asked to give their opinions on the benefits and difficulties of both the United States social service system and that of Brattleboro's social service system. They were also asked to discuss what hurdles their clients faced, if their needs were being met, how their clients faced their hurdles and what could be done better to meet their clients' needs if anything. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The Participants were asked to sign consent forms and a copy of it is found in Appendix B. In keeping with the consent forms signed by individuals working in the social service field their names and positions were removed in order to keep confidentiality. Each

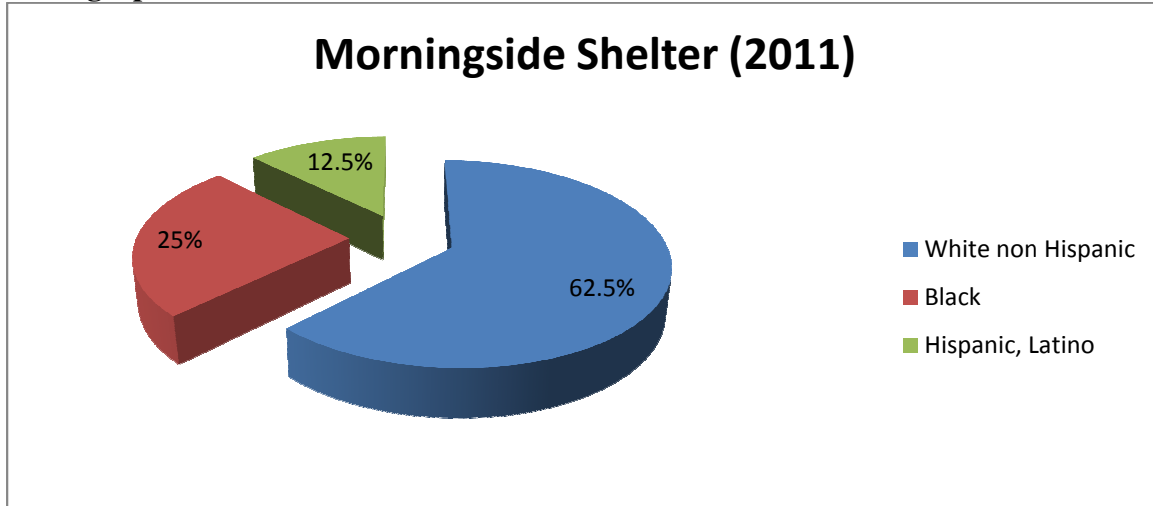
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individual is referred to as a SP (service provider) with a number after it. The information from the questionnaires and the interviews were integrated with each other in the findings in order to better support the secondary questions that were asked.

In order to be able to look at the question proposed in a comprehensive manner eight current/former residents of Morningside Shelter (MS) were interviewed. The ages of those interviewed ranged from 19 to 50. Seven of them were female and all but one were mothers, although not all resided at MS with their children. The fact that seven of the eight participants were females and the majority were mothers mirrored the research reported by The National Coalition for the Homeless. They said research showed the population of female-headed households was the largest group of people who were homeless in rural areas (“Rural Homelessness”, 2009).

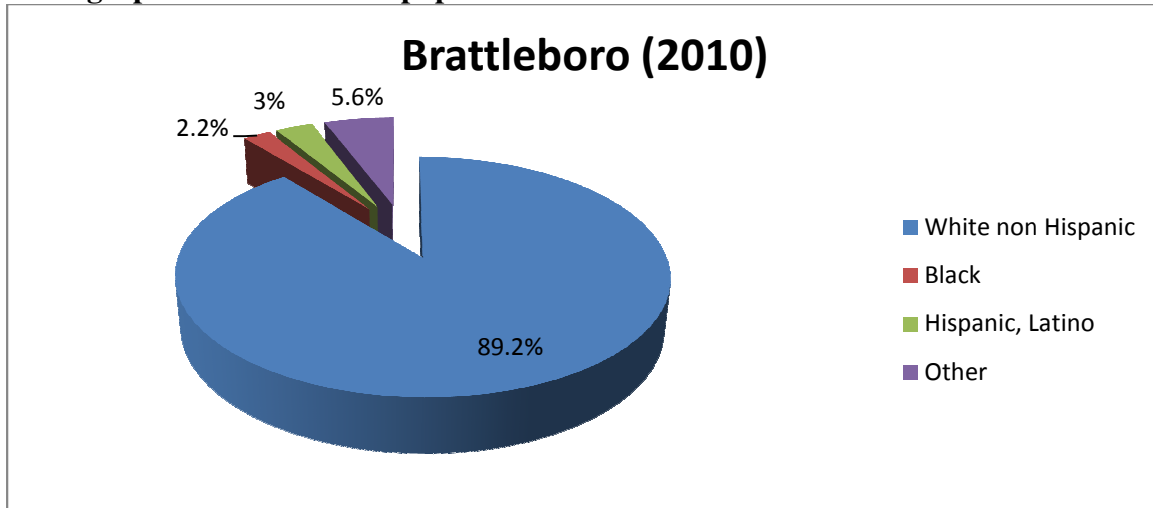
At the time of the interviews the ages of the children who lived at MS with the participants ranged from six months to 13 years. However, it should be mentioned that one of the participants had their child while living at MS and another one’s child was three months old when they first arrived at Morningside. Two of the eight participants had recently moved to Brattleboro from other parts of the country and one had returned after being in another state for a number of years. Five of the participants were White non Hispanic, two were Black, and one was Hispanic or Latino Origin. As illustrated in figures 1-3, the breakdown in demographics at Morningside was similar with the demographic breakdown of Brattleboro proper and Vermont and coincided with what The National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) said that people who experienced homelessness in rural areas were more likely to be White.

Figure 1
Demographic breakdown of Interviewees



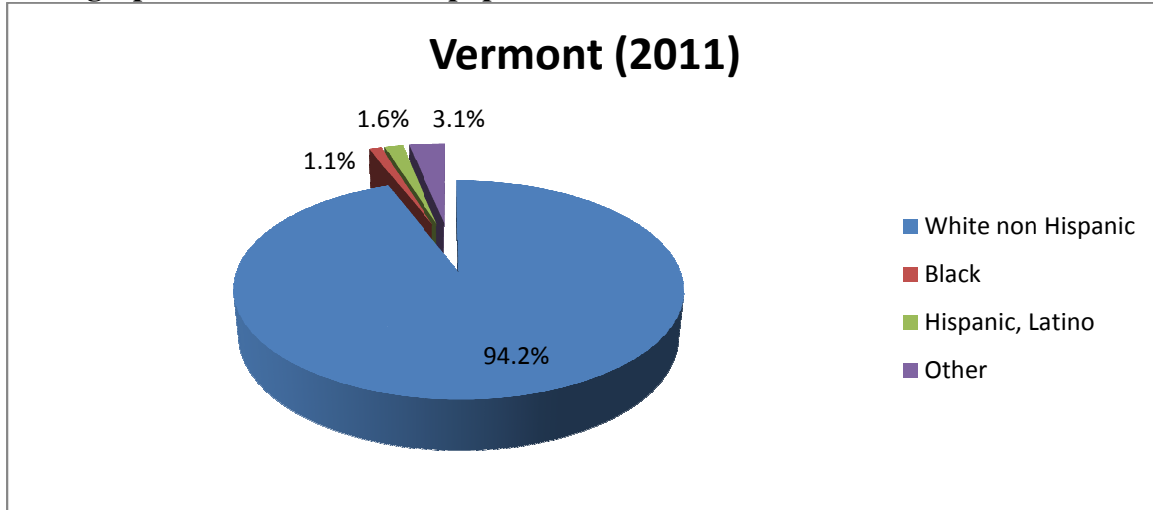
Source: Author's calculations based on number of participants interviewed.

Figure 2
Demographic Breakdown of population in Brattleboro



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. United States Census Bureau. State & County QuickFacts. quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/50/5007975.html. See appendix E for full data collection.

Figure 3
Demographic breakdown of the population in Vermont



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. United States Census Bureau. State & County QuickFacts. quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/5000.html. See appendix F for full data collection.













It should be noted that the pool of participants for Morningside was small but had a larger group been pooled the numbers from figure 1 would have been around the same as the numbers from figures 2 and 3. In keeping with the consent form signed by each interviewed participant, their names were not used in order to keep their anonymity and a P (participant) with a number after it was used in its place. If a participant referred to an individual by name a Mr. or Ms. with a letter after it was used for anonymity purposes. A copy of both the interview questions and the consent form can be found in Appendices C and D.

Each interview was transcribed and coded in order to better understand and to properly analyze the data. Each interview question was assigned the letter 'I', which represented the interviewer and a number after it which corresponded to the interview question being asked. In some cases letters were assigned after the letter 'I' to correspond to the questions about definitions or amounts received from services. An 'R' was assigned to the responses given by the interviewees, along with either a letter or number after it, which followed suit with the interview questions. Each line of the responses given by the interviewee was numbered in order to easily

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cross reference it. Asterisks were assigned to answers given to a question but were not part of the original question and located in other areas of the interview. In other words if the interviewee was asked what services they have accessed and they answered the question directly an asterisk was not assigned, but if later in the interview they were talking about an accessed service that they did not mention when the question was originally asked it was assigned an asterisk. Lower case letters were also assigned and placed above a word or phrase if more than one answer to a given category was found in the same line. Colors were also assigned to each category and words or phrases belonging to a specific category were highlighted to the corresponding color. An explanation of what the letters and colors represented is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4
Interview Coding Key

| | |
|---|--|
| I = Interviewer | |
| R = Interviewee response | |
| # = A specific number after 'I' or 'R' represents the interview question | |
| Letter = A letter after 'I' or an 'R' represents one of the following: | |
| AR = Amount received from Reach Up | AF = Amount received from food stamps |
| AVH = Amount of state health insurance (VHAP) | DR = Definition of Reach Up |
| DF = Definition of food stamps | DVH = Definition of state health insurance |
| DD = Definition of Drop-In-Center | DL = Definition of LNA |
| DVR = Definition of Vocational Rehabilitation (VocRehab) | |
| * = represents a word or phrase belonging to a category but the response was found elsewhere in the interview and not at the time the question was answered | |
| a,b,c = lower case letters found above words in the interview represent multiple answers to the one category can be found on the same line | |
|  = Story |  = Solutions for Brattleboro services |
|  = Amount of time on services |  = Difficulties with Brattleboro services |
|  = Difficulties with receiving services |  = Benefits with Brattleboro services |
|  = Amount received from services |  = Definition of poor/poverty |
|  = Services accessed in Brattleboro |  = Definition of services accessed |
|  = Benefits with receiving services |  = Age of participants |

Source: Complete Coded Interviews.

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As a result of coding, four primary categories came to light: services, Brattleboro, poor/poverty, and personal. After categorizing the interviews and reading through them it became apparent that the topics were too broad and sub-categories had to be created for services, Brattleboro, and personal. The interviews were repeatedly scrutinized to make sure the categories and sub-categories fit the interviews and were in line with the primary and secondary questions being asked.

Table 1: Services – Coded

| SERVICES | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Accessed | Amount Received | Length of Time | Benefits | Difficulties | Definitions |
| Interview #1 | R3: 30 a,b,c; 31a,b; 37 a,b,c,d, R6: 64 *,** | RAR: 25 RAF: 100 RDVH: 110* | R2: 19 | R2b: 33 a,b R3a: 39 a,b; 40 RDF: 101 | R2a: 21, 22, 23, 28 R2b: 34 R3a: 40, 41, 44 R7: 78 R8: 83, 84, 86, 87 | RDR: 93, 94 a,b,c; 95 RDF: 101, 102 a,b; 103 RDVH: 108, 110, 112 a,b; 113 |
| Interview #2 | R3: 29 a,b,c,d | RAF: 88 | R2: 15 | R2a: 20 a,b R2b: 22 a,b; 24 a,b; 25 R3a: 35 a,b,c RDVH: 90, 92 | R2a: 19 R2b: 24 R5: 45 a,b | RDVH: 90, 91 a,b,c,d |
| Interview #3 | R1: 16*, 18* R3: 33 a,b,c,d 48* | RAR: 50 RAF: 52 RAVH: 54 a,b,c | R2: 21 a,b; 22 a,b; 24, 26 | R2a: 28 a,b R2b: a,b R3a: 37 | R2a: 28 a,b; 29 a,b R3a: 37 R5: 64 *,**,***; 65 *,**,***; 70 *,**, 71*, 74*, 75 *,**,***; 76 *,**,*** | RDR: 94 RDF: 43 RDD: 45, 46 a,b,c |
| Interview #4 | R1: 16* R2: 20* R3: 47 a,b R3a: 99* | R2: 19, 20 | R2b: 23, 27 | R2b: 39 a,b,c; 40 RDVR: 58, 58 R3a: 61-62 | R2a: 33 a,b,c 34 a,b,c; 37 a,b,c R3a: 61 a,b | RDR: 49 a,b,c; 50 a,b,c 51 a,b,c; 52 RDVR: 54, 57 |
| Interview #5 | R2: 18*, 19* R3: 29 a,b; 30 R5: 50* | RAF: 82 | R2: 18, 19 a,b | R2b: 26 a,b,c 27 R3a: 38 R4: 107 | R2a: 23 a,b,c 24 a,b,c R3a: 35 a,b; 36, 38 a,b; 93, 94 R4: 46, 47 a,b,c; 106, 106 a,b RAF: 84 a,b RDR: 88 a,b | RDD: 68 a,b,c; 69, 70 a,b; 71 a,b RDVR: 74 a,b; 75, 76 a,b,c; 77 RDR: a,b,c; 87 a,b,c |
| Interview #6 | RAR: 57,58 R3: 67, 69, 75, 92, 93 R4: 111* R6: 140* | RAR: 58 RAF: 60 a,b | R2: 33 a,b,c | R2b: 46 a,b,c 47 a,b,c; 48, 49 a,b; 50 a,b 51 a,b; 53 a,b,c R3: 71, 72 a,b,c; 73 a,b,c; 74, 76, 77 a,b,c; 78, 79 a,b; 80 a,b,c; 81 a,b,c,d R3a: 99a,b; 100 a,b,c; 101 | R2a: 39 a,b; 40 a,b; 41 a,b,c,d; 42, 43 a,b R3a: 99 | RDL: 159 RDR: 171 a,b; 172, 176 a,b; 177 RDVR: 179, 180 a,b |
| Interview #7 | R3: 28 a,b,c | RAF: 38 | R2: 16 a,b; 17 | R2a: 20 R2b: 25 a,b; 26 a,b,c R3a: 40 a,b,c; 41 a,b; 42, 43 | R2a: 20 a,b,c; 21 a,b R3a: 40 | RDVH: 30 a,b,c,d; 31 RDHCRS: 33 a,b,c; 34 a,b; 35 a,b,c |
| Interview #8 | R3: 32 a,b | RAF: 37 | R2: 19 a,b | R2b: 28 a,b,c; 29 a,b; 30 a,b,c R3a: 42 a,b; 43, 44 a,b,c,d; 46 a,b | R2a: 18 a,b; 19 R3a: 46 a,b,c; 47 a,b,c; 48 a,b | RDF: 33 a,b,c; 34 RDVH: 36 a,b; 37 a,b,c,d |

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The services sub-categories were broken down into: services accessed, the monthly amount they received, the length of time participants were on them, the benefits of receiving services, the difficulties with receiving services and definitions/explanations of what the services/programs were that they received. Table 1(see previous page) illustrates the findings through numerical coding.

Table 2: Personal - coded

| PERSONAL | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Story | Age |
| Interview #1 | R1: 12, 14 a,b; 15 a,b,c R8: 82* | R9: 115, 117, 119 |
| Interview #2 | R1: 8 a,b,c; 9 a,b; 11, 13 | R9: 86 |
| Interview #3 | R1: 9 a,b; 10, 12, 14, 16 | R9: 93, 98 |
| Interview #4 | R1: 11, 12 a,b,c,d,e; 13 a,b,c; 14, 16, 93 | R9: 89 |
| Interview #5 | R1: 12 a,b,c; 13, 15 | R9: 96 |
| Interview #6 | R1: 6, 7, 8, 9 a,b; 10 a,b; 11 a,b; 12 a,b; 13 a,b; 14 a,b; 17, 21 a,b,c,d.; 22 a,b; 23, 24 a,b,c; 25 a,b,c; 26 a,b; 29 a,b; 30 a,b,c | R9b: 206, 208 |
| Interview #7 | R1: 11 a,b,c; 12, 13 a,b | R9: 100 |
| Interview #8 | R1: 10 a,b; 14 a,b; 15 | R9: 97 |

Two sub-categories: story- which described how the interviewees came to live at Morningside Shelter, and age- which asked their age and the ages of those who stayed with them at the Shelter were a result from the personal category. All of the numerical findings can be found in Table 2.

Source: Complete Coded Interviews.

Poverty/Poor did not need a sub-category because it simply asked interviewees to give their definition of what poor/living in poverty meant to them. The findings may be found in Table 3.

Brattleboro's sub-categories:

benefits, difficulties, and solutions looked at the services in regards to Brattleboro, VT. The interviewees were asked what the benefits of the services in Brattleboro were, if they had any difficulties and if so what where they and what would they recommend as possible solutions.

Table 4 (see below) illustrates the coded information.

Table 3: Poverty/Poor - coded

| | Definition |
|---------------------|---|
| Interview #1 | R8: 80, 81 a,b; 88, 89, 90 a,b |
| Interview #2 | R8: 82 a,b,c,d; 83 |
| Interview #3 | R8: 85 a,b; 87 a,b; 88, 89 a,b; 90 a,b,c,d,e,f |
| Interview #4 | R8: 86 a,b,c; 87 a,b |
| Interview #5 | R8: 65 |
| Interview #6 | R8: 193 a,b; 194 a,b,c; 195 a,b,c,d,e; 197 a,b,c; 198, 202 a,b; 203 a,b; 204 a,b |
| Interview #7 | R8: 95, 96, 97a,b,c |
| Interview #8 | R8: 89 a,b,c; 90a,b; 91 a,b,c |

Source: Complete Coded Interviews.

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Table 4: Brattleboro - coded

| BRATTLEBORO | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|--|
| | Benefits | Difficulties | Solutions |
| Interview #1 | R5: 59, 60, 61 R6: 63 a,b R7: 71, 76 a,b; 77 a,b | R4: 56 | R4: 47, 48, 49, 50, 55 a,b |
| Interview #2 | R6: 52 R7: 60, 61 a,b; 62 a,b; | R5: 47, 48, 49 R6: 52, 53 a,b 54 a,b; 55, 56 a,b R7: 67, 68 a,b; 69 a,b,c | R4: 38 a,b; 41, 44 a,b R5: 47, 49 a,b R7: 69-70, 72 a,b; 73 a,b; 74 |
| Interview #3 | R5: 62 R3a: 69 a,b,c R6: 78 a,b R7: 81 a,b; 82 a,b; 83 | R5: 62 R6: 78 | R4: 57 a,b; 58 a,b; 59 a,b; 60 a,b |
| Interview #4 | RDVR: 55, 58 R6: 77 a,b; 78 a,b; 79 a,b; 80 R3a: 97, 98 | R5: 74, 75 R3a: 98 | R5: 74, 75 |
| Interview #5 | R6: 54 a,b; 56 R7: 59 a,b; 60 a,b-61; 63 a,b,c,d R3a: 93 | R4: 43, 44 a,b; 45, 46 R6: 55, 56 | R4: 42 a,b,c; 47, 48 a,b,c R5: 50 a,b,c; 51-52 |
| Interview #6 | R4: 104 a,b; 105, 106 a,b,c; 107 a,b,c-108 R6: 139 a,b; 141 R7: 147 | R5: 132 R6: 140 a,b; 141 | R5: 123 a,b; 124 a,b; 129 |
| Interview #7 | R5: 65 a,b,c R6: 75 a,b; 76 a,b,c; 77, 78 a,b | R4: 48 a,b; 49 a,b; 50 a,b,c; 53 a,b; 55 a,b,c R5: 66 a,b,c R7: 78 a,b; 79 a,b,c | R7: 90 a,b,c |
| Interview #8 | R6: 70 a,b; 71 a,b,c; 72 a,b; 73 R7: 80 a,b,c; 81, 83 | R5: 63 a,b,c; 65, 67 a,b,c,d R6: 70, 72 a,b | R5: 64 a,b; 66 a,b,c |

Source: Complete Coded Interviews.

The biggest limitation to conducting this research was interviewing current/former residents of Morningside Shelter. Working there proved to have its advantages as well as disadvantages. Earning their trust and building a relationship with the interviewees was a definite advantage because I worked with them and therefore it created a place and a space for it to happen a lot quicker. However the Shelter has a high turnover rate and it would always take a few months to reach a point of mutual trust and often times many of the individuals would move on or be asked to leave and so the process would begin again.

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When interviewing the individuals I knew their back story and everything they were working on at the time of the interviews and so when it came to their responses I knew when they were leaving something out, but I could not comment on it. It was difficult to think of follow up questions to their responses for the same reason. When certain questions came up and they did not answer them how I assumed they would have, that too proved to be difficult. An example would be if they said everything was good in their life and there was nothing to “complain” about and yet I knew what their day had been like or even their week and the trials and tribulations they had experienced.

Most of the interviewees were nervous once the tape recorder was on and many wanted to make sure they answered the questions correctly and would look to me for guidance, in response I sat there with a blank face or I would say okay and move the interview along. Some of the interviewees proved to be less prolific on the recordings than I expected them to be because of the one on one case management to which I was accustomed.

Some of the interviewees felt a few of the questions were asked twice, and in some ways they were in order to garner different information. Even with the interviewees feeling that way different information was provided for each question, and therefore the purpose of asking them in slightly different ways proved to be beneficial.

Perhaps a limitation that ran parallel to that was when they were asked about the benefits and difficulties of services accessed. Many were most likely answering them in relation to Brattleboro services as opposed to national services on a whole. An example was when providing information about how Brattleboro could make improvements a few individuals discussed making changes to the amount of food stamps or what should be made available

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through food stamps but changes such as those cannot be made on a local level. However, valuable information was gathered none the less.

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Presentation and Analysis of Data

There is no doubt the United States social service system is a large, expensive, complicated and intricate web of programs set up to assist those living in poverty. According to the testimony of Robert Rector, before the Committee on the Budget of the United States House of Representatives, the federal and state government as well as independent state programs paid \$927 billion on means-tested welfare programs in FY2011 (Rector, 2012). In fact it is so intricate there does not seem to be a consensus on how to correctly categorize the exact number of programs the government funds and therefore many different numbers are given. According to an article in Forbes, Peter Ferrara, a contributor, wrote that there were “185 federal means tested welfare programs” (Ferrara, 2011). While Daniel Halper, who blogs for The Weekly Standard, stated there were “nearly 80 different overlapping federal means-tested welfare programs” (Halper, 2012). Michael Tanner, who wrote a piece for POLITICO, wrote “the Federal government alone currently funds and operates 126 different welfare or anti-poverty programs” (Tanner, 2012). And finally Rector said “the means-tested welfare system consists of 79 federal programs” (Rector 2012). As noted there are anywhere from 79 to 185 federal means tested welfare programs in the United States, and in Vermont, according to the Agency of Human Services (AHS) website there are about 95 programs listed that are offered within and outside of AHS. However they do not specify which ones are means tested welfare programs (<http://humanservices.vermont.gov/services/services/links-to-service>).

For many participants of the system are viewed as “users” and “abusers” who are “lazy” and just want to live off of government handouts. The arguments have been made for and against the system since its inception. The reality is that many face hurdles in their daily lives that prevent them from completely freeing themselves of the welfare nightmare. During the

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interviews the participants were asked to tell their story of how they ended up at Morningside Shelter (MS) and those who worked within the system were asked to describe the hurdles their

Figure 5
Story of participants' journey to Morningside Shelter

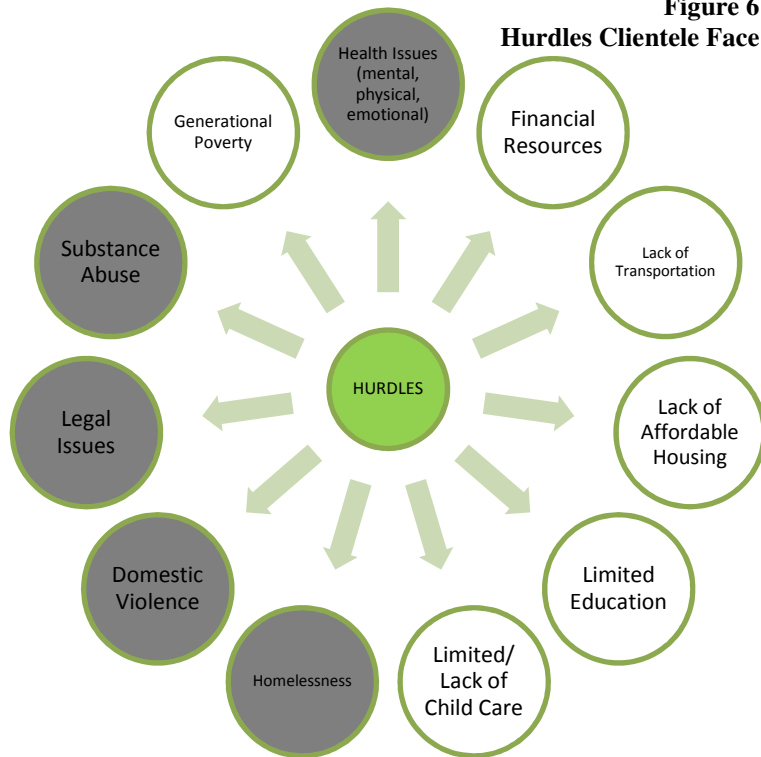


Source: Information from coded interviews.

clients faced. What may seem like very different questions ended up producing very similar answers, as illustrated in figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 depicts the responses from the interviewees and figure 6 depicts the responses from those working within the system. The circles shaded in both figures represent identical answers. Although the interviewees did not mention all of the hurdles mentioned in figure 2, they have all

experienced at least 10 out of the 11 hurdles, which in the end contributed to their living at Morningside. Many of the hurdles faced by clients also represent many of the challenges faced within the current services in Brattleboro.

Figure 6
Hurdles Clientele Face



Source: Information from questionnaires.

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It is worth noting that Vermont is a very generous state and it is much easier to access services in Vermont than it is in many other states. Vermont's TANF benefits measured at 44 percent of poverty which is relatively high compared with Mississippi's 11 percent of poverty. It should also be noted no state reached above 50 percent of poverty and only seven reached above 40% (Edelman, 2012). SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) believed "VT is as liberal as it can be in terms of social services...Vermont does really well taking care of those less fortunate." Brattleboro benefits from Vermont's liberal outlook on social services. SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) agreed that because Brattleboro's population was smaller it was easier to know who to contact at various agencies to help clients get connected. She emphasized the size of the population as being key to accessibility, "again, due to the size of the population, services are sometimes able to be accessed more quickly than in more populated areas" (SP7, questionnaire, June 21, 2011). Even with easier access and familiarity among workers within the many services the gap within the social service system is very apparent in Brattleboro and therefore it is difficult to meet the needs of those most vulnerable.

The largest need echoed by both sets of participants was the lack/gap in affordable housing. Five of the eight individuals working for social services directly mentioned housing as a gap and seven of the eight interviewees mentioned housing or lack of shelter as a need for Brattleboro. When asked about the gaps in assistance SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) answered "housing, housing, housing." SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) said "there is a need for affordable housing for our clients." According to SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) "there is a huge gap in affordable housing in the area." She also discussed how her clients looked for affordable housing and then discovered they would have to live in either substandard situations or be in a constant state of transition. SP6 (questionnaire, August 17, 2011) believed there was a

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gap in “affordable, supported housing options.” Finally SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) echoed what her colleagues said but added supportive/transitional housing. If individuals working within the system are frustrated by the lack of one of the basic human needs it is no wonder those who are in need of the housing feel defeated and hopeless. P3 (personal communication, August 9, 2011) was on an apartment search for a while and believed more housing needed to be found or that housing should be built on some of the lands because there are too many people and not enough places to live.

Federal budget cuts to social programs greatly impact budgets on a state level. When cuts are made at the federal level it usually means cuts are made at the state/local level. Six of the individuals who worked within the social service system commented on budget cuts, underfunding/limited funding as one of the challenges of the United States/Brattleboro social service system. SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) said “...I supposed everyone is being drained by budget cuts...” and SP8 (questionnaire, May 6, 2011) said “the challenges...are the constant budget cuts.” One of the main areas in which this can be felt is with the various housing authorities/programs in Vermont. The cut backs play an important role in the overwhelming need for housing. Currently the Vermont State Housing Authority’s waitlist is closed. One just needs to visit their website and click on the application for rental assistance link, once there you are met with a public notice stating it will close at 4:30 pm on September 30, 2010. There were a few exceptions but even then there were very specific criteria to get on a very long waitlist for the available vouchers (<https://www.waitlistcheck.com/application/form.php?ID=1682-VT901>). Although the Brattleboro Housing Authority’s wait list was not closed, one would have to wait years for their name to be pulled up and then it could still be months until they were assigned housing (<https://brattleborohousingauthority.tenmast.com/applybrattleborohousingauthority/>).

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The closed wait lists and multi-year wait lists are a result of federal cut backs and in an interview with P6 (personal communication, June 22, 2011) she discussed one of the hurdles she and others who are in her situation experienced due to being on or trying to get on Section 8:

More time to be able to get on Section 8 or any of the housing programs that they have. It's like...even though it's a small town you still have people who need homes and there's homes out there but you have to get the community to realize that just because someone's on Section 8 or whatever the other housing program is called people need to know that it's okay to rent to people because not everybody is dirty. I mean I know that's what a lot of people think. "Oh you're on Section, you're lazy, you're dirty" and that's not true. Not everybody is and people need to be aware that they can open up their homes and their apartments to people that really need them. (P6, personal communication, June 22, 2011)

Due to the lack of affordable housing in the area many people try to come up with their own solutions to the problem. Some couch surf, others sleep in their cars and some try to find some sort of outside shelter. SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) noted that her clients doubled up on housing to meet their need. This can be dangerous because often times the doubling up may occur with people who are on Section 8 or in a housing program and there are very strict rules that do not allow for visits to last longer than two weeks. In the end families and friends who allow people to stay with them jeopardize their own housing situation and often become homeless themselves.

As reported housing is a major need in Brattleboro and yet it only has three shelters of which two of those are operational year round. Morningside Shelter is the only shelter in southeastern Vermont which offers their services to families and individuals. There is an overflow shelter, which is a seasonal shelter, and usually runs from November to March/April. And finally there is a shelter for victims of domestic violence run by the Women's Freedom Center. SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) noted people came to Brattleboro because of the overflow shelter, which created a need for more space. P4 (personal communication, May 26,

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2011) talked about building a “big homeless building” because there was nowhere to put the many homeless people of Brattleboro. P2 (personal communication, August 10, 2011) discussed the waiting list:

I mean look at the waiting list for Morningside. You got that waiting list and you got people further down on that list really needing someplace to go but they don't have anywhere to go. Open another shelter; it will offer more beds for people. (P2, personal communication, August 10, 2011)

P3 (personal communication, June 7, 2011) stated it best when she simply said “I mean why is there just one shelter?”

Luckily Vermont has a very easily accessible state health care plan and many find they are fortunate to have it because they understand the benefits it creates for them. In the case with Brattleboro there are two main issues. The first is the judgment and care received by those who are on state health insurance. The Brattleboro ER has a notorious reputation for their mistreatment of individuals who are on state health insurance. The second issue is finding the resources in Brattleboro who will accept it. Currently there are a limited number of primary care offices that accept VHAP, Vermont's health care plan. There is also a lack of psychiatrists in the community as noted by SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) and SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) with the latter further discussing that if there were psychiatrists willing to take on a new patient there could be a two month waitlist. As a result of the void in accessible health care: medical, emotional, and physical self medicating has proven to be a remedy for many individuals. Many workers found that their clients self medicate in order to deal with their lives. Four of the eight individuals who work in social services discussed the issue of self medication. SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011), SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011), SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) and SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) all mentioned self medication. The latter detailed the struggle further:

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Many seek help from the medical community and end up taking many medications that they often have little understanding regarding the long term consequences and don't receive the additional education they need to make the best use of their medical treatment. (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011)

She also went on to say she would like to see "more teaching around managing health care, particularly medications" (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011).

Transportation or lack thereof is also a major issue. While there are programs in place to assist people in buying personal transportation not everyone is qualified or at the point in their welfare journey to take advantage of the programs. The transportation being referred to is not a direct service but more of an indirect service that plays a key role in providing the ability for people to access the services in place and the services they need. Because Brattleboro is a small rural community there is a void in accessible transportation. Brattleboro does have a bus system that is cheap to access and provides a means of access to some of the surrounding towns, but unlike more populated communities the hours of operation are limited and there is a large gap of time between pickups at stops. In other words the bus does not run past each stop every 20-30 minutes. Some individuals have appointments, most often medically/mentally related, in other towns or even in New Hampshire because Brattleboro does not have the services accessible to them. This can be very difficult for someone without transportation and who cannot use the bus system because it does not run to those towns from Brattleboro or New Hampshire. They could call a taxi, but taxi service is very expensive and unless you have Medicaid and can receive a medical ride they struggle to make their appointments. SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) admittedly agreed the bus system was okay, but went on further to say that taxis were limited and expensive and felt as though better transportation would be helpful to her clients. They can ask friends and family, but far

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too often that falls through and the appointment must be re-scheduled, which in turn adds to the vicious cycle they are in. Unfortunately sometimes people only know a couple of people with transportation and they are so taxed running everyone else around that they forget to take their needs into consideration and miss their appointments. The lack of transportation is not a phenomenon to just Brattleboro. It, unfortunately, is a reality in many rural communities.

Since the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 there is a work requirement that they must fulfill in order for many to receive services. In a rural community like Brattleboro, it can prove to be more difficult than one might think. As the statistics show, the growing population of homeless individuals and those living in poverty are female-headed families. As of 2010 the percentage of poor children under the age of eighteen who lived in female-headed families was 55 percent (Edelman, 2012). And in Vermont according to The Vermont Women's Fund 61% of families in poverty were headed by females (<http://www.vermontwomensfund.org/who-we-are/>). In order for them to receive the benefits they must find work but often times have young children that are not old enough for school and that definitely cannot be left unattended. Child care is expensive and it is difficult to find full-time employment that offers a livable wage. It is a vicious cycle that many fall into because if they cannot afford child care they cannot go to work. If they are deemed eligible to work they could lose their benefits. If they are working they could also lose their benefits because they may end up making too much to receive them but their employment does not pay them a livable wage. There are programs set up that offer income based vouchers for child care but as with most of the services the wait list can be very long. In Brattleboro there is a lack of child care and child care options as mentioned

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by SP2 (questionnaire, August 17, 2011) and SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011).

According to SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) her clients would try to come up with solutions by trading child care with friends and families. She pointed out that sometimes it was the best possible solution and sometimes it created chaos for the children. She also believed more alternative hours in child care availability was needed and would go a long way to help her clients. An example she gave was with her clients working in LNA [Licensed Nursing Assistant]. “You cannot find childcare before 7 a.m. and LNA all starts at 7” (SP1, questionnaire, May 12, 2011).

Eligibility for child care is not the only aspect of the services where people get caught in the cycle. P4 (personal communication, May 26, 2011) talked about being on and off services for eight years. Having children and not being able to work led her to be on the services and then finding work led her to be off of them. Her youngest two children were three and 14 at the time of the interview. When discussing being on the services she had this to say:

They help, but they don't help as much cause when you have kids I think it should be more than it is but when you're working you can't... You get more when you're not than when you are, you get less. (P4, personal communication, May 26, 2011)

Many might view this as the purpose of services, but at the time of the interview she was working a full time job, received one dollar in assistance from Reach-Up, 16 dollars for food stamps and had to pay a premium to receive VHAP. Because of her job she would be getting insurance through them, but that would cost more than what she had to pay for VHAP rendering it more difficult to make ends meet. Even with a full-time job P4 was eligible for a housing voucher, which meant her job did not provide her with a livable income and yet her services were drastically cut. SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) stated it this way:

Presently welfare reform punishes people for not being able to meet the set requirements.

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It provides financial assistance that is only about 49% of need so that people are still not able to pay their bills and then requires them to accept employment that meets the hours of participation, but is not enough to live. It creates a cycle that makes people feel they are always treading water and barely getting by. This becomes exhausting for most and leads to many clients just giving up. (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011)

Both parties are frustrated with the system. It may seem like those who work in it are more frustrated than those who are participants in it but the reality is participants have become mechanized deep within its trenches. They don't have time to think about the injustices. They feel them but they must continue to do what is demanded of them in order to be able to attain the ever elusive "American dream." They tell their painful heart wrenching stories over and over and over again. The emotion is gone from them; they have been drained from all feeling, they are numb to it all. It is not by choice that they have become a shell of their former selves, it is because the system has told them it must be this way if their needs are to be met. P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011) discussed that exact point when she talked about the difficulties of receiving services. She said "reporting every detail of like what's going on in my life...telling them your story a thousand times" (P6, personal communication, June 7, 2011). She said it with such normalcy and matter-of-fact tone as if everyone has to go through life telling their story repeatedly. "The process of going to multiple service providers and having to tell a story over and over can feel demeaning and create another barrier" (SP6, questionnaire, May 4, 2011). Many of them try to do what is required of them while holding on to whatever dignity they have left yet feeling that they are a slave to the system. Workers in the system can see the toll it is taking on their clients, they can see the miles of hurdles laid out before their clients and they want to be able to help them overcome those hurdles, but their hands are tied by what the Government dictates. "Clients begin to feel that even when they are doing all of the "right"

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things, they are still not able to move forward. They begin to feel “stuck” or “trapped” (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011).

When interviewing recipients of services they all expressed how the services helped them. Some even did not want to say too many negative things about it because they realized that when they were able to access the resources it helped them. P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011) even mentioned that everything she had was because of the State and she was extremely grateful, but as previously stated she talked about the struggles of having to tell her story repeatedly in order to receive the assistance. P7 (personal communication, May 13, 2012) discussed how much VHAP meant to her. “It means a lot to me because of my illnesses and I couldn’t afford my medical care without it” (P7, personal communication, May 13, 2012). P2 (personal communication, August 10, 2011) discussed how he benefited from food stamps and state health insurance. “It [state health insurance] helps me afford things I really can’t get...they help” (P2, personal communication, August 10, 2011). However, he also discussed the need for more food stamps for families who really cannot afford anything and noted that just because people were employed it did not mean they received enough money. In 2009 there were 2 million families, roughly 6 million people, whose sole source of income were food stamps and by the fall of 2011 close to 46 million in total were receiving food stamps (not necessarily as their sole source of income) (Edelman, 2012). In March 2012 Vermont had 36,520 households receiving food stamp benefits, which translated to 82,179 recipients. The state paid out \$9,598,366 for that month (<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/esd/stats/3SquaresVT%20Participation%20Report%20%28PET%29.pdf>). That same month, the district of Brattleboro had 3,104 households receiving food stamp benefits, which equaled 5,829 recipients and the state paid \$715,100 for the month

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(<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/esd/stats/3SqVT%20District.pdf>). P1 (personal communication, September 28, 2011) loved food stamps. They were her favorite, but felt diapers and baby items should have been added to them. P7 (personal communication, May 13, 2012) appreciated food stamps when she was eligible for them because with her celiac disease they helped her afford the appropriate foods to eat correctly. When she does not have them she cannot afford the proper food and she often becomes sick and is in poor health. P3 (personal communication, May 26, 2011), who came from another state was able to compare accessing services in both communities. “Like seriously some places don’t even have what you guys have here. Like in Connecticut it’s not like that...they don’t care anymore. The little things they have they take away...Vermont really helps you. Vermont is a really generous state...” (P3, personal communication, May 26, 2011). And yet she ended up at MS because nothing else worked out for her.

In the quiet of the moment when the tape recorder was ticking away and the participants were enveloped in a sense of calm because their tasks in trying to gain and maintain assistance were finished for the day, they were unable to fully articulate the struggles they experienced on a daily basis. As previously mentioned they were appreciative of the services they received and realized that without them they would be struggling even more. What they did not mention was the daily toll it takes on them. Workers within the social service system see it and constantly feel it from their clients. It was well articulated when a respondent simply said:

Even with all of the assistance available, I believe it is a daunting task for many clients in navigating all of the various systems and requirements. Many clients feel that receiving assistance often becomes a full time job with so many appointments and requirements. (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011)

One of the biggest ways clients felt it to be a daunting task was the modernization that took place with Economic Services (ESD), which is the gateway to accessing food stamps,

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healthcare, Reach Up and many other services. In 2007 the state wanted to take advantage of new, state-of-the-art technologies and national best practices to boost productivity, enhance client service, increase benefit access, and improve staff satisfaction through modernizing the way they delivered their services. They did so in four ways: a centralized phone-based service center, an interactive website, a centralized place to receive and process the documents, and partnering with community organizations to assist people in filling out applications and keeping their benefits (http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/about_us). Since its inception it has only caused strife, headaches, anxiety and a loss of benefits. SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) discussed it as being really cumbersome and that it took her clients longer to receive benefits. When asked to elaborate on the modernization process she talked about it being a centralized system:

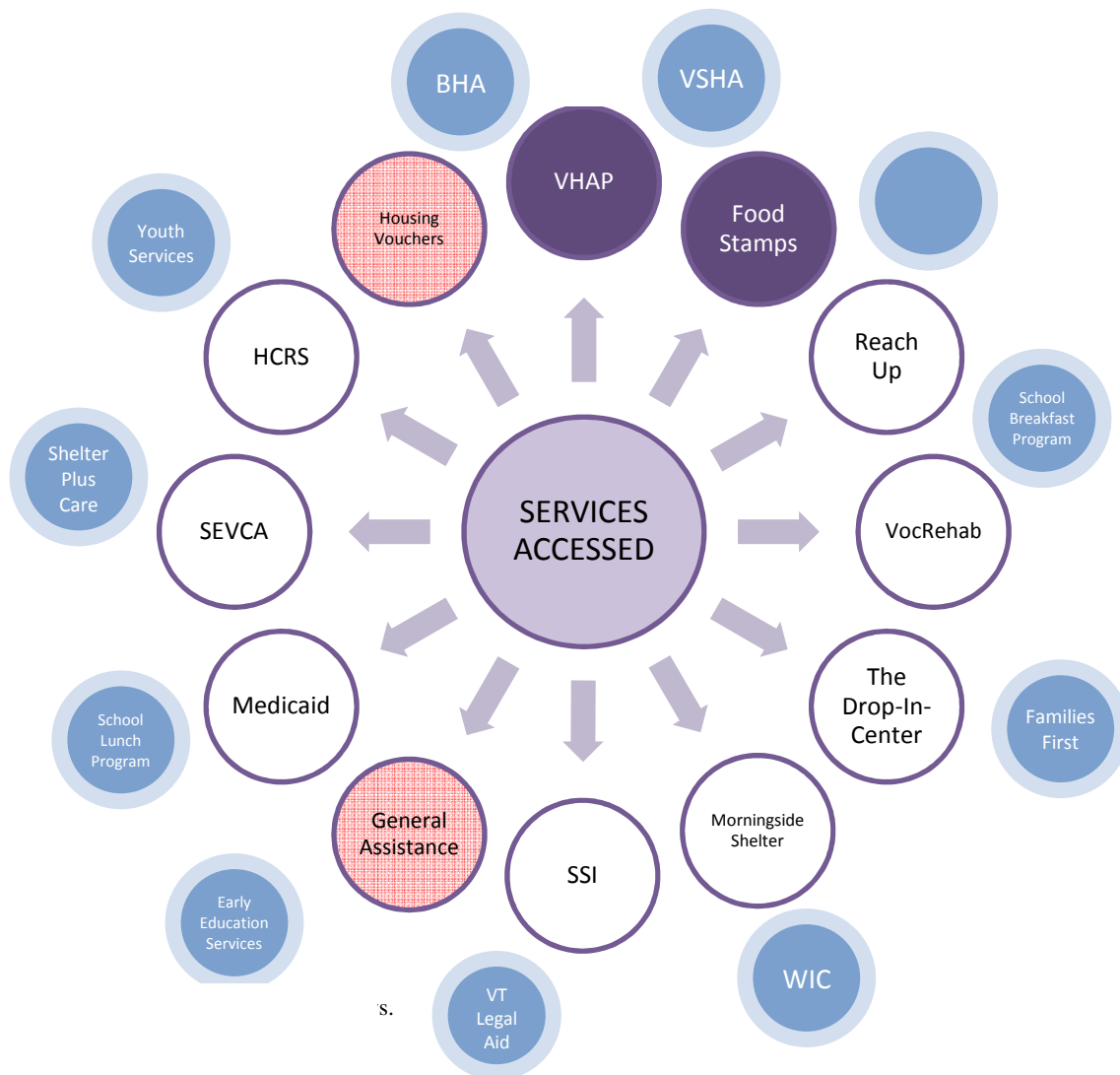
When an individual applied for services their application went to Waterbury, VT, where the main state office was located. They had a computerized system where each application received was in turn scanned. The next available social worker would process the application. Meaning when a client called with questions they would have to wait 20-30 minutes at minimum to even speak to anyone. They had an 800 number to call with a very large daunting menu. Many clients would hang up because they did not understand the options or at that point did not have the patience to wade through all of the information. Each time a client called in about their case they would get a different person on the phone that would look up their case on the computer. The worker did not know who the client was, they were not familiar with the resources located in the town in which the client lived and they had never met the client. Those who assisted their clients by calling Economic Services ran into similar issues of having to wait on the phone for an unspecified amount of time and navigate the tedious menu. There were many complaints from both clients and their workers. (SP4, questionnaire, May 15, 2011)¹

SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) believed it would be beneficial for ESD to allow people to talk to their benefit providers again, while SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) suggested “getting rid of systems such as modernization that remove the human element from the process of trying to get assistance.”

¹ Since the questionnaire took place Economic Services is going to be getting rid of modernization and going back to local offices with case workers being assigned to individuals. The reasoning is because of Tropical Storm Irene. She washed away the state building and the workers had to relocate proving the modernization system difficult. At the time of this writing, October 18, 2012, the date of reversal is unknown.

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Another way to explain why it may seem as though people have difficulty explaining their struggles is illustrated in figure 7 where it shows the services accessed by the participants of the interviews. The circles shaded in purple represent the services accessed by all participants, the pink circles represent services accessed by the participants but were not mentioned until later in the interview and they were not mentioned when directly asked about what services they had accessed. The remaining large circles represent what some of them said when asked about services accessed or they appeared at different times in the interview. The small blue circles surrounding the larger ones represent the services they have accessed, but were never mentioned during their interviews.



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There are two assumptions that can be made from figure 7. The first is that Food Stamps, and VHAP (Reach Up was mentioned by the mothers because it is for families with children, the individuals who were single did not mention Reach Up) were mentioned by everyone because they are direct services that are replenished monthly, they utilize them daily and they all have a monetary value attached to them although VHAP's monetary value most often is \$0, which is the appropriate value. The second assumption is that unless it is a constant direct service that is utilized daily they are unaware of or they do not think about all the assistance they receive or are eligible for due to the intricately fragmented system. When P1 (personal communication, September 28, 2011) was asked why she did not mention some of the services she accessed like Youth Services she stated "oh yeah I forgot about that. I guess I don't really think of it that way and the funny thing is I just talked to my case worker before this interview began." "The services that are available for clients are sometimes not immediately apparent and must be accessed through a fragmented system" (SP6, questionnaire, May 4, 2011).

One of the largest difficulties workers faced with their organizations was the fragmentation of the system as a whole. SP6 (questionnaire, May 4, 2011) saw fragmentation as the biggest challenge for the Brattleboro social service system for everyone involved. "I feel it for people who need to access services and for people who are trying to provide services." This is not just an issue for Brattleboro. "Even at the federal level, financial systems and services are fragmented in ways that make the system function less effectively for people who are accessing it" (SP6, questionnaire, May 4, 2011). SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011) also discussed the issues of the health and social service system being largely fragmented stating "people without financial and /or family resources are often left to try and navigate a highly confusing and inefficient set of systems by themselves." P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011)

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acknowledged there are resources available and that anything that is needed is available in Brattleboro but at the same time she said “you got to know the right people and the right places to go and have the sources...You just gotta know where to go.” P7 (personal communication, May 13, 2012) discussed the struggles with first accessing the services. She talked about not knowing all of the services available and where to go to access them. And therein lies the issue with the fragmented system. Unless an individual knows where to go and with whom they should speak their needs are not being met. SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) discussed the issues of trying to navigate the broken system and trying to meet clients’ needs within the systems that are not designed to meet those needs. They end up bouncing from one agency to the next with growing frustration and need assistance to help them navigate the many systems.

As previously mentioned workers within the social service system have also had to deal with limited resources and budget cuts which affect their ability to assist their clients to navigate the systems. SP8 (questionnaire, May 6, 2011) believed many of the struggles faced by the social service system were the constant budget cuts. That fact was also reiterated by SP2 (questionnaire, August 17, 2011) and SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011). Brattleboro has many organizations working on the same issues, competing for the same piles of money, but the entire system is underfunded. State jobs are continually being cut from programs set up to assist people dependant on the state system. This in turn creates “a void in the provision of services, in an attempt to conserve money, which creates a breakdown in communication among providers and consumers, making a complicated and untenable situation even worse” (SP7, questionnaire, June 21, 2012). SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) noted that Brattleboro was fortunate to have a wealth of resources to draw from, but also noted that too often they are attempting to draw from the same limited funds, which was echoed by her fellow colleagues.

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It is recognized by many in the field that Brattleboro is fortunate enough to have a social service system that offers programs and “that they are well connected and seem to work collaboratively” (SP8, questionnaire, May 6, 2011). Many like SP2 (questionnaire, August 17, 2011), SP6 (questionnaire, May 4, 2011), SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011), SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011) and SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) acknowledged that the people providing the services were the main benefit to Brattleboro’s social service system. They recognized the care and dedication from the providers for the people they served. Some of the recipients of the services articulated the same feeling. “Amazing case workers. Good people that really care” (P6, personal communication, June 7, 2011). “They do try and help those that need help” (P4, personal communication, May 26, 2011). “People have been very helpful very courteous trying to you know get help for me and find the help that I need...” (P6, personal communication, June 22, 2012). “I was lucky because I found a case manager who really cared and I could tell she really wanted to help me” (P8, personal communication, February 4, 2012).

It is through that dedication and care that those working within the field would like to see a better more efficient system. SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) believed new ways of delivering the existing services would be helpful. She believed the system needed to be made more accessible without clients having to meet with numerous people and completing many forms and applications. She is not the only one to have felt that way. SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011) discussed each non-profit and government agency in Brattleboro having their own system, paperwork and resources. P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011) expressed having four case workers case managing whatever she was dealing with. P6’s experience, unfortunately, is the norm. It is for that reason, among others, that SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) believed services should be coordinated. “I think agencies try and do this, but it is difficult to do

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effectively with so many social service agencies in town” (SP4, questionnaire, May 15, 2011). In line with that SP6 (questionnaire, May 4, 2011) suggested providing the services in a more coherent way:

Part of that coherence could be a prioritization of services in terms of meeting people’s needs. This might vary from person to person in terms of presenting issues. But in general, service providers could emphasize housing first, food security second, mental health...etc. (SP6, questionnaire, May 4, 2011)

SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011) discussed a local system that was consumer friendly and focused. “Ideally, we would streamline, modernize, and reform the health and social service system to make them more consumer friendly and rational with a single point of entry and simplified eligibility/application process” (SP5, questionnaire, June 13, 2011). SP8

(questionnaire, May 6, 2011) also discussed a centralized system that would include all components of a client’s needs so that they only had one place to go. SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) gave an example of a place she believed emulated some of what has been mentioned:

I love the Parks Place in Bellows Falls model. It is a community center that hosts many service providers and people are able to meet with many providers in one place. It is a part of the neighborhood and gives people the opportunity to participate in many ways. It is an opportunity to feel that you matter and have a part to play in defining your life. It teaches people to be their own advocate and allows them to feel invested in that process. It also gives people a place where they belong and have a voice in what happens there. (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011)

Case management, when it is done well, is often the link that holds people to their services. They are able to build a relationship of trust and realize if they are having problems, or are overwhelmed by all of the requirements and paperwork there is someone there who will be able to help them organize it all and help them understand what is required of them. Sometimes without case management people slip further and further away from their goals because life is steadily pulling them down and they can no longer fight it alone. SP5 (questionnaire, June 13, 2011) suggested that a system was needed for paying for professional case managers to assist

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low income individuals. Available case management is often limited and often times at the expense of the organization. It is often linked with housing vouchers and many state and government vouchers mandate case management as a requirement, but they do not pay for it. For instance Shelter Plus Care is a lifetime housing voucher that provides rental assistance to homeless individuals with disabilities. One of the requirements, in order to maintain the voucher, is that individuals must have case management. In the end, a place like Morningside Shelter that offers outside case management, case manages the individuals but is not paid for it. The burden of finding the funding is left to the organization and it is difficult to find grants that allow the funds to be appropriated to case management. This means people who are not eligible for programs that provide case management, but are in desperate need of case management because they are fighting to keep what they have and often times the final landing spot is a shelter, do not receive the help they desperately need. And if they do it is not until after they have lost everything. SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) noted financial reimbursement was needed for case management and that currently there was little funding dedicated to it, and that case management could help people use and access resources most effectively. SP6 (questionnaire, May 4, 2011) agreed additional case management would be helpful and wondered if there was a way to do it with peers. "I think that building a network amongst people who are facing similar issues would be beneficial and might enhance people's feeling of efficacy in interfacing with service providers" (SP6, questionnaire, May 4, 2011). SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) could think of three clients who were incredible case managers with incredible case management skills but because they did not have high-school diplomas they were not being paid and so they operated in an informal network. She went on to say that "we could rely more systematically on people living in poverty as resources or focal points" (SP1, questionnaire, May 12, 2011). SP7

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(questionnaire, June 21, 2011) suggested putting more effort into “mobilizing and offering opportunities for people living in poverty to directly address solutions, rather than having people not living in poverty creating solutions, imposing them, then wondering why they fail.”

SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) summed it up best when discussing the challenges of the system:

35 years ago I would have said money, but it strikes me that we have money for the things we want. Correct prioritization. We are trying to separate the deserving poor from the non-deserving poor but there is an inability to differentiate between the two groups. Just accept that poverty exists. We come up with these systems to come up with money to get it in the hands of the people who need it, but it becomes so convoluted that it doesn't end up in the hands that need it. It funds the system. If we made fewer rules than we would need fewer people and it could release an income to actually give to people living in poverty. (SP1, May 12, 2011)

Through the Lens of Sustainable Development Theories and Practices

Practices of sustainable development have been around for decades and have been used predominantly by countries in the Global North trying to aid countries in the Global South eradicate poverty and bring them into the same level playing field as the Global North. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) uses the definition of sustainable development from the Brundtland Report, which is also the most frequently quoted definition:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. (www.iisd.org/sd/)

As Brattleboro's poor is part of the world's poor it is beneficial to look at sustainable development theories through the eyes of a North American community. For this purpose dependency theory was chosen. In short it was created in the 1960s and 1970s by theorists who believed development was not occurring in what today is referred to as the Global South because

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the international system was preventing them from doing so. It was exploitative and dominant over dependents. The international system was believed to be controlled by what many refer to today as the Global North. There were three main aspects to the theory: international division of labor, class distinction, and global capitalism. International division of labor looked at the Global North as being dominant in terms of industry and technology and the Global South were resource extraction countries i.e. cheap labor and agricultural industry. Class distinction referred to the clear divide between the rich and the poor. There was an increase in top tiers own wealth and they collaborated with one another to aid in the continual flow of wealth to the top. Global capitalism distinguished banks and corporations as instruments of the rich. And the educational systems served the interests of the Global North. To sum it up they believed the entire system served the interest of the wealthy and they did not serve the interest of the developing countries. The international system did not promote equal opportunity instead it supported dominance and exploitation. In the end the system supported underdevelopment leaving the dependents at the mercy of the system (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

In the case of Brattleboro those who were residents of Morningside Shelter and those dependent on the welfare system represent the dependents who are dominated by the United States/Brattleboro social service system. One of the ways control is maintained is by adding sanctions to the relief/aid delivered. It is similar in the way aid is distributed to the Global South. The Government attaches sanctions to the aid which dictates what exactly they must do to keep receiving the aid and if they misstep they will be cut off. Like the Global South, recipients of welfare are at the mercy of the Government both at the federal and state level. P1 (personal communication, September 28, 2011) talked about being terrified of doing anything or saying

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anything wrong and getting herself and her child kicked out over something as simple as budgeting.

An example of division of labor is the “sanctions” of work requirement put on the dependents as previously noted. In order to receive benefits they must conduct a work search. If they are lucky to find work their benefits are reduced or cut all together but they are unable to maintain independence because they do not make enough to support themselves or their families. “They try to find jobs which will pay the bills, but usually can’t find work that pays a livable wage” (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011). An example that many residents of the Shelter experienced was being employed at fast food restaurants, in particular Burger King. They met the requirement of finding a job, they were only hired for part-time employment, thus Burger King did not have to pay benefits, their federal/state benefits were cut or greatly reduced and yet they could not afford to move into a place of their own because the wage was not a livable wage. This did not just affect the residents of the shelter; it affected many individuals that lived below or within the poverty line. There were many residents who found themselves at the shelter because employment opportunities were limited in Brattleboro. “You can’t get a job around this town for nothing” (P2, personal communication, August 10, 2011). The only opportunity they could find was a fast food restaurant but they were not making enough to make ends meet and so after fighting it they found themselves homeless. The fast food industry thrived off the exploitations of their employees.

Class distinction can best be illustrated through two examples: housing and predatory loan businesses. Housing, as previously mentioned, or lack thereof plays an important role in dependency. The programs set up in Brattleboro and Vermont have limited accessibility and yet those living at MS and others in the community that are precariously housed are trying to follow

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the rules set in place by the system. “They look for affordable housing and discover that they must live in either substandard situations or be continually in transitional situations” (SP3, questionnaire, May 18, 2011). If they are lucky to receive a voucher they have a certain amount of time in which to locate housing and there is a monetary range, depending on family size, of what the voucher will allow the recipients to rent an apartment. The range is understandable, if there was affordable housing in Brattleboro, but as previously stated both sets of participants talked about the lack of/need of affordable housing. The monetary range of the voucher does not coincide with the going rates for apartments in Brattleboro. Currently a two bedroom voucher runs at \$930 with everything included. Two bedroom apartments are very hard to come by in Brattleboro and if they do become available they are very expensive. Many two bedroom apartments are listed over the voucher limit and if they do run at or below the voucher limit often times not all utilities are included. Sometimes an apartment is found but it is out of reach for the client base served by MS and the social services because they require credit checks or previous land lord references and often time the clients do not have either or they have bad credit and less than positive references. Once the voucher is received there are many guidelines that they must follow in order to maintain their voucher. “Dictating to a client what they need to do to become a functioning member of society is an archaic and privileged approach. Clients should have basic needs met, like stable housing, then be assisted in meeting self-determined goals” (SP7, questionnaire, June 21, 2011).

SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) talked about ending predatory loaning and gave Rent-A-Center (RAC) as an example. Many of the clientele of those working within the Brattleboro social service system and those who resided at MS purchased furniture, electronics, appliances and computers through RAC and similar businesses. Some even had their items repossessed

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because they missed a payment or they were moving to MS. Although those types of businesses are not a part of the social service system the government and dominant culture as a whole survive off of these types of businesses which in turn survives off of exploiting those living in poverty. They make it easy for those living in poverty to be materialistically wealthy by gouging the prices of the offered merchandise and offering the ability to have it paid off in small weekly “affordable” increments. A perfect example is a flat screen television that is commercially offered everywhere. At many retailers it is sold for \$680.00, Rent-A-Center offers it for \$19.99 per week over 104 consecutive weeks. The total price paid for the same model is a whopping \$2,078.96 (<http://www6.rentacenter.com/Rent/Electronics/Televisions/Plasma-TVs/LG-60-Full-HD-1080p-Plasma-TV.html>). This way of doing business is very similar to the way the Global North sells goods to the Global South at exploitive prices. Further complicating the inequity of this system is the fact that these same goods in their raw form were extracted from the Global South.

The educational system, to say the least, is set up to be easily accessible to the middle and upper classes. It is a bi-product of global capitalism which is the third aspect of the dependency theory. According to The Vermont Women’s Fund “by 2014, 78% of jobs in Vermont will require some college or training beyond high school yet between 16-23% of Vermont girls won’t graduate with their high school class (<http://www.vermontwomensfund.org/who-we-are/>). Lack of formal education is not gender biased and is a commonality amongst those living in poverty. Three of the eight interviewees had no high school degree, three of them had received their GEDs, one received their high school diploma and received further training in LNA, and one of the interviewees had some college experience. Higher forms of education are expensive and prove to be allusive. Further training in some areas is possible but the accessibility and cost can

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still prove to be an issue. Five of the eight agency respondents believed lack of or limited education was a barrier for their clientele. SP4 (questionnaire, May 15, 2011) said she often sees lack of education as one of the biggest hurdles her clientele faced. SP3 (questionnaire, May 18, 2011) also believed lack of education/training was a hurdle. Two of the agency respondents believed education around communication would be helpful to their clients. “With communication being at the forefront of our society, a class on how to communicate effectively would teach our clients to present themselves in a better light” (SP8, questionnaire, May 6, 2011). SP1 (questionnaire, May 12, 2011) discussed her clients’ attempts at job employment:

A 19 year old who is job seeking goes into an interview and when asked what are you most proud of doesn’t talk about education or training. She talks about her two children, which she is proud of, but she’s not going to get a second or third interview. (SP1, questionnaire, May 12, 2011)

Although the last two examples do not deal with formal education they are a bi-product of not being formally/informally educated in a society where great emphasis is put on who you know and where you received your education.

So (1990) discussed one of the main dependency theorists, Andre Gunder Frank, and his belief about the relationship between Western countries and Third World countries:

Third World countries could never follow the Western path because they have experienced something that Western countries have not experienced...Western countries have not experienced colonialism, while most Third World countries are former colonies of Western countries...The colonial experience has totally restructured Third World countries and has drastically altered their paths of development. (p. 96)

This can be related to policy makers who write the rules, regulations, and requirements for recipients whose survival is at the mercy of the system. It may be safe to assume many of them never experienced poverty or the societal burden that accompanies it. Dependency theorists believed the way to battle the dominant was through autonomy, independent development, and socialist revolutions. As previously discussed several of the agency respondents discussed peer

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to peer assistance, client centered services, and community level assistance. When asked how we could benefit/learn from other countries battling poverty SP7 (questionnaire, June 21, 2011) had this to say:

By mobilizing and offering opportunities for people living in poverty to directly address solutions, rather than having people not living in poverty creating solutions, imposing them, then wondering why they fail. We could examine our own intentions in the global fight against poverty – are we really attempting to eradicate poverty, and if so, why are we not scrutinizing and demonizing poverty within the US the way that we do in other countries. Our government and policy makers benefit from poverty. Without poverty, no one is on top. Why do the people who stand to benefit from the existence of poverty spearhead operations to end poverty? (SP7, questionnaire, June 21, 2011)

SP7's sentiments ran parallel to what Frank and many other theorists believed to be true. P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011), who is someone who had experienced the system, discussed what living in poverty meant to her and how outside people, meaning those who never experienced it, would never understand. "...And the ones that never have lived it rough and grew up in one house in a whole family, they'll just never understand it" (P7, personal communication, June 7, 2011).

Sustainable development theories, when broken down, have an impact on all communities. The players may be different but the problems stem from similar issues and the root source of the problem which is poverty. "Poverty isn't about money it's about resources" (SP1, questionnaire, May 12, 2011). The dichotomy between those who are dominant and those who are dependent exists both domestically and internationally.

Current/former residents of MS as well as those considered to be living in poverty in Brattleboro lack of employment opportunities and ability to save or invest and the deteriorating safety net might attract ways of dealing with development by focusing on ways to improve education, savings and investment functions or on the most efficient industrialization strategies. Traditional theories of development like Dependency Theory and non-traditional theories like

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the feminist development theories could assist in the development of those living in poverty in Brattleboro. They could have various effects on the creation of new policies and the formation of organizations by people living in poverty.

The people of Brattleboro could unite and find their voice. Many of them could undertake research to view how best to proceed with developing and changing the programs and access to programs that affect their daily lives. They could redefine various discourses by ensuring that their historical perspective of the way their lives have been dictated and dominated and the change many tried to instill become an integral part of the discourse. They can try to challenge and correct the assumptions made by people who do not live in poverty and who have never accessed the system.

By using the theories that would be presented to them they could give a voice to the “silent.” They could work to make them relevant and to make sure the correct views were being heard and seen. With the constant evolution of the theories through cooperation and mutual understanding amongst those who access services and those who provide services, the practice of theories would become more feasible and beneficial to the people the theories are trying to encompass.

Many of the frustrations experienced by recipients of the social service system were reinforced by those who worked for the social service system. Both parties felt their hands were tied. The stress of not being able to find housing, employment, or meeting the requirements needed to receive benefits was a daily experience for former residents/residents at MS. The workers empathized and met their stress with frustration because of their inability to affectively help the individuals successfully overcome their hurdles. Both groups were at the mercy of the government and what they dictated. Even with the frustrations both parties were able to see some

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positive aspects to what was set up for them and what they had access to, when it was received.

They were able to articulate what improvements they felt needed to be made and in what areas they needed to be made.

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Discussion

Conclusion

The interviewees were asked to define what living in poverty/being poor meant to them. The following is what each of them had to say. “You don’t get to experience some other things that people who have more money do...It’s really stressful and I’m stressed 24/7...It’s harder to be happy when you have so much going on to worry about” (P1, personal communication, September 28, 2011). P2 (personal communication, August 8, 2011) expressed he did not understand what poverty meant or that he did but had a difficult time putting it into words. He also expressed uncertainty in how to respond but in the end he said that being poor is “people who can’t get a job, have nowhere to live and no money to eat” (P2, personal communication, August 8, 2010). P3 (personal communication, August 9, 2011) believed it meant nothing:

[It means] nothing because you can be rich and still be poor. You can be rich and be miserable and you’re still poor because you don’t have love in your heart. Living in poverty is living life. It’s an experience you learn, you live, and you grow or you just don’t. (P3, personal communication, August 9, 2011)

P4 (personal communication, May 26, 2011) did not classify herself that way but understood that people would classify her as being poor/living in poverty. “I kind of don’t know. I don’t know right now. I’m kind of in that [poverty] but I don’t consider myself that so that’s why it probably doesn’t mean too much to me” (P4, personal communication, May 26, 2011). P5 (personal communication, June 22, 2011) simply stated “it’s not having anything.” P6 (personal communication, June 7, 2011) had this to say:

Well it’s not fun because you can’t always get what you want like the upper class. But you’re definitely surviving or just getting by or doing it. Living life and being happy about whatever you can because that’s what life is all about. Just enjoy it...“you don’t need anything to be happy” is said by people who never had it rough and they’ll never understand it either...going without...some people can’t handle it. (P6, personal communication, June 7, 2011)

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“To me there are two ways to look at it. First is you give up and say I can’t do this anymore and second is it makes you stronger and you use the things out there to better yourself” (P7, personal communication, May 13, 2012). And lastly P8 (personal communication, February 4, 2012) had this to say “It’s hard but I try to make the best of it. I don’t let it get me down and I keep finding ways to survive.”

The diversity in the responses, thoughts and feelings about the question is very important because it illustrates the importance of their voices being heard. They are a major player in bringing about effective change and should be included in it. It further illustrates how outside voices cannot dictate what change looks like because they do not have a true realistic understanding of what they are enforcing individuals to do.

The realization that both the residents and the individuals who work within the system have a profound impact on each other is elemental in waging a battle against the current system. The trust that is built between both parties allows for greater advocacy, which is a stronger force in which to create change. It is evident by the research that individuals feel the current system is deeply flawed and in desperate need of renovation. It is promising to know that through all the murk participants were able to find positives, although varied.

Simplifying the lives of the beneficiaries of the system would make it easier for them to successfully transition away from dependency. It was extremely important that those who worked within the system recognized that the intricacy of the system, i.e., complicated paperwork, multiple case workers, repetitive life story telling, excessive appointments, was not advantageous to their clientele. By doing so they acknowledged and understood that a bridge was needed to gap the supply and demand of the services. By simplifying the system the lives of individuals are simplified.

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Simplification as well as attempting a needs based approach as opposed to a service based approach would help in lifting the defeatist attitude many feel as well as the shame they endure not only from themselves but from society as well. Providing the tools in which change can happen, instead of taking them away can go a long way. Such tools could be career training, child care, parent education classes etc. Change and independence cannot be expected when the means to achieve it are taken away or never supplied.

Sustainable development/practices can offer an alternative way to tackle an archaic fundamentally flawed system. They could provide insight to a community like Brattleboro, Vermont. They are able to critique a system set in place and look at the dichotomy between players, the exploitative practices, and the power dynamics involved and try to provide a means to change what has been in existence for decades even centuries. Poverty does not discriminate and its affects are felt worldwide.

The theories/practices are about putting power and control back in the hands of individuals and communities who have been exploited. It is about balance and equality and making sure people's needs are being met. They offer possible solutions for those negatively affected by the current system. They provide different ways to regroup and press forward. They provide an alternative to the norm and are a carrier for change. And they offer reasons as to why and how systems were set up and played out.

Practical Applicability

Many of the social service organizations in Brattleboro would benefit from this study because they would see their frustrations are similar and the solutions recommended by their colleagues were also similar. It would provide a jumping off point for discussions and possible

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results. It would reiterate to agencies that possible mergers would be beneficial to the system as well as to the clientele they serve. Seeing, in writing, that their visions are similar might motivate them to demand change.

The District Leadership Team, which consists of representatives of some of the agencies in Brattleboro, might find the information useful as they meet to discuss some of these very issues and try to support their clientele as best they can within the current system. They would be able to see possible solutions coming from both participants that might assist them in their goals to supporting individuals affected by the system. Eventually they might be able to share it with other district teams/liaisons in the state.

The Vermont Council on Homelessness might find this beneficial as they have a plan to end homelessness projected out to 2018. It might prove to be insightful and assist them in some of the goals they already have set in place. It may also prove useful to have the voice of those who were homeless offer their opinion and possible solutions to some of the issues at hand. In turn they could compare and contrast what they have in place and see what the pros and cons may be.

The local politicians of Brattleboro might benefit as well so they can see what and who they need to advocate for and truly understand why they are advocating for it/them. They will be able to see what policies are working and what policies need changing. They would benefit from the bottom up effect as opposed to the top down effect.

Recommendations for further research

If women are predominantly employed in social services and single female headed households living in poverty are increasing wouldn't it be just to do a further study on the

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feminist theories of sustainable development and their relationship to social services? Perhaps a completely different perspective would be enlightening as the voices of the majority in both groups would be heard.

What would an asset based approach look like on this community? Breaking down the sectors and recognizing what is set in place and where there is a void would help a small community like Brattleboro because they would be able to see what is working really well and where changes would need to be made and how they would need to be made. Also comparing it with a community in the Global South might help to bridge the gap between the views of those living in poverty in the Global North and those in the Global South.

If those living in poverty were given the power to create a plan of change what would it entail and how would it stand up against the system? This would be extremely important because their advice and their voice would be the key players as the agents of change, which is critical in having successful change occur. The source at the center of the matter would be the one providing solutions. Again it would be a bottom up approach.

There are many critics of the system for it and against it as well as for theories/practices of sustainable development. It is important that the voices of those who experience it are given equal, if not more weight, in this continual fight against poverty. The top down approach is more detrimental than beneficial and it shuts out the key players who know what is needed for change and for improvements to occur. It cannot be done alone and it cannot be done through dictation. It must be done through supportive communities.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for individuals who work in social services

1. What is your position?

2. How long have you worked there?

3. How long have you been working in social services?

4. What, if any, do you find to be the biggest hurdles your clientele face?
 - a. Tell me more about why these are hurdles for the clients?

 - b. How do the clients usually respond to these hurdles?

5. What are the clients doing on their own to deal with these hurdles?

6. What kind of help are they seeking to deal with the hurdles?

7. What are the gaps in what could be available to help them?

8. What could be working better than it is to help the clients?

9. What other services do you think would be helpful to these clients?

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10. In your opinion where do improvements need to be made in helping your clients overcome their hurdles?

11. What do you see as positive attributes of the US social service system?

12. What are the positive attributes of Brattleboro's social service system?

13. What are the challenges of the US social service system?

14. What are the challenges of Brattleboro's social service system?

15. How could we benefit/learn from other countries battling poverty?

16. Are you aware of international techniques to combat poverty being used in the United States and more specifically Brattleboro? If yes, please explain.

17. May we contact you for a follow-up interview? If yes, please write your name and your contact information.

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Appendix B

Non-clinical, Minimum Risk Study

Homelessness in Brattleboro: An examination of a poor community in Brattleboro, VT, what services are available, and how the community could benefit from sustainable development practices.

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Emily Clever, who is a current student at SIT Graduate Institute and is working on obtaining her Master's degree. The purpose of this research study is to determine how effective social services are in Brattleboro and how sustainable development practices might work if implemented in the Brattleboro community.

There will be about 20 people participating in this study; Clients who use the services and People who help provide the services. Those in this particular aspect of the study will be the ones who help provide the services. A questionnaire will be sent out to those who agree to participate in the study. The questionnaire should take about 30-45 minutes maximum.

If you agree to take part in the study, a questionnaire will be sent to you. You may either fill out the questionnaire and send it back, or you may set up a phone interview to answer the questions directly. There will be one question at the end of the questionnaire asking if you would be willing to participate in a follow up interview if needed. The information collected and used in the study will be kept anonymously and the information will not be linked back to you.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the questionnaire. In addition, you may choose not to answer any question.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire, you may contact Emily Clever at 802-257-0066 x107 or email at eclever@gmail.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may visit the World Learning website at www.worldlearning.org, and check its policies on Human Subjects Research; if you have further questions, feel free to contact the chair of the IRB Committee.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Researcher _____ Date _____

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

Appendix C

Interview Questions for the Homeless population

1. Would you mind telling me your story about what happened that led to your current situation? /What led you to live in the homeless shelter? (this is for those who are no longer at the shelter)
2. How long, if at all, have you been on Reach Up, Food Stamps, State Health Insurance etc.?
 - a. What has been the most difficult about it?
 - b. What have been the positive outcomes?
3. What services have you accessed in Brattleboro?
 - a. How have the services worked for you/against you?
4. What changes would you like to see Brattleboro make in the services that are provided to help people in situations like yours?
5. What more could you see Brattleboro doing to help people in situations like yours?
6. What is Brattleboro doing well to help people in situations like yours?
7. What do you see as positive changes for you and others who are in situations like yours in Brattleboro?
8. What does poor/living in poverty mean to you?
9. Would you mind me asking your age?

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

Appendix D

Title of Study

Homelessness in Brattleboro: An examination of a poor community in Brattleboro, VT, what services are available, and how the community could benefit from sustainable development practices.

Principal Investigator

Emily Clever

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask the investigator. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

Background/Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out what services, i.e., reach up, food stamps, VocRehab, you have used. What did you find helpful about them? What did you find to be difficult about them? Do you have ideas of what would work better? By asking these questions the study would like to find out how well the services offered in Brattleboro are helping poor communities and how practices in other countries could work in a community like Brattleboro.

Information

Participation in this study will involve the following: One interview in which ten questions will be asked. There may be a follow up interview if you agree to it. The interview should last anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour.

Alternatives to Participation

There are no alternatives to participation. Participation is voluntary. If at any time you feel uncomfortable answering a question you may stop the interview or ask to move on to the next question. If during the interview you change your mind and do not want to participate in the study the interview notes will be deleted in front of you and no information that you gave will be used.

Risks

Emotional discomfort may be experienced. If the sound of a question or answering a question creates any discomfort you may stop right away. It is not the intention of the study to create any discomfort. During the interview you will be given multiple chances to end the interview or delete information you do not want shared.

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Benefits

Participation in this study may not benefit you directly. However, the information that I get from your participation, and the participation of other volunteers, may help us to better understand how you view a system set up to help you and other people who find themselves in hard times.

Confidentiality

The information gathered in this study will remain confidential and, if you would prefer, will remain anonymous. Data will be stored on my computer and the files locked. A password will be needed to access the information and no one will have the password except the person conducting the research. Your name will not be mentioned in the reports/data collection that will be used by the researcher. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could possibly be attached to you.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Emily Clever, at Morningside Shelter – 802-257-0066 x107. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may visit the World Learning website at www.worldlearning.org, and check its policies on Human Subjects Research; if you have further questions, feel free to contact the chair of the IRB Committee.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be removed from the data set and destroyed.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Subject's signature _____ **Date** _____

Researcher's signature _____ **Date** _____

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

Appendix E

United States Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts – Brattleboro CDP, Vermont

| People QuickFacts | Brattleboro CDP | Vermont |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Population, 2011 estimate | X | 626,431 |
| Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base | X | 625,741 |
| Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011 | X | 0.1% |
| Population, 2010 | 7,414 | 625,741 |
| Persons under 5 years, percent, 2010 | 5.3% | 5.1% |
| Persons under 18 years, percent, 2010 | 19.3% | 20.7% |
| Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2010 | 15.9% | 14.6% |
| Female persons, percent, 2010 | 53.6% | 50.7% |
| White persons, percent, 2010 (a) | 90.8% | 95.3% |
| Black persons, percent, 2010 (a) | 2.2% | 1.0% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2010 (a) | 0.3% | 0.4% |
| Asian persons, percent, 2010 (a) | 2.8% | 1.3% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2010 (a) | Z | 0.0% |
| Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2010 | 3.0% | 1.7% |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2010 (b) | 3.0% | 1.5% |
| White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2010 | 89.2% | 94.3% |
| Living in same house 1 year & over, 2006-2010 | 80.7% | 86.0% |
| Foreign born persons, percent, 2006-2010 | 4.0% | 4.0% |
| Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2006-2010 | 4.9% | 5.4% |
| High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2006-2010 | 90.5% | 90.6% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2006-2010 | 35.1% | 33.3% |
| Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2006-2010 | | 15.2 21.5 |
| Homeownership rate, 2006-2010 | 43.2% | 71.4% |
| Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2006-2010 | 57.8% | 23.2% |
| Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2006-2010 | \$194,200 | \$208,400 |
| Households, 2006-2010 | 3,645 | 256,612 |

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|------|------------|
| Persons per household, 2006-2010 | | 1.92 | 2.34 |
| Per capita money income in past 12 months (2010 dollars) 2006-2010 | \$25,165 | | \$27,478 |
| Median household income 2006-2010 | \$38,538 | | \$51,841 |
| Persons below poverty level, percent, 2006-2010 | 12.8% | | 11.1% |
| Business QuickFacts | | | |
| | Brattleboro CDP | | Vermont |
| Total number of firms, 2007 | F | | 78,729 |
| Black-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | S |
| American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | 0.5% |
| Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | 0.8% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | S |
| Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | 0.6% |
| Women-owned firms, percent, 2007 | F | | 26.0% |
| Manufacturers shipments, 2007 (\$1000) | | | |
| | NA | | 10,751,461 |
| Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 (\$1000) | | | |
| | NA | | 5,121,694 |
| Retail sales, 2007 (\$1000) | | | |
| | NA | | 9,310,119 |
| Retail sales per capita, 2007 | | | |
| | NA | | \$15,005 |
| Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1000) | | | |
| | NA | | 1,367,630 |
| Geography QuickFacts | | | |
| | Brattleboro CDP | | Vermont |
| Land area in square miles, 2010 | | 4.18 | 9,216.66 |
| Persons per square mile, 2010 | 1,772.8 | | 67.9 |
| FIPS Code | | 7975 | 50 |

Counties

Windham County

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data

NA: Not available

D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information

X: Not applicable

S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards

Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

F: Fewer than 100 firms

Source: US Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

Appendix F

United States Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts - Vermont

| People QuickFacts | Vermont | USA |
|---|---------|--------------------|
| Population, 2011 estimate | 626,431 | 311,591,917 |
| Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base | 625,741 | 308,745,538 |
| Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011 | 0.1% | 0.9% |
| Population, 2010 | 625,741 | 308,745,538 |
| Persons under 5 years, percent, 2011 | 5.0% | 6.5% |
| Persons under 18 years, percent, 2011 | 20.1% | 23.7% |
| Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2011 | 15.0% | 13.3% |
| Female persons, percent, 2011 | 50.7% | 50.8% |
| White persons, percent, 2011 (a) | 95.5% | 78.1% |
| Black persons, percent, 2011 (a) | 1.1% | 13.1% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2011 (a) | 0.4% | 1.2% |
| Asian persons, percent, 2011 (a) | 1.4% | 5.0% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons, percent, 2011 (a) | Z | 0.2% |
| Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2011 | 1.7% | 2.3% |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin, percent, 2011 (b) | 1.6% | 16.7% |
| White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2011 | 94.2% | 63.4% |
| Living in same house 1 year & over, 2006-2010 | 86.0% | 84.2% |
| Foreign born persons, percent, 2006-2010 | 4.0% | 12.7% |
| Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2006-2010 | 5.4% | 20.1% |
| High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2006-2010 | 90.6% | 85.0% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2006-2010 | 33.3% | 27.9% |
| Veterans, 2006-2010 | 52,765 | 22,652,496 |
| Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2006-2010 | | 21.5 25.2 |
| Housing units, 2011 | 324,389 | 132,312,404 |
| Homeownership rate, 2006-2010 | 71.4% | 66.6% |
| Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2006-2010 | 23.2% | 25.9% |

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

| | | | |
|---|------------|------|---------------|
| Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2006-2010 | \$208,400 | | \$188,400 |
| Households, 2006-2010 | 256,612 | | 114,235,996 |
| Persons per household, 2006-2010 | | 2.34 | 2.59 |
| Per capita money income in past 12 months (2010 dollars) 2006-2010 | \$27,478 | | \$27,334 |
| Median household income 2006-2010 | \$51,841 | | \$51,914 |
| Persons below poverty level, percent, 2006-2010 | 11.1% | | 13.8% |
| Business QuickFacts | Vermont | | USA |
| Private nonfarm establishments, 2010 | 21,451 | | 7,396,628 |
| Private nonfarm employment, 2010 | 264,099 | | 111,970,095 |
| Private nonfarm employment, percent change, 2000-2010 | | 4.2 | -1.8 |
| Nonemployer establishments, 2010 | 59,945 | | 22,110,628 |
| Total number of firms, 2007 | 78,729 | | 27,092,908 |
| Black-owned firms, percent, 2007 | S | | 7.1% |
| American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007 | 0.5% | | 0.9% |
| Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007 | 0.8% | | 5.7% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007 | S | | 0.1% |
| Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007 | 0.6% | | 8.3% |
| Women-owned firms, percent, 2007 | 26.0% | | 28.8% |
| Manufacturers shipments, 2007 (\$1000) | 10,751,461 | | 5,338,306,501 |
| Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 (\$1000) | 5,121,694 | | 4,174,286,516 |
| Retail sales, 2007 (\$1000) | 9,310,119 | | 3,917,663,456 |
| Retail sales per capita, 2007 | \$15,005 | | \$12,990 |
| Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1000) | 1,367,630 | | 613,795,732 |
| Building permits, 2011 | 1,299 | | 624,061 |
| Geography QuickFacts | Vermont | | USA |
| Land area in square miles, 2010 | 9,216.66 | | 3,531,905.43 |
| Persons per square mile, 2010 | | 67.9 | 87.4 |
| FIPS Code | | 50 | |

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data

NA: Not available

HOMELESSNESS IN BRATTLEBORO: AN EXAMINATION OF A POOR

D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information

X: Not applicable

S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards

Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

F: Fewer than 100 firms

Source: US Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts