

California State University, Los Angeles

Tableau Project Reflection: American Shadows: Mapping Homelessness and Veteran Challenges
Across the Nation

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Business Intelligence 5270-01

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The challenge I faced personally with this project was the limited interest I have in the homeless problem in Los Angeles. Yes, I know it is a big issue that affects all aspects of society. But I also think that the funds from the City of Los Angeles are not being properly used and officials are lenient with how the funds are dispersed. I personally think homelessness is not being solved because it is a business that generates jobs for non-profit services, medical services, and more jobs for the City of Los Angeles. According to an article by CalMatters.org, “The state has spent nearly \$10 billion and provided services to more than 571,000 people, each year helping more people than the last. And despite all that, at the end of year three, the majority of those more than half a million Californians still didn’t end up with a roof over their heads. The number of unsheltered Californians continues to swell” (Christopher). Another significant challenge we face is the large influx of homeless individuals from other states. Additionally, California's mild climate makes it an appealing location for unsheltered individuals to continue living outdoors. These factors contribute to the complexity of addressing homelessness in the region. Another challenge I faced personally with the project was the presentation from ACOF. I felt like the ACOF Representative was very disorganized and did not present the organization or data well. I felt like Professor Balan was leading the presentation instead of the ACOF Rep.

It seemed like the ACOF did not know a lot about the organization or the properties that they manage.

One significant challenge our team faced during the project was the limited range of graphs we could produce with the survey data. I did not create any graphs with the survey data; that was Sapan's responsibility. As a group, we struggled to find ways to connect homelessness to the survey results. Despite these obstacles, we sincerely did our best to use the data effectively and illustrate the causes of homelessness for the residents of ACOF.

What I learned from the project is that the Sheriff's Department in the City of Lancaster gave relentless abuse to the unsheltered homeless population. The Sheriff's contracted by the city of Lancaster "routinely push homeless people into the inhospitable desert, where they often face additional pressure from county officials, the report contends" (Smith). The sheriff's actions push them out of the city into remote areas where they have to walk long distances for water, food, and medical services. I am surprised that the actions of the Lancaster Sheriffs against unsheltered homeless people have not yet attracted criticism from human rights activists or internal affairs. Given the potential for human rights concerns, one would expect these authorities to be under investigation to ensure that their interactions with vulnerable populations are conducted in a manner that respects their dignity and rights. Such oversight mechanisms must be in place to prevent abuses and ensure accountability.

This project significantly enhanced my appreciation for Tableau, primarily due to its user-friendly interface and the impressive programming that allows for instant data visualization without any delays. Tableau's intuitive design makes it accessible for users of all skill levels, enabling them to easily create complex visualizations. Furthermore, its robust analytical capabilities allow for deep dives into large datasets, offering insights that might not be

immediately apparent. The ability to seamlessly integrate with various data sources and the flexibility to customize dashboards are other standout features that make Tableau an exceptional tool for anyone looking to derive meaningful information from their data.

In the future, I plan to use Tableau to connect to a SQL database at work. My goal is to create reports for my department that will enable us to analyze student grades more effectively and implement interventions for those scoring a D or lower. I have already envisioned several reports I would like to develop, including a bar chart that displays the number of students who have received at least one D or F in any of their classes. This will help us identify and assist at-risk students more efficiently.

Looking back on this project, there are a few things I would do differently. First, I would have initiated the project earlier, giving us more time to brainstorm and refine our ideas. Meeting more frequently as a group could have benefited us with more creative solutions for visualizing the survey data. Additionally, I recognize the need to enhance my skills in creating specific types of graphs, such as box-whisker plots, scatter plots, and line charts, to improve our data representation in future projects.

Despite these challenges, working with Snehil and Sapan was a highly positive experience. They were excellent teammates, contributing equally and bringing valuable insights to our project. Their cooperation not only made the project enjoyable but also enriched the learning experience for all of us. Moving forward, I am eager to apply what I've learned in this collaboration to future endeavors and continue developing my data visualization skills.

Works Cited

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