

Marginal experiences of homelessness

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Poverty is not a timeless condition of human beings. It refers to a social position that varies in time and among societies and cultures. It takes many forms and necessarily relates to hierarchies among individuals and groups and to the criteria used to define them. She knows variations, gradations and changes.

Homelessness is a form of poverty defined by residential instability. Of course, one is always residing somewhere, i.e. is necessarily located somewhere in space. But if that somewhere is precarious, not in accordance with local standards, devoid of the capacity to identify people or is hostile, we are probably justified in thinking that this is no residence and that this absence comes from extreme poverty. Homelessness, therefore, does not represent all the shades of poverty or poverty "in general", because the greatest number of poor people are probably closer to the "threshold of wealth." But by its extreme aspect, homelessness brings out more clearly certain aspects of poverty that less shocking forms reveal less easily.

It is special not only because of its degree, but because it is exceptional. Using space to identify oneself probably is a general feature of the human condition, even if this space is changing and mobile. In a sedentary society, it is "abnormal" to move, especially if this move is indeed not a choice, but a constraint. When I was young, many of us traveled with a backpack from one youth hostel to another. We moved every day and we did not have much money - but we were classified as travelers, not as homeless persons. Hence, to understand homelessness in today's world, we must grasp its meaning, its symbolic aspects, the social norms, and the material determinants that govern and manage them.

This text will give special attention to this symbolic and social aspect. Simmel (2005) noted that what defines the poor is not his/her material deprivation, but his/her dependent situation. S/He is the one who is assisted, who receives and can hardly give back. This places him/her in a position of inferiority and makes him/her dependent on his/her benefactors. Although philanthropy has not disappeared in advanced capitalist societies, this benevolent function falls to the state, which has to support many of the necessities of social reproduction. To understand how economic growth, social order and access to consumption ("well-being") may have converging effects, one must understand how state institutions think, plan and organize the people they have the mandate to supervise. Understanding homelessness and its place in these

societies therefore requests that we consider the intellectual, political and administrative modalities of state intervention and the normativity they carry.

As Herzfeld (1993) had pointed out, the production of categories and taxonomies is a fundamental aspect of state activity. These classifications allocate the people in the social space as it is conceived by bureaucracies, which is a fundamental aspect of technologies of control (Rose & Miller 2008) specific to advanced capitalist societies. The intention here is not to make a general theory of the state. It is to see what identities are offered by the state to social actors; this will help us to understand how these positions interact with one another, and thus to grasp their mutual relations.

Accordingly, this text begins with a quick historical contextualization of homelessness, to show how it has gradually emerged from other conceptualizations. Following this overview, we will indicate how the Quebec government proposes to define homelessness, both within the borders it constructs and in the identification of actors that constitute it. The last section will show how one can approach homelessness from an angle different from the epidemiological perspective that is currently dominant. We will suggest that this better, more empirical, approach should consider the symbolic and cultural space defined by homelessness. The main point is that to study homelessness, we have to look at it as a “world”, a field of interaction, and not to limit the research to homeless people.

On the definition of homelessness¹

But what is homelessness? Essentially a social construction. This becomes evident when we notice that the term is of recent use: a book as important as *The Other America* (Harrington 1963) does not use it, even in its chapter on housing. Of course, the poor have been around for a long time and their housing difficulties have been part of their lives for just as long. But they have not always been defined as deprived of a home (homeless). As Rossi recalled, the genealogy of homelessness can be dated back to the Middle Ages and to peasants displaced by the enclosures of the eighteenth century. But the processes that produced these people are very different from those that have been at work since the beginning of the twentieth century: in North American history, *hobos* (or hoboemians) of the beginning of the 20th century were following the labor market of temporary farm workers. Often travelling long distances by jumping freight trains, they represented, despite their poverty and the hardness of their lives, a romantic figure of freedom and of travel in the great American spaces. It has had an enormous influence on popular culture down, to Kris Kristofferson and Janis Joplin. What defined them, in other words, was a *relation to the temporary labor market* typical of turn-of-the-century agriculture.

At the same time and somewhat later, *skid row* became the symbol of job insecurity and of the instability that accompanies it. The word comes from the name of a street in Seattle used to slid (to skid) building materials to the nearby shipyards. The jobs at these sites were temporary and precarious; the workers were paid by the day, at very low rates and overexploited. Around this area were services (hotels and rooming houses, bars, brothels) adapted to the revenue and way of life of these workers. By extension, all over North American cities, skid row came to

designates areas generally of bad repute in or near city centers where precarious workers used to live, usually single men alternating between odd jobs, unemployment and jail time. Skid row, therefore, was defined as an area, i.e. *as a space in the overall urban ecology*. The urban renewal operations of the forties and fifties in North American cities saw the destruction of these areas and the relocation of their residents, whose definition changed accordingly.

J. Spradley's classic book (1970) is a good example of this definitional change. First in the definition of his informants: they were called - including by themselves - tramps and drunkards. Spradley labeled them urban nomads with behavioral problems (alcoholism). Second, in his method: his sample consisted of persons imprisoned for public drunkenness; he encountered them mainly in the municipal court or local jail². Finally, in his purpose: he is interested in their culture as a set of mental categories and uses the techniques of cognitive anthropology. Vagrants are identified and recognized as having a certain way of life: they have internalized the negative identity that was imposed on them, they have made their niche in the social environment, they have friends, a distinctive mode of living and an identifiable outlook on the world. What defines these vagabonds is their *way of life* based on the consumption of alcohol.

Homelessness defined as being-without-a-home is a term that will spread during the eighties. The destruction of skid row housing and the changes in criminal laws have made life on the streets, with the implication of precariousness that goes with it, dangerous and unsanitary. It blurs the distinction between the private and the public and this has made homelessness increasingly visible. This might be why many say it has become more prevalent; its obviousness certainly has become more and more central to public opinion. Contrary to what is often heard, it does not coincide with the wave of deinstitutionalization of psychiatric hospitals, but it certainly fits with changes in social policies that are the hallmark of the first wave of neoliberalism (Piven & Cloward 1982, Harvey 2007). The disappearance of skid row institutions gave more importance to organizations - often charities - which are taking charge of this problem: night shelters, soup kitchens, day centers for people with behavioral or mental health difficulties. During this recent period, therefore, *the issue has been framed as being-without-a-home*: homelessness. This special kind of deprivation is accompanied by other features like loneliness, substance abuse, mental health problems; they are important but logically secondary.

This brief historical overview shows how variable is the definition of what it means to be homeless. From this point of view, we could say that there has not always been homelessness: there were hobos, residents of skid row, then drunks³ and vagrants. Now, there are homeless people.

To this historical variability, we can add a linguistic variability. In English, the word homeless focuses on the absence of home, i.e. the absence of a place which one is attached, a space that provides a reference point and security (the home is where the heart is). This is usually translated in France as *sans-domicile-fixe* (without a fixed residence) that does not connote the idea of comfort associated with home. It gives more importance to housing and the stability of residence which provides a legal existence and legal identity (Bresson 1997: 36-56). Being

homeless means to be in poverty and to have no real social life, being left in the margins of society. It means, to use a term that has become very widespread, to be excluded (Guillou and Moreau de Bellaing 1999). This marginality makes for a very complicated relation to social policies designed for "target groups" identified with explicit criteria. One could say that this state of exclusion makes one unmanageable by the (welfare) state institutions. Is that why the care of homeless people is often left to community, philanthropic or charitable organizations, that is to say, to organizations themselves at the margins of the state apparatuses?

The definition used in Quebec (*errance* or, more often, *itinérance*) is close to the French definition with an emphasis on being-without-a-home, but it puts more emphasis on movement, on residential instability. In a society increasingly marked by mobility (Urry 2000), this should not be surprising. Then why make it a problem? We can hypothesize that this is caused by its recursivity: homelessness is no longer referring to the labor market or to a specific area, but to itself. It is conceived as a wandering (Laberge [ed.] 2000), that, by a kind of *mise en abyme*, defines its own world.

This brief overview shows that homelessness is not a-historical. Its characterization does not appear as self-evident. Its acceptance in public discourse and in state action is the fruit of a conceptual and discursive work: homelessness must be conceptually formulated, imposed and proposed as a meaningful way to address reality. But this reality does not exist before its definition. Conceptualizing the object makes it socially real (Douglas 1986). In other words, homelessness is a cultural and symbolic construction as much as a social condition. In advanced capitalist societies, this categorizing work is a duty devoted in great part to the State apparatuses.

The construction of homelessness by the State

To give an illustration of the complexity of the phenomenon, let us consider how the Quebec government addresses the topic. This will allow us to see how this particular State is using this categorical tool to organize the structures of social integration and incorporation, this being, according to Herzfeld (1993), the main mission entrusted to the State. Responding to pressure coming from organizations working with homeless people, the Quebec government produced an administrative "Framework" followed by a Commission of inquiry that had to design a "Plan of Action" (Government of Quebec 2008, 2009, 2010). The first year of the Plan was later evaluated by the Ministry responsible for it (Ministry of Health and Social Services 2011); a coalition of community organizations produced its own assessment, which was highly critical of the Plan (RAPSIM 2011).

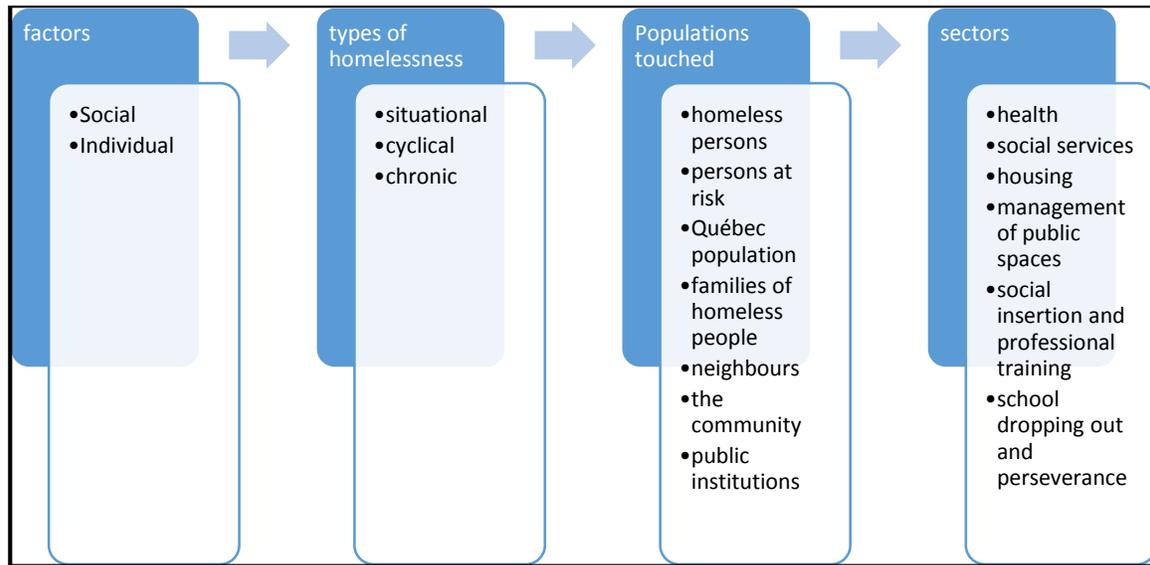
In these official documents, homelessness is presented as the product of underlying *factors* producing homelessness (or causing it, or bringing it to actuality). The Action Plan proposes to act "upstream" from the effect to the causes, and up the chain of determinations. This is made possible by the fact that homelessness is less a situation that affects people than a set of processes having to do with the deterioration of social ties. These factors add up and combine

to lead, where appropriate, to homelessness. They are of two types: individual and social⁴. The complexity of these mechanisms explains that although homelessness is seen as a problem of precarious or unstable housing, summarized by the phrase "living on the street," the proposed solutions are much broader than just providing a place to settle down. These solutions cover the whole underlying factors that produce homelessness and affect many sectors: health, social services, housing, management of public space, social and professional integration, school dropping out and persistence (Action Plan 2010: 17).

These factors produce various types of homelessness⁵. The first is called situational and is referring to a momentary lack of housing. This type of vagrancy is probably the most common and the least visible, for when people finally find a home, they establish new social ties and become "like everyone else." The second type of homelessness is cyclical and is applied to people coming and going between a home and street life. The third type is said to be chronic. This is the less frequent and the most stereotypical kind of homelessness. These different types can be refer to a graduation in difficulty of treatment (and of the chances of success). They require different methods of action; for example, training and integration into the labor market will be more appropriate for the situational rather than the chronic homeless.

These multiple causes therefore produce various kinds of homelessness. The Action Plan also establishes a typology of people who are affected by these. First there are the "people experiencing homelessness," according to the three types identified above. There are also "persons at risk of becoming homeless" and, finally, "the population of Quebec." This taxonomy implies that the actually homeless and those who are "at risk" are outside of the Quebec population, which is certainly not the intention of the drafters of the plan, but seems to follow logically from the terms they use. It is interesting to see that this taxonomy is based not only on the actual, present, situation, but also on a potentiality, that of *becoming* an itinerant person, what we might call a "potential homelessness." This category is highly heterogeneous⁶ and, in practice, the only thing these people have in common is that they have been designed as carriers of the same risks. They are not a real group but a conceptual abstraction. Furthermore, their characterization refers to traits that can add up and be accumulated by the same person. Therefore, some will be more at risk than others; the more traits they show, the more they will be "at risk" and the higher will be the probability of actualizing their risk of homelessness. Figure 1 summarizes these taxonomies.

Figure 1 Taxonomies of homelessness



All this shows the prevalence of the epidemiological approach, something that is not surprising since the Action Plan 2010 defines homelessness as a public health problem. But this is not the only categorization at work. Indeed, the Plan also identifies the organizations that contribute to the solution: government departments, government agencies, municipalities, private and community organizations and, finally, the Quebec population. Each organization has its own way of thinking and categorizing the population; this is reflected in the identification of target groups. Thus, when considering the training to be provided to the homeless, the Plan uses the categories developed by the Ministry of Education and talks about "special school populations" of "vulnerable customers, including homeless people", making homeless people a subset of a broader category devised with other aims. Given the large number of institutional actors identified by the Action Plan⁷, one can easily imagine the complexity of the interlocking categories.

These various actors and the problems they carry are unevenly distributed in the social space. Homelessness is a global problem, but it has varying prevalence. So there is a variability according to the sub-population considered. Some are more "at risk" than others (young, elderly, Aboriginal) and these problematic populations vary in time: as indicated in the Action Plan, there are more homeless women than before and this is no more a typically male problem. This change causes a change in the treatment of the homeless population. For example, the treatment will have to take into account the issue of violence against women. We must add to this the variability in space: homelessness is primarily the problem of cities and will be more problematic the bigger the city: worst in Montreal than in Quebec City, worse in Québec City than in Sherbrooke and practically non-existent elsewhere. In the same way, it will be more serious in inner cities than in the suburbs. We should finally add the thorny question of the relationship between the Montreal area and the peripheral regions: according to the Action Plan, the problems are in Montreal, but the risks are located in the regions. This design leads to diverse interventions (solutions): Montreal will be entitled to healing solutions, while the

regions will have preventive interventions. Finally, homelessness varies in time: it is getting worse, an aggravation that gives it a temporal perspective and puts the necessary actions in the domain of emergency.

Multiplicity of causes, diversity of populations and complexity of coordinating actions: homelessness does not belong solely to the field of housing, as would imply a simple definition in terms of residential instability. In fact, its understanding refers to the totality of social relations. To act on this particular aspect of social reality, we find ourselves having to think about the entire social field; in other words, defining the margin implies a foundational act. By instituting the border, the State also defines the identity of the social body. What is more, it also indicates what the "normal" groups are, those who set the socially accepted norms and standards: neither youth nor women in difficulty, nor drug addicts, nor urban Aboriginal people, etc.

Finally, in these texts, homelessness less as an objective situation or social condition than a *problem*. They define it as requiring a solution (Rose & Miller 2008: 16). It consists of many dimensions, that is to say problems (loneliness, family, social, behavior, etc.) that refer to a wide range of social fields and are also beyond the scope of the consciousness of actors : they can be "at risk of homelessness" without knowing it, in the same way we can unknowingly carry a disease or a defective gene. Symmetrically, we may take care of the homeless (and, *a fortiori*, of people at risk) without realizing it, that is to say without categorized them as homeless, by considering them, for example, as broken families, mentally ill, or poor people. According to the categories used, we will make different diagnoses, refer to different social programs, consider different resources and establish various linkages, networks and partnerships.

Proposals to address homelessness in non-metropolitan areas

The Action Plan and its accompanying texts define an understanding of homelessness in order to oversee its management. This is why they always begin by asking what is the number of homeless people – in that, they also repeat most of the research done on this issue. But is the approach suggested by the political and administrative instances the only one possible? This last section would suggest a different methodological approach, in order to avoid the imposition of a legal and administrative framework of homelessness, but without falling into a positivism implying a pure and obvious reality. The central concept is the "world" of homelessness. After a brief presentation, we will show how it might be possible to deconstruct it to allow empirical analysis.

The world of homelessness

Researchers who are interested in this "social problem" have generally limited themselves to studying the homeless people themselves: their number, their localization, their physical, mental, medical, economic, psychological and family situation. Understanding homelessness

means understanding these people, their wants and their survival strategies. This amounts to say that homeless people *are* the problem, in another manifestation of the old tactics to "blame the victim" (Ryan 1976). In this case, this puts in symmetrical positions the person who is/was the problem, and the public and private services that support him/her by providing the services that are the solution. The problem will be resolved by the disappearance of one of the protagonists, the homeless person, when he/she will become a person "like any other."

Such an approach to homelessness might be appropriate to act upon it, but as an analytical tool, it misses the interactions that define social reality and the experiences of concrete people. It essentializes homelessness and transforms it from a social condition to an intimate trait of the individuals who are carrying it (in the same sense than one can be "carrying a disease"). This produces a stream of equivalences that defines the politico-sanitary space of homelessness: causal factors of homelessness → homelessness → homeless person.

This is not to deny that people experiencing homelessness have problems and are faced with numerous and sometimes insurmountable difficulties. Homelessness is a situation of extreme poverty that puts people in a precarious and marginalized state whose consequences can be disastrous. But *we cannot reduce people to the situation they find themselves in*. It is therefore necessary to address homelessness not a problem originating from innate characteristics but as a *field of social interaction* (a "universe of discourse", in the words of Unruh [1980]) with its own particular conditions of existence. In other words, people who are homeless do not live in a social vacuum. They interact with many other people: social workers, court personnel, health institutions and hospitals, charities and community organizations and, of course, with other people experiencing homelessness and, sometimes, with social researchers. They also interact with organizations responsible for their support and/or to managing their situation. These often have anonymous rules and ways of functioning, to which homeless people will have to adapt, which can lead to resistance or avoidance behavior. These individuals and organizations are often based in social and cultural universes more or less exterior to each other; that is to say, they will be implementing logics of action that were not developed according to one another and, therefore, will be generating ways to think and act more or less autonomous. Homeless people will have, in their daily lives, to articulate these various logics in order to get by. The interactions between these individuals, these organizations, these logics and strategies build what might be called a "social universe" or social and cultural "world" (Becker 1982).

Its boundaries are blurred, as are the rules to enter it, leave it and to behave in it but we can make the assumption, following Shibutani⁸, that it is delimited by modes of communication, with fluid but effective codes. Verbal and behavioral, these codes, are used to link the various members or actors of this world to coordinate their actions. For example, the scientific world was once described as an "invisible college", an informal network of scientists communicating to each other their preoccupations questions and their research results; that was the origin of the Royal Society.

In a similar fashion, this particular "social world" that is homelessness refers to material and symbolic relations as much as organizational arrangements to manage them. It implies identities

and identifications, a "division of labor" (Strauss 1978) in reproduction and the adjustment of the world to other social worlds, etc. These networks of social relations influence the practices of social integration that is the aim of social intervention. Homelessness has therefore a "regulatory" dimension: it is framed by devices, institutions and codes. Some are formally made and have an explicit mandate to manage homelessness. Others are more informal or affect homelessness only marginally. All, however, participate in the social definition of homelessness. In other words, the first step in understanding the worlds of homelessness is to study this regulatory framework. But this must be complemented by the study of mobility, of the definition of home and by the diverse representations that accompany them.

Mobility

By definition, homelessness implies displacement, a movement, the flow of a route, an itinerary. Documentation and prior contacts with the field show that these movements are not random. We must therefore ask what influences them, what motivates them, how they change over time (that of a season or of years). We must also consider the resources required by these movements and how they are obtained. Homelessness is also a movement between areas, organizations and between the social and health services where these resources are located: how do the homeless persons articulate their use in order to build a meaningful existence?

The home

Being "homeless" does not mean being without a home. The lack of fixed residence implies, in a negative sort of way, a reference to a more stable situation whether physical or imaginary. Understanding what represents a home can give a clue to what motivates some of the movements. They can act as a magnet or as a foil. This notion of a home also requires a relation to the surrounding environment and community (desired or denied inclusion, exclusion, mutual exclusion, etc.). In all these cases, the person is in relation with a social universes that act as a reference and may have a positive or negative figure. But what are the various images of "home"? Where does one feel at ease? Do the services provided to or used by homeless people correspond to this representation? Do the places occupied by homeless people correspond to these representations? Do the people dealing with homeless people have knowledge of these representations?

Representations

Homelessness is a mode of integration into society, that is to say, of interacting with people. As such, it implies, on the part of each agent, the expectations of others and oneself, and it involves attitudes to these expectations. This means that people will act according to their definition of the situation. It has at least three components. The first is how PSI represent their own identity, that is to say, their own situation in the world. How do they conceive of their lives, their problems, the places where they live (or lived)? Do they have a sense of belonging to the community? What is this community? In other words, this first component implies a relation

from me to me. The second component is the relationship between me and others. Who is the "significant other"? How does one see other homeless people and the people who interact with them? The third component is the representation that homeless people have of the relations between other people whether these are the other homeless, the social workers or simply people of the surrounding world.

Variations of these concepts

These three dimensions are not purely analytical. They characterize in different ways the world of homelessness, and produce nuances and distinctions in the way it is produced, experienced and interpreted. As they structure the whole of the life of people, they produce the distinctions relating to the availability of resources necessary for social life (social bonds, family, relationship to public apparatuses and organizations of civil society, income, etc.). A central aspect of these changes will be their modulation by gender. Homeless men and women do not make a similar use of social and family resources and do not have the same relationship to institutions, labor market and to other people.

In addition, these three dimensions of the world of homelessness are distributed differently within the regional space. To capture these nuances, we have to take into account the empirical features relating to the location of homelessness. In this case, the fact that the research is in the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean region brings a number of features.

Figure 2 Localization of the region



We know they are distributed differently in the regional area. To capture these nuances, we should take into account the empirical features related to the location of homelessness. In this case, the fact that the land is in the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean brings a number of features. This region is located 450 kms north-east of Montreal (see Figure 2). Its population was estimated at 271,250 people in 2010 (Agence de la santé et des services sociaux du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, 2010) and is in sharp decline.

According to demographic projections, the regional population will decline to somewhere between 225,000 and 230,000 persons in 2050 (Proulx, 2007). On the economic front, the lack of diversification of the economic base confines the region into a crisis of the timber industry, of investment and of entrepreneurial development. This economic situation creates a worsening of social problems such as devitalized villages as a result of numerous difficulties such as high unemployment (9.3% in 2006 against 7% for Quebec), poverty, demographic decline, etc.

Figure 3 Urban agglomerations



the Saguenay is centered on Ville de Saguenay, which includes the three recently merged cities of Jonquière, Chicoutimi and La Baie. With about 140,000 inhabitants, Ville de Saguenay alone accounts for over 50% of the total population of the region. Employment is primarily based on the service sector, but the city also has large factories producing aluminum. Although they no longer occupy the preeminent place they once did, they continue to strongly influence the labor market and the socio-cultural landscape: the Saguenay is an industrial area and work is defined by a male working-class culture.

In sum, the field where the research will take place is characterized by gender differences, which can be expected to influence the use of public services, but also of family networks. It is also influenced by the distance from Montreal, this distance putting a constraint on movements, making them more complicated and more expensive. It is also a region with a low population density and long distances between communities. In other words, the area is relatively marginal: to get to it and to get around is a complex and expensive process. The harsh climate, especially in winter, suggests that there will be a significant seasonality of homelessness and, therefore, that movements will be very much seasonal. The consequence is that homeless people will be neither very numerous nor very visible. This means, in turn, that there will not be many services with the mission to take care of them, and it is most likely that they will be unevenly distributed. Villages and small towns will not have many of them and they will probably concentrate in the city of Saguenay. Presumably, the services offered to homeless people will not "specialize in homelessness": homeless people will be one type of users among others. This will raise the question of the recognition (or lack of recognition) of homelessness in the representations and practices of social intervention, the way they will structure their various fields of action and the organization of their relations. In this context more than in any other, the world of homelessness cannot be closed on itself.

Among other important features are the economic conditions: a shrinking job market, fewer low skilled jobs, migration from villages to the city of Saguenay, etc. There are also aspects relating to the history of relative closure of the region upon itself: social ties are "close-knit" and family networks still loom large. It is therefore difficult to be anonymous, which may have positive consequences (it is more difficult to be "lost and alone in the city") and negative ones (stigma

It is culturally and socially divided into two sub-regions (Lake Saint-Jean/Saguenay) that are different - in a way that we will have to document more accurately - in the demographics of homelessness and the modalities of its management. The Lake St. John is a rural sub-region whose economy is based in agriculture and forestry. The villages are numerous and cities are of small to medium size (the main city, Alma, has about 30,000 inhabitants). It also includes Mashteuiatsh, the only Aboriginal municipality of the region. The sub-region of

inherited from the past). This could, in particular, influence the behavior of Aboriginal people and will complicate their lives outside the reserve for, in addition, they confronts a latent racism and an obvious culture shock. Finally, the diminishing demography may lead to decreasing public services; that could affect people who depend on them.

These factors show that the general considerations can and must be particularized. The world of homelessness is not an abstract and homogeneous world. It is always embodied in local conditions and the challenge is always to take both these general and particular aspects into consideration.

Conclusion

In this paper, we wanted to show the importance of considering not only the homeless, but the "world" of homelessness, the diversity of its actors and its changing parameters. We wanted to put much emphasis on the fact that the definition of homelessness is historically and socially determined and subject to changes in the social structure. It is modulated by the institutions - the state, in the first place - which have the task of regulating social relations. To understand homelessness, we must consider more than the persons experiencing homelessness. We must take into account the multiple interactions of the various actors who contribute to its social definition. This is what we have called the "world of homelessness."

We then described how it seems possible to empirically implement these intentions. By differentiating this world according to some general dimensions: mobility, home and the representations generated by the actors, we hope to show that homelessness can be analyzed in a way that is different from the clinical perspective currently predominant. If it is a problem, it is above all a problem about the organization of the margins of society and, consequently, about the ability to transform the terms of entry and of exit in these margins.

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Notes

¹ This section owes much to the work of Rossi (1989).

² At that time, U.S. laws allowed the arrest and imprisonment of people for being drunk in public. Due to the overload of the judicial system and of the municipal jails, these laws were repealed in the 80s.

³ The Québec term is *robineux*.

⁴ Individual: mental health, social isolation, substance abuse (drugs, alcohol), trauma in personal history. Social: poverty, scarcity of affordable housing, being out of a penal institution, weaknesses in the social fabric due to changes in neighborhoods and families, loss of social support, changes in social values

⁵ In this and many other aspects, the provincial government reproduces ways of thinking first defined at the Canadian, federal level. See Comité sénatorial permanent des affaires sociales, des sciences et de la technologie (2009).

⁶ It includes poor people going through divorce and isolation, youth and women in difficulty, people suffering from drug addiction or pathological gambling, with mental health problems, under judicial control, people discharged from a penal institution, the people who applied for political asylum and immigrants with integration issues, Aboriginal people in precarious situations in urban areas.

⁷ Ministries and organizations who participated in the Action Plan: Secretariat for Aboriginal affairs, public safety, education, Ministry for local government, employment and social solidarity, justice, immigration and cultural communities, Secretariat for Youth, Québec Housing Corporation.

⁸ Quoted in A. Strauss (1978).