

Abstract

This thesis tests a new theory about the role that public perceptions on target populations play in designing homeless policies — as demonstrated through the Homeless Policy Design Model. The theory and model present an expansion of theories on the target populations and policy design from Lowi (1972), Ingram, Schneider and DeLeon (2007); and Schneider and Ingram (1993). The model is tested through a case study of homeless policy in Seattle, WA from 2007 to 2016 and the correlating perceptions of the homeless generated through the rhetoric of the political elite and the general public. The homeless policy design model indicates that the public's perceptions about homeless target populations will impact policy design choices. Through qualitative research methods, the thesis finds that there is a recognizable correlation between how the public views the homeless and what type of policy the Seattle City Council passed from 2007 to 2016.