HOMELESSNESS AND THE HOMELESS IN CANADA:
A GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

By

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ABSTRACT

In 1981, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), to raise the consciousness of the world to the estimated 100 million people who have no shelter, and to the 1 billion who lack a secure, permanent home which they can afford. This dissertation contributes to the goals and objectives of the IYSH, and introduces conceptual and practical considerations which are pertinent to a geographic examination of homelessness in Canada. Field observations from across the country are integrated with a critical appraisal of the international literature to demonstrate that the spatial distribution and diversity of the homeless are related to physical shelter problems and to a combination of individual, social and economic precipitants which produce homelessness at a variety of regional, community and household scales. Three broad categories among the homeless in Canada are identified: those who are inadequately housed; those who are economically disenfranchised, and those who are socially marginalised and service-dependent. Homelessness is shown to be linked to a wide range of human, social and economic problems, for individuals and families, for communities and for society as a whole. It is defined as the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which people have personal control, and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic, health and cultural public services. In various regions of the country the problems historically have been chronic; in others, they are spatially and temporally episodic. It is argued here that the problem constitutes a legitimate focus of academic inquiry which is of significance and relevance to geography.
Case examples are presented to show: homelessness results from the reciprocal relations between individuals and social processes; these relations are manifest in identifiable spatial forms; these spatial arrangements in turn influence the composition of the homeless and the sources of homelessness. Geographic considerations contribute to an understanding of homelessness in Canada through an analysis of how individual action, social processes and spatial relations are linked to the genesis and persistence of homelessness. By showing how certain events and conditions precipitate and exacerbate homeless-related problems, evidence is presented that the problems in Canada cannot be reduced to single-factor causal explanations. Despite regional and temporal variations, and the establishment of a social welfare safety net, poverty, unemployment and inadequate social assistance benefits have historically influenced the form of homelessness. The effects of deinstitutionalisation and revitalisation have significantly altered the structure of the inner city and the vital role which these areas play in providing a supportive community for the socially marginalised homeless. As living conditions have improved, housing problems of the homeless have shifted to concerns over affordability and the lack of low-cost accommodation. Two significant conclusions emerge: homelessness is not a problem OF cities; but IS amenable to public policy intervention, of which housing is a vital but not exclusive part of creating a place to call home. Given the classification of the homeless and the recognition that homelessness is manifest at varying geographic scales, differential policies, programmes and housing alternatives are required to assist the homeless and reduce homelessness.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Millions of people throughout the world are homeless, and despite concerted efforts to improve conditions on a global scale, the number of people living in poverty and squalor continues to grow. In 1981, at the instigation of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), to draw attention to the estimated 100 million people who have no shelter of any kind, and to the one billion people who lack a real home - one which provides protection from the elements; has access to safe water and sanitation; provides for secure tenure and personal safety; is within easy reach of centres of employment, education and health care; and is at a cost which people and society can afford.(1) As Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations has suggested, "The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless raises questions that run to the heart of the human condition and for which answers are not in any sense evident".(2)

The foundations for action by the United Nations on behalf of the homeless were established in 1976 at Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver, British Columbia. At that meeting, representatives of 132 governments addressed the formidable shelter problems facing countries throughout the world and concluded that there was a crisis in human settlements' development. In response, The Vancouver Declaration proclaimed the commitment of the international community to improve the living and housing conditions for human beings everywhere through strategies of national and local action.(3) While much has been achieved since Habitat '76, the goal of adequate shelter for all remains elusive.
Homelessness, urban poverty and unhealthy living conditions have worsened as population increases and rapid, poorly-planned urbanization exacerbate the impact of the world-wide recession which began in the middle of the 1970's. In the developing world, the dual processes of population growth and rapid urbanization are placing a tremendous strain on the system of settlements. Within the next 15 years, the entire urban population of the developing countries will double, and as has been noted by The Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development, during this same time frame, the developing world will have to increase the capacity to produce and manage its urban infrastructure, services and shelter by 65% merely to maintain present conditions.

In the meantime, chilling images of impoverishment and homelessness are relayed throughout the world by the media. It has been reported that every 24 hours, more than 50,000 people, most of them children, die of malnutrition and disease – deaths generally linked to lack of adequate housing. In Latin America alone, more than 20 million children are estimated to be living on the streets. This is due in part to the fact that between 1970 and 1980, the number of people experiencing "critical poverty" grew by 44%, from 90 million to 130 million.

Nor are the homeless confined to the slum and squatter settlements of the developing countries. In Western Europe, they are becoming more economically and socially diverse, and now include growing numbers of young people and the so-called 'new poor'. In Great Britain, the national housing advocacy group 'Shelter' reports that more and more families are becoming chronically homeless. A 1984 estimate showed that over four million people were living in substandard dwellings, and that the 140,000 who were
living in dormitory-style hostels represents an increase of 90,000 on the 1980 figure (none of the figures includes those who lack any form of shelter).(10) A 1985 Summit meeting of the European Economic Commission concluded that to become homeless is not usually a failure on the part of the individual but a failure of the social structure and social support systems that each society provides. As a result, the homeless in Europe are typically those who have the fewest resources to survive the social and economic changes imposed upon them by an economic development to which they are surplus, but it also reflects structures in the housing market, deficiencies in general housing policy and the frequency of relative poverty.(11)

In Canada, the IYSH has been instrumental in focusing attention on the fact that homelessness continues to be a problem particularly, but not exclusively, in the major metropolitan centres. As evidence emerges on the economic, social and political conditions which can constrain a person's choice and control over their living and housing conditions, the well-entrenched myth that the homeless are the architects of their own misfortune is slowly being eroded. There is growing recognition that the homeless in Canada are not only people without permanent accommodation, but also those who are experiencing social instability and economic insecurity. They include those at risk of losing, as well as those who have already lost their home.(12) This dissertation is offered as a contribution to the goals and objectives of the IYSH. It brings to the dialogue a geographic perspective which speaks to a number of related conceptual and substantive issues which have relevance to public policy considerations.
STATEMENT OF THESIS

Although geographers have so far expressed little interest in analysing the links between homeless people and sources of homelessness, certain basic geographic concepts are shown to provide a relevant and important contextual basis for analysing these links.

It is the thesis of this dissertation that:

The spatial distribution and diversity of the homeless in Canada are related to physical shelter problems and to a combination of individual, social and economic conditions which synergistically produce homelessness at a variety of regional, urban and local community scales.

Homelessness is defined as the absence of a continuing and permanent home over which individuals or families have personal control, and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic, health and cultural public services. Geographically, it is a predominantly urban-centred problem; in many regions of the country, homeless-related problems historically have been chronic, whereas in others, they are spatially and temporally episodic. This intentionally broad definition eschews alternative formulations which regard homelessness as being solely a temporary problem, or one which can be traced to a singular cause which, by inference, is amenable to a linear or singular solution.

The thesis is addressed in four related ways:

* There is an essential spatial dimension to the problem of homelessness which is at times reflected in variations in the composition and concentration of the homeless. A geographic frame of reference identifies links between sources of homelessness and sub-groups among the homeless.
Field observations and secondary sources are drawn upon to describe the diversity of the homeless and their predominantly urban concentration across Canada. The main sources of homelessness are reviewed and analysed.

Three related case studies examine the conditions and events which produce homelessness at varying geographic scales in Canada and illustrate how the composition of the homeless in particular places is influenced by specific local conditions as well as by broader social processes.

The final chapter presents the major conclusions and addresses the implications emerging from this study for further academic analysis of the geographic dimensions of homelessness. It ends with a discussion of public policy issues which link assistance to the homeless with comprehensive strategies to reduce homelessness in Canada.

The remainder of the present chapter addresses some of the conceptual ambiguities which surround the use of the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness'. 
HOMELESS PEOPLE AND SOURCES OF HOMELESSNESS: CONCEPTUAL AMBIGUITIES

There are widely diverging views about who the homeless are and what the concept of homelessness means. Despite the attention generated by the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, few attempts have been made to differentiate homeless people from sources of homelessness, with the result that no general consensus exists as to the scope and scale of the problem. Reliable information on homelessness is sparse and there is no accurate estimate of the number of homeless people across the country.

While the limitations on the nature and reliability of existing data have important theoretical and methodological implications for the current study, the methods chosen to collect and interpret the data are appropriate to the current state of the subject matter.

In Canada, as in other countries, accurate statistics on homelessness are difficult to obtain, in part because establishing reliable estimates of the homeless is complex and the results are often confusing. While much of the current emphasis involves making numerical and normative claims, the precise number of homeless nationally or in any one of the major cities at any given time depends upon the definition chosen, and on the descriptive boundaries of selected social, economic and geographic factors. To date, these criteria have not been applied consistently in local or national studies. For instance, if only those who have no shelter are counted, a relatively low estimate results; if those who rely on emergency shelters are included in a definition, one gets a larger estimate. When the definition is correlated with identifiable sources of homelessness (e.g. poverty or unemployment), far greater numbers are involved.
Recent attempts to quantify the homeless in Canada are inconclusive for a number of methodological and pragmatic reasons. Accurate measurement is difficult because the numbers and composition of the homeless change in response to such factors as national and regional economic policies, unemployment (particularly temporary, seasonal and regional variations), the availability and use of community-based support services, availability of low-rent housing, the incidence and persistence of poverty, season of the year, climate, day of the month and so on. In Appendix A, the results of a national inquiry which sought to estimate the homeless in Canada are reviewed, and questions raised about the limitations involved in this type of research. It is argued that the methods which were employed to enumerate the homeless have an important bearing on the results obtained, and perhaps more importantly, on the interpretation of these results.

Evidence to support the claim that the homeless are becoming increasingly diverse socially and economically was obtained from a number of primary sources. In depth consultations were undertaken with individuals and organisations active in providing assistance to the homeless. These included representatives of local, provincial and federal governments, private sector architects, developers, consultants, non-profit community organisations, and homeless people in five provinces. Field work included personal on-site observation in a range of shelter and housing projects, community support service programmes, emergency shelters, detox centres, provincial and local conferences and workshops in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. An extensive network of professional and volunteer contacts, established since January 1986, has provided advice and detailed information on what is happening in specific parts of the country.
There are obvious biases in the data and advice provided by these sources, some reflecting professional and personal self-interest and others related to partial knowledge of the synergy of the conditions which contribute to homelessness. Nevertheless, while every effort was made to accumulate the best available data, it is clear that more stringent efforts are required to produce more reliable numerical estimates which can be applied to policy and programme development, and which reflect the widely varying economic, social and geographic conditions across the range of provincial jurisdictions.

The present study demonstrates that the conceptual and practical differences between the terms homeless and homelessness have important geographic implications which are relevant to public policy interventions.

The conceptual ambiguity between homeless people and sources of homelessness is more than an issue of semantics. Definitions implicitly involve conceptual and practical implications which make a difference to:

* The legitimacy of the issue - e.g. how homelessness is defined has a bearing on whether or not it becomes a 'social problem' which society chooses to address;

* Reliable statistical analysis - e.g. who gets counted, where, how and for what purposes; and to

* Public policy considerations - e.g. in terms of implementing policies at appropriate levels of jurisdiction and responsibility. This point is examined by contrasting the range of efforts to assist the homeless with the limited policy-based approaches to reduce the incidence of homelessness.
Homelessness as a 'Social Problem'

The ways in which the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness' are used largely depends upon the particular context:

A social problem is a unique configuration of events and behaviours, unique because some condition or situation is singled out for attention, and efforts to solve the problem influence the course of social change. This is the starting point for the political debate over policy options. Until then, the political debate is over whether or not there is a problem society ought to address. (13)

Since at least the eighteenth century the number of homeless has been tied to changes in economic conditions, but the social care for the homeless has been organised by "upper- and middle-class caretakers". Their desire for moral reform and fear of social disorder resulted in the homeless being classified as a social problem. In tracing what he describes as the "historical pathways of the homeless", Hoch argues:

I divide this brief history of the homeless into four historical time periods based on major changes in the classification and care of the homeless performed by their caretakers. Each period is marked by a label for the homeless problem that predominated during that time (vagrancy, tramping, deviant and victim). Such labeling was neither completely exclusive nor totally preemptive. I am focusing on categorical differences in order to emphasise not only how the definitions differed, but how the moral arguments and social power of upper-class elites and middle-class professionals classified homeless people as a public problem. (14) (Emphasis added).

According to Hoch, the homeless once again became an important social problem in the early 1980's when the worst economic recession since the 1930's hit the United States at the same time that a newly elected president initiated unprecedented cutbacks in federally funded public assistance programmes. Hoch argues that historical interpretations of the homeless remain relevant today since professionals and officials often incorporate concepts from the past into their definitions and proscriptions for the homeless:

10
The eclectic classification of the homeless today retains the older interpretations, but separates the homeless into distinct types according to the specialized criteria of different professions serving the homeless. These types are based on a combination of causal and moral criteria that reflect the contours of interpretation left behind by earlier efforts to channel the social and economic uncertainties of a changing homeless population into predictable tributaries of social order and care.(15)

Hoch classifies of the homeless using the twin axes of moral and causal criteria:

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<td>DEVIANT</td>
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<tr>
<td>From OUTSIDE the person</td>
<td>VICTIM</td>
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The horizontal axis outlines the moral criteria used to determine social responsibility for homelessness. The morally deserving are those who endure the burden of homelessness through no fault of their own; the undeserving suffer a privation brought about as a consequence of their own choice. The vertical axis identifies the causal criteria. The primary source of the homeless condition can be traced back either to psychological breakdowns within the individual or the pressures of social, economic, and physical forces external to the individual. The signposts of earlier pathways of reform still inform the judgments of different professionals. Missionaries devoted to converting the immoral and police committed to incarcerating the unlawful tend to perceive the homeless as vagrants or tramps whose predicament is self-imposed. In contrast, psychiatrists and psychologists focus on the causes of the individual mental and physiological illness that set the homeless apart as deviant or disabled, while social workers and organizers tend to explore how institutional forces have pushed people out of their shelter.(16)
Hoch points out that classifications of the homeless which are based on causal and moral assessment are predicated on the deployment of social power, and as a result contemporary caretakers, like their predecessors, pass judgement on the conditions, causes and intentions of homeless people "which mix compliance with care". He cautions however that such assessments by professional "specialists" may, when based on the power of position and the exercise of control, actually undermine the capacity of the homeless to fend for themselves, and reinforce the stigma associated with being labelled a "social problem".

Definitions, Enumeration and Measurement

The lack of consensus over what constitutes homelessness also makes a difference to statistical analysis - in particular, who is to be counted? How? Where? And for what purpose?

Recent attempts to enumerate the homeless in Canada and the U.S.A. are inconclusive (see Appendix A). Depending upon the particular definition and survey methods used, estimates varied from 20,000 to 100,000 in Canada, and from 250,000 to 4 million in the United States! (17) There is currently no reliable estimate of the homeless because the methods currently employed are not sufficiently sensitive to the diversity among the homeless or to the synergy of the conditions and events which produce homelessness in Canada. Since there is no single cause, and a limited number of in-depth local analyses, current estimates tend to be conservative and limited to specific sub-populations of the homeless. The most common estimates in fact are restricted to those who utilise the emergency shelter system, and in some cases, are actually estimates of the number of available beds in this system.
Definitions and Public Policy Considerations

Definitions of homelessness embody a conception of the source of the problem, and by implication, what are considered to be appropriate solutions. As Greve suggests:

The term 'homelessness' - like 'disablement', 'subnormality', or 'deprived' - represents the conceptualisation of a situation by people who make decisions about priorities in the allocation of social resources. Thus, how they interpret 'homelessness' bears directly upon policies and has implications for those who receive or fail to receive services. The meaning placed upon 'homelessness' by officials and politicians, is therefore of considerable importance in relation to defining need and determining the nature and volume of resources to be allocated.(18)

Given the political structure in Canada, where housing, employment, social services, health, education and so on, are the responsibility of individual ministries, and given the constitutional jurisdictions of the federal and provincial governments, specific public policies and the allocation of resources are critical to the implementation of remedial or proactive solutions. As Hulchanski has argued:

The current political debate over homelessness in economically advanced countries such as the U.S. and Canada is best understood as a contest over the policy status of this issue. It could break into the arena of serious public consideration and public action, or it could be dismissed as insignificant and gradually blend into the accepted order of things. This explains why much of the literature and media coverage of homelessness, at this stage of its development as a public issue, is preoccupied with making numerical and normative claims.(19)

This point can be illustrated by examining how definitions are related to courses of action. In the United Kingdom for example, the tradition for some is to equate homelessness with actual rooflessness. Others focus narrowly on personal characteristics of the homeless and propose explanations based on varying degrees of social incompetence. The tendency in this case is to regard those who become homeless as representing a "special" problem requiring "special" - often institutional solutions.(20)
Finally, others such as Greve argue for a broader perspective which differentiates between a dwelling and a 'home', and therefore between rooflessness and homelessness. Greve argues that a home is more than a place. It is also imbued with a set of personal relationships which are as vital to a person's security and well-being as having four walls and a roof over one's head:

What seems to be crystallising from the present concern with definitions is a distinction - and an awareness for the need for such a distinction - between 'houselessness' and 'homelessness'. There is a trend away from the former - from the view that homelessness means simply being without accommodation - to a recognition of homelessness as a more complex state, something multi-dimensional, involving the quality of life, and particularly of relationships between members of a family (or household), and not just the possession of a roof over one's head. The emphasis is shifting away from 'house' towards 'home' with all this implies psychologically and emotionally.(21)

When homelessness is defined as a housing problem in Britain, the response has been to seek housing solutions, ranging from extensive programmes of local Council House rental construction, to the provision of incentives to promote home ownership among renters, and to guarantee shelter protection under the 1977 Homeless Person's (Housing) Act.(22) Where it is considered to be related to personality traits, the response is to look to the social work and health-care professions for ways of 'treating' the problems. How the problem is defined therefore, significantly influences the type and scope of remedial action taken.

In Canada, the ambiguity surrounding the appropriate use of 'homeless' and 'homelessness' is reflected in the fact that most of the emphasis is on assisting the homeless. These efforts are most often initiated by local organisations, especially voluntary and non-governmental agencies, and are predominantly project and programme responses to immediate problems. However, since homelessness is produced at a variety of geographic scales, local
initiatives need to be complemented by public policies to ensure the effective mobilisation of resources, and also to ensure that proposed solutions appropriately reflect local, community and regional differences in homelessness.

The remainder of this chapter outlines the organisation of the dissertation.

Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 presents the main geographic frame of reference for the study of homelessness in Canada. It is based on three related arguments: (i) homelessness results from reciprocal relations between human agency and broader economic and social processes; (ii) these relations become manifest in identifiable spatial arrangements at varying spatial scales; and (iii) these spatial arrangements in turn influence both the composition of the homeless in specific geographic locations and the incidence and persistence of homelessness (regional conditions and particular places make a difference to the reciprocal relations through which homelessness is constituted and transformed).

The reciprocal relations between human agency, social processes and spatial arrangements which produce homelessness can be identified by examining economic and social processes which combine regionally, and conditions and events which contribute locally to the changing composition and concentration of the urban homeless. One conclusion from this argument represents a contribution to the debate on homelessness which previously has not been explored. While homelessness is manifest in individual problems in the major urban centres, it is related to conditions which are constituted at a variety of spatial scales. Homelessness is therefore not fundamentally a problem of cities, but rather a problem in cities.
In Chapter 3, field observations and a review of recent studies from across Canada are presented to demonstrate that the homeless constitute a broad social and economic spectrum of society, and that the composition of the homeless in the 1980's is more diverse than during earlier periods. The stereotypical transients who drifted across the country in search of work or adventure, and the single older men on welfare who have traditionally occupied the skid row areas have been joined by women, children and entire families; Canada's homeless now include the young, old, handicapped and the able-bodied, those who have given up and those who are being passed over.

Chapter 4 examines the conditions and events which contribute to the problems of the homeless. Ten major sources of homelessness are identified including: housing affordability, displacement, deinstitutionalisation, the lack of adequate community support services, poverty, unemployment, insufficient social assistance benefits, family breakdown, individual responsibility and social attitudes. A review of the international literature on homelessness corroborates the Canadian experience that personal problems and housing issues are commonly linked to broader social, economic and political conditions. Two significant conclusions emerge from the review: (i) homelessness in Canada appears to be both a condition of and in some cases a response to a variety of inter-related problems; (ii) the synergy of the conditions and events which produce homelessness suggests that place significantly influences the particular forms homeless-related problems can take. These issues are central to the case studies in chapters 5-7.

Three case examples are used to underscore that homelessness in Canada is not, and has never been solely a housing or shelter problem.
In Chapter 5, at least three economic conditions are shown to have contributed historically to regional and temporal variations in the incidence and severity of homelessness. In the first half of the century, poverty and unemployment were major sources of homelessness, particularly during periods of economic crisis such as occurred during the 1930's. With only a rudimentary system of public assistance, the onus was on individuals to support themselves and their families. The emergence and strengthening of the social welfare 'safety net' during the 1950's and 1960's coincided with a period of sustained economic prosperity during which living conditions improved substantially but economic pre-conditions for homelessness, while considerably reduced, were not eliminated. Suggestions that homelessness is once again on the rise in the 1980's are corroborated by examining trends in income, poverty and unemployment in the last two decades. The effects of the economic recessions of the mid-1970's, coupled with government policies of fiscal restraint have resulted in a weakening of the welfare consensus and in a resurgence of economic sources of homelessness in many parts of the country. These effects are linked to patterns of uneven economic development across the provinces, but homelessness has increased even in the more prosperous regions, partly because of the weakening welfare consensus, and also because of the relatively high cost of living in cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. This claim is supported by examining the inadequate provision of income assistance in these jurisdictions.

While the analysis relies on aggregate data, the spatial impact of the economic trends outlined are shown to be locally manifest in community and personal problems.
Chapter 6 examines conditions which have substantially altered the composition of the socially marginalised homeless and service-dependent groups, and transformed the internal structure of the city. While there has always been a core group of transient homeless men in Canada, their number and distribution have altered in recent years as a result of the unintended consequences of deinstitutionalisation policies, and as their traditional skid row milieu has come under intensive redevelopment pressures. The effects of these related social and economic processes are analysed within the context of the vital role which the inner city plays in providing a supportive community for the homeless, marginalised and disenfranchised.

Homelessness is shown to be clearly related to personal and social conditions and events, and at the same time to economic considerations which are related to reductions in the supply of low-cost accommodation appropriate to the needs of poor inner city residents. The analysis of the processes which have combined to create and subsequently alter skid row, and which have contributed to making this milieu home by choice for some, and by default for others, demonstrates a specific instance of how the dialectic relations between social processes and spatial form operate in practice.

Chapter 7 recognises the fundamental significance of housing problems as a necessary but not sufficient pre-condition for homelessness, but it addresses the issue in a way not previously seen in Canadian studies. It illustrates how local conditions and events and broader social and economic processes combine to produce housing problems among four sub-groups of the homeless.

Two related propositions are discussed: is the housing dimension of homelessness simply the most recent formulation of the historical problem of providing housing for people who cannot afford the private market (in
effect, an income problem)? Or is there something substantively different about the current situation which sets it apart from past housing crises?

An analysis of housing problems in Canada reveals that the particular characteristics of the present housing market, and changes in housing policies which affect the shelter needs of the poor, have produced a set of circumstances which were not evident during earlier periods of pronounced homelessness in Canada. The historical evidence suggests that Canada began the post-WWII period with a large stock of aging and substandard housing and a substantial number of households living in overcrowded and slum conditions. Recent indications are that the housing problems of low-income people are related to issues of affordability and to shortages of low-cost housing which can be traced in part to the changing internal structures of cities. These changes have produced a number of related conditions which together constitute a qualitative change in the urban housing market: the older low-cost rental accommodation is being allowed to deteriorate to the point that it is taken out of the market while the land on which it is situated increases in value; and the traditional rooming houses, boarding homes and residential hotels are disappearing.

The traditional issue of housing need outstripping effective market demand is being exacerbated by a series of related social, economic and policy trends, including: changes in the composition of the poor (particularly among women, single employable but unemployed individuals, and youth); the unmet promise of deinstitutionalisation and the fulfilled objectives of inner city revitalisation; and changes in government housing programmes and policies under federal and provincial jurisdiction.
The final chapter brings together the conclusions derived from field observations, the review of the literature and the analyses in the case examples, to substantiate that homelessness in Canada is deeply rooted in the individual, social, economic and political structure of Canadian society. Among these various sources, there are some which are directly linked to homelessness whereas others are contingently related, in various ways, and for different homeless groups. From a geographic perspective, homelessness is seen to be manifest at varying spatial scales, which in turn alter the pre-conditions for the emergence of homelessness and the composition of the homeless. While it has been argued in some quarters that a certain measure of homelessness is endemic to Canada's urban population, a major contribution to the debate from the results of this study is that homelessness is not exclusively produced by cities, or by any other singular source.

Chapter 8 also addresses public policy considerations. Homelessness in Canada is subject to public policy resolution, of which housing is a vital, but not exclusive part. Homelessness cannot and will not be solved by governments alone. The viability of systematic, sustained and cost-effective strategies to assist the homeless and reduce homelessness in Canada, rests with the willingness and commitment of the public and non-governmental sectors to co-ordinate their efforts and work in concert with the poor and disadvantaged.

Using examples of relatively successful approaches to addressing homeless-related problems across the country, three concepts are advanced which should be an integral part of a policy framework to solve homelessness in Canada. They are predicated on the assumption that the goals of public policy in this area include developing initiatives to assist the homeless create a
home, and ultimately identifying generic criteria which would allow for the replication of locally derived solutions on a regional basis.

The three concepts are: **Progressive Adaptation** - a staged or incremental process of providing support and resources which is sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to the changing and variable needs of the individual as (s)he progresses or regresses. The process is based on the concept of aided self-help, and can apply to either a residential setting or to community-based opportunities to regain productive self-sufficiency; **Facilitative Management** - a process which fosters the development of communities of people who choose to act together to improve their well-being. The primary goal is to create a residential or community environment which empowers people to make choices and decisions to improve their living conditions and personal relationships, but also includes an approach to housing management.

The success of the previous two concepts depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of **Community Supportive Living** - which recognises that people require a supportive environment within which to regain their self-sufficiency and stability, and become re-integrated within the community of their choice. By designing community-based programmes productively **with** the consumer, and by ensuring that support services are flexible, portable and "de-linked" from housing requirements, a spectrum of comprehensive and co-ordinated options can be provided which tailor programmes to the individual, and strengthen their ties to the community.
Notes


3. The Vancouver Declaration endorsed 64 recommendations which would integrate settlement policies, settlement planning, the provision of shelter, infrastructure and services, land use and land tenure, the role of popular participation, and effective institutions and management.

4. Up to 50% (in some cities nearly 80%) of the urban population currently lives in slums and squatter settlements in which the population is increasing at twice the rate of the cities themselves. This represents an annual growth rate of 3.5%, or some 49 million people. In 1950 only two cities in the developing countries had populations of over five million. By 1980 there were 26 such cities, 19 of them in the developing countries. By the year 2000, given current trends, 60 cities will have populations of over 5 million; 45 of them are in the developing countries. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements 1986, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.


6. UNCHS(Habitat). Building for the Homeless.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. The Canadian estimates come from the Canadian Council on Social Development which reported in 1986 that between 20,000 and 40,000 Canadians were absolutely homeless, but also employed a definition of homelessness which was equated with poverty (and according to the CCSD, over 4.5 Million people were living below the Statistics Canada poverty line in 1984). The U.S. estimates are derived from studies by HUD (250,000 - 350,000) and the Community for Creative Non-violence (over 4 million).

18. John Greve's research has had a significant impact on how the concept of homelessness has come to be defined, and how it relates to the broader question of what constitutes a home. His landmark 1964 study of homelessness in London argued the need for greater clarity and agreement in how these concepts are defined and operationalised. John Greve. Homelessness in London, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1964.

19. Hulchanski. "Who are the Homeless?"


22. A review of the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act by Paul Watchman of Dundee University, suggests that homelessness has grown rapidly in the U.K. over the past ten years, and that although 150,000 people are officially recognised as being homeless, "this does not include housing conditions which any civilised country would condemn". According to Watchman, the three main objectives of the act were:

   i. To transfer primary responsibility for housing homeless persons from social services/ social work departments which did not have direct access to housing accommodation, to housing departments which did have (and by so doing
to emphasise that homelessness was itself first and foremost a housing problem and not the result of human frailty);

ii. To establish a legally enforceable right to assistance for homeless persons;

iii. Encourage a corporate approach to the problem of homelessness and end what had become an internecine struggle between social services/social work departments and housing departments (and to place stress on the need to take preventive action to ensure that accommodation is not lost rather than merely responding to the crisis of becoming homeless).

The goal of advocates of the act was that all homeless people have priority for public housing. They succeeded only with families, the elderly, and the handicapped; single people and childless couples were excluded. Also, families considered intentionally homeless can be barred from priority government housing. Watchman, Paul. "Homelessness 1977-1987: A Decade of Distress and Disappointment", Paper presented at the International Conference 'City Renewal through Partnerships', Glasgow, Scotland, July 7, 1987.
CHAPTER TWO: GEOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS OF HOMELESSNESS
It seems obvious that space makes a difference. We have only to reflect upon the most mundane of our activities to recognise its effect: that things must be in the right place if we are to use them or be affected by them is commonsense...[But] how important is it and how should space and its supposed effects be understood? What are the implications of space for social theory and practice? (1)

There is an inherent spatial dimension to the problem of homelessness which is related to variations in the composition and concentration of the homeless. To date however, this dimension has received little attention by analysts or by those engaged in seeking solutions to the problem. Research by geographers has tended to focus on specific sub-populations among the homeless (e.g. the mentally ill released into communities from psychiatric institutions, or the traditional homeless transients who occupy skid row and inner-city neighbourhoods), or on a particular source of homelessness (e.g. the lack of affordable housing, displacement or gentrification). While this research provides valuable insights into particular aspects of the homeless and some of the problems they face, it is often limited by a narrow focus of inquiry which neglects the essential synergy of the conditions and events which combine to produce variations in the incidence of homelessness at different spatial scales, as well as producing specific concentrations of homeless people.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a geographic frame of reference which will be used throughout the dissertation to make the following case:

* Homelessness results from reciprocal relations between human agency and broader social and economic processes;

* These relations are constituted in, and become manifest in identifiable spatial arrangements, but at varying spatial scales;
* Regional economic and social conditions, and specific geographic locations make a difference to the reciprocal relations through which homelessness is constituted and transformed.

* The processes through which homelessness is constituted cannot be understood simply by tracing identifiable concentrations of the homeless, a point which was seriously overlooked in the recent National Inquiry on Homelessness conducted by the Canadian Council on Social Development in 1987.(2)

The main thrust of this argument is that homelessness is constituted in specific places which have an important bearing on how and where specific problems become manifest.

A GEOGRAPHIC FRAME OF REFERENCE

The perspective chosen to examine the geographic dimensions of homelessness in Canada stems from the argument that the interactions between individuals and society are fundamentally influenced by the places in which these interactions are carried out, and as a result, the spatial form of social activity cannot be ignored in explanations of the processes which creates it. Spatial patterns should not be regarded however as merely providing the backdrop within which social activity takes place. Rather, these arrangements substantially influence the ways in which society is constituted and re-constituted in particular places because the space-society dialectic is an integral part of social activity.

This perspective is by no means original. Classical geographic studies of region, place, community, pays de vie, localism, etc. have long recognised that places differ from one another, and that these differences can have socially meaningful effects.
The present study contributes to this tradition, as well as to the debate in social theory concerning the significance of space in relation to social processes and practice, by the nature of the subject matter under investigation.

There has recently been a geographic analysis of one element of homelessness in Canada and the United States in which the authors argue:

Any narrative about landscapes, regions, or locales is necessarily an account of the reciprocal relationship between relatively long-term structural forces and the shorter-term routine practices of individual human agents.(3)

Dear and Wolch suggest that the economic, political and social processes which produce a given geographic outcome evolve at different temporal rates, although they are also place-specific, in the sense that "these relationships unfold in recognizable 'locales' according to some precise logic of spatial diffusion".(4) However, they argue that it is not possible to predict the exact spatial outcome of the interaction between structure and agency, because while individual activities are framed within a particular structural context, they can also transform the context itself:

Geographical patterns...are evolving manifestations of a complex social process. As society evolves, so does its spatial expression; but by the same token, the geographical form will have repercussions on the social forces themselves.(5)

The authors examine the links between deinstitutionalisation and homelessness by tracing the development and persistence of what they term "the service-dependent ghetto" which has been created by "skilled and knowledgeable actors (or agents) operating within a social context (or structure), which both limits and enables their actions":

...in the context of urban-based service-dependent populations, our use of the term "ghetto" differs in certain respects from its more common usage
by social scientists in reference to racial or ethnic minorities (i.e. black ghetto, Jewish ghetto). In these latter cases, the term implies spatial concentration; the use of majority force or coercion (physical; legal; social practice) in maintaining the ghetto pattern; and a sense of community and self-identification as ghetto-dwellers. In the case of the service-dependent population ghetto, spatial concentration may be lower in absolute degree; the use of coercion or force is minimal; and a sense of community may or may not be experienced by residents. However, social, economic and political practices, including service delivery policy, planning regulations and land-use zoning, poverty and discrimination, act to eliminate non-ghetto alternatives for the service dependent. Thus, like other ghettos, the service-dependent ghetto is a coercively constructed element in urban space, not simply a result of preferences for self-segregation (like an ethnic enclave) or the result of purely economic factors.

According to Dear and Wolch, "the geography of dependence" among the mentally ill in North America began in the late nineteenth century as large-scale institutions such as mental hospitals became the predominant setting for housing and treating various dependent populations. These facilities were located in isolated rural areas or in central city districts. With the emergence of community-based care after the 1950's, however, a dramatic turnabout in public policy resulted in massive reductions in the number of institutionalised people. Because the network of services which were supposed to facilitate their stability in the community did not materialise sufficiently, many drifted to the most run-down parts of the central core. At the same time, a variety of services were also concentrated in these areas, and the combination produced "service-dependent population ghettos".

Dear and Wolch's argument that "the reflexive impact of space on society" produces recognisable 'locales' according to a logic of spatial diffusion, significantly extends the geographic analysis of mental health, and underscores a number of common criticisms concerning some of the limitations of much of the spatial research in the 1960's and 1970's.
GEOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH

Medical geography has traditionally been concerned with the effective delivery of health care, notably in studies which have examined the provision, distribution and use of mental health facilities. Other studies have assessed how rates of hospital admission and release are affected by locational considerations such as distance, and others have correlated the spatial concentration of services and facilities with levels of use and perceived satisfaction. In each case however, the focus has been limited to a particular aspect of mental health rather than linking the various issues analytically.

Within the past two decades, there have been two distinct changes in orientation in geographic approaches to the study of mental health. The first reflected a shift toward the consideration of locational factors which have an identifiable impact on the lives of the mentally ill. This approach initially adapted concepts from economic geography, particularly locational analysis, to assess the significance of distance and accessibility in the provision, distribution and use of mental health facilities. Studies of optimal locations were common as geographers sought to convince themselves and others of the strategic significance of locational factors for public policy formulation.

Secondly, by the late-1970's, a sizeable body of literature began to emerge which explored the locational conflicts involved in the distribution of facilities, and the relocation of former mental hospital patients into the community. This concern about community mental health issues gained considerable momentum as deinstitutionalisation policies began to take effect. At this time, the so-called Quantitative Revolution in geography had
generated a whole new arsenal of techniques and an appeal for scientific credibility, which together were used to argue for the legitimacy of "a geography of mental health". In Canada, three related concerns were emphasised in this research:

(i) studies exploring community opposition to the siting of mental health facilities (e.g. the reasons given for the perceived 'noxiousness' of these facilities);

(ii) studies which attempted to distinguish between the "tangible and intangible externality effects" (the links to economic geography are clearly evident in the terminology used); and

(iii) studies which were concerned with trying to identify suitable neighbourhoods in which to locate mental health facilities.

While this research has been successful in introducing aspects of mental health to the geographers, it was less effective in demonstrating the importance of geographic considerations to analyses of homelessness.

By the early 1980's, deinstitutionalisation had become a preoccupation of many analysts in several disciplines, and much of the geographic research reflected this trend. The emphasis shifted from identifying optimal locations of facilities toward explanations for the spatial concentration and social isolation of the mentally ill, who tended to be characterised by the misnomer "ex-psychiatric patients". Much of this geographic research was based on identifying the exclusionary forces which were operating at the metropolitan or neighbourhood scales.

On a community level, Segal and Aviram (1978) describe how opposition to community based mental health facilities may be manifested through the exclusion of the mentally ill by either formal or informal mechanisms. The social and spatial segregation of the mentally ill has also been integrated into a Marxian theory of the state (Dear, 1981). This analysis focuses on the role of space as one key element in the social reproduction of class relations. Both Dear and Peet argue that inequality is perpetuated by individuals being locked into a "prison of space and resources" which in the case of the mentally ill, may represent the asylum, the ghetto, or the 'closed community. Furthermore, Dear implicates the active role of the state in the spatial and social
reproduction of the mentally ill, occurring most often through urban planning strategies. (17)

Throughout the 1980's, the research by Dear and a series of collaborators has been particularly influential among geographers studying mental health. Their analyses of the formation of spatial concentrations of the mentally ill in Ontario was based on the argument that the concentration of support services and service-dependent populations were indicative of a trend toward 'the public city'. According to this perspective, inner city abandonment and gentrification represent an inherent structural feature of urbanization which is necessary to instill social reproduction:

Given these conditions (abandonment and gentrification), the service-dependent populations, typified by limited incomes and mobility, form an available market to fill the vacuum created in the inner city. The resultant spatial delineation of populations (which may be reinforced by the state through planning mechanisms), is seen to be instrumental in setting in motion a self-reinforcing process reproducing the social and spatial inequalities already existing. Thus, from this perspective, the public city is seen as a functional inequality reproducing unit, rather than an ad hoc clustering of people and services. (18)

The analysis by Dear and Wolch raises a number of interesting geographic considerations about homelessness in Canada, but their study is limited by its narrow emphasis on deinstitutionalisation. Several of these issues relate specifically to this dissertation, but are addressed in a more broadly based examination of the synergy among the conditions which contribute to homelessness:

* The operation of the space-society dialectic in the genesis of homelessness;

* The spatial concentration and varying composition of homeless groups in relation to the interaction between agency and structure;
The differentiation between conditions and events which influence the spatial manifestation of homelessness, and those which produce specific concentrations of the homeless;

The previous consideration raises the possibility of ascertaining which (if any) sources of homelessness are essentially problems of cities, and which are problems in cities. The difference is significant for public policy considerations.

This last point represents an important geographic contribution to the homelessness debate which has not been previously addressed.

Harvey Lithwick has suggested that the growth of large cities leads to competing demands for scarce urban space, driving core prices upward and households outward. The poor become locked into the central areas with prices and rents squeezing them as urbanization proceeds.(17)

The present study differs from Lithwick's explanation in one critical respect. In discussing the housing problems of the poor, Lithwick stressed the 'urbanness' of the problem, contending that they did not occur in cities in the same way as they do in small towns and rural areas, "we might call them problems of the city to distinguish them from the simpler in the city problems".(20) While recognising that his focus was housing problems facing the poor, not homelessness, Lithwick's conclusion that the problem is fundamentally of cities is not supported here. Rather, it is suggested that the housing problems of the poor are not created solely by housing conditions, but are related to broader social, economic and political conditions which are not generated by cities.

Although homelessness in Canada is manifest primarily in the major urban centres, the pre-conditions for many of the economic and housing problems
originate at regional, national and in some cases international scales. This would suggest that homelessness is not fundamentally a problem of cities, but rather a problem in cities.

This conclusion does not negate the fact that cities are particularly important to an understanding of the dimensions and dynamics of homelessness in Canada. For instance, in chapter six, the inner-city is shown to be an important arena in which homeless-related problems have traditionally been concentrated. It has been an important source of supportive community living for the homeless and socially marginalised, and it has also been a trap for them. Recent developments have seen the inner-city becoming 'revitalised', and a sharp decline in low-cost accommodation in the area coupled with economic restraint measures which reduced the social services available, have threatened the stability and security of many people who regard this area as their home.

It should be noted that the conclusion drawn here differs in some respects from the analysis by Dear and Wolch, who argue that:

As institutions have been closed, discharged populations have gravitated toward specific zones in our urban areas. These have typically been core areas of the inner city, where the service-dependent have found helping agencies and housing opportunities. As dependent persons migrated to those urban locations (often from considerable distances outside the city), they attracted more services which themselves acted as a magnet for yet more needy persons. A self-reinforcing cycle of ghettoization was thus begun.

This specific urban manifestation of the deinstitutionalization process is, we believe, the key to understanding the history and possible future of our current social welfare dilemmas. We have previously referred to this phenomenon as the growth of the 'public city'.(21) (emphasis added)

From this perspective ghettoization is an informal process of spatial filtering through which a mobile minority of the more severely disordered gravitate towards areas of transient accommodation in the core areas of
cities. The inner city becomes a coping mechanism in the search for a home, a job, support services and help with the basic activities of daily living. (22)

There are two areas of considerable overlap between the present study and that by Dear and Wolch which stem from the common concern with identifying how spatial relations associated with homelessness are constituted in particular places. They relate to issues raised in connection with the analysis of 'localities', an approach developed most fully by geographers in the United Kingdom, but which is attracting a growing inter-disciplinary audience. (23) 'Locality studies' make the case that there is an essential spatial dimension to the interactions between individuals and broader social processes, and as a result, spatial relations make a difference to the way social relations are structured and transformed.

The term 'locality' has a precise meaning for the proponents of this perspective. (24) It is used to signify that there is something more involved in geographic differentiation than merely identifying distinct spatial units. It also incorporates the notion of local specificity, or in some cases local causality. (25) Locality Studies developed in part as a reaction against deficiencies in regional and spatial studies which claimed that spatial relations created social behaviour. Duncan discusses some of these intellectual cul-de-sacs in the debate over the relative significance of the social and the spatial. He contrasts the traditional perspectives in sociology and economics with those in geography and urban sociology:

(in economics and sociology)...societies and economies have been treated as though they exist on the head of a pin. In so far as space was admitted, this was usually just a matter of a minor and limited deviation from spaceless (and usually also timeless) social phenomena. This view
was handily confirmed by the opposite extreme of geography and urban sociology, where the autonomy of the spatial was, equally incorrectly, of prime explanatory importance. (26)

Duncan extends his critique to "non-traditional" theories (e.g. Castells' new urban sociology) in which the spatial is considered to be something produced by society, and can therefore be reduced to its social constituents. This type of explanation is argued to have developed as an over-reaction to spatial determinism. The following discussion of urban ecology studies illustrates the thrust of this general critique:

It was not just any space that determined social behaviour, but particular sorts of space. Drawing originally on the urban ecology of the Chicago school, and Wirth's "Urbanism As A Way Of Life", the assumption was that particular spatial arrangements - for example the urban - were fundamental to social organisation and behaviour - hence the urban way of life, urban society, urban managers and so on. That this view was essentially spatially deterministic probably helps explain why these theories were so attractive to geographers looking for replacements for the region and for the socially contentless spatial science. Community studies was a less theoretically assertive form of this deterministic use of spatial specificity. The notion was that particular social communities existed as spatially defined and autonomous social units - with the demise of urban ecology as a presentable theory - urban sociology could thus coalesce around community studies. Unfortunately for these attempts to create essentially spatial theories and disciplines, space is not autonomous from society nor does it determine social behaviour, (although) it does make a difference. (27) (Emphasis added).

These attempts to establish spatial theories of society were criticised for elevating the local basis of social structure above all others by theoretical fiat, or else because they depended on or resulted in spatial determinism:

These concepts were unable to distinguish between contingent and active effects and so ended up in the spatial fetishism of spatially determined social action. Theories of 'the urban', urban and rural social systems or ways of life, communities and neighbourhood, pays de vie and region have all been used in this way. That these concepts have been taken so far (and hence fatally overreached themselves) partly depends on the social need to find a distinctive theoretical base for explanatory theory. Threatened by the intellectual and social dominance of basic economic and social theory, both geography and urban sociology have clutched at spatial specificity in this unwarranted way. (28)
This critique of the traditional approaches to the study of the significance of spatial differentiation to some extent over-extends the arguments concerning the inherent limitations of these alternative approaches. By limiting the focus to redundant efforts to develop an explicit spatial theory, they diminish the significance of empirical and conceptual contributions from a substantial body of urban and social geography.

LOCALITY AND HOMELESSNESS

The argument from Locality Studies that spatial relations are constituted in particular places which are differentiated by the uneven development of natural and social structures is incorporated into the present concern with identifying variations in the conditions and events which produce homelessness in Canada. It is shown in chapter five, for example, that while spatial relations make a difference to variations in the incidence of poverty, these relations do not necessarily produce homelessness in particular poor regions of the country. The existence of poverty is not sufficient for homelessness to occur.

There is an additional dimension to Locality Studies which relates to the present concern with geographic dimensions of homelessness:

There may be localities with particular social effects but most of the time we are simply talking about local variations resulting from spatial contingency or, possibly, from local causal processes. These localities and their effects should be empirically demonstrated, rather than asserted, and "locality research" should perhaps be renamed "the case study method". Locality is not the place from which to start research. (29) (emphasis added).

Much of the empirical research is based on specific case studies which examine how local and non-local processes combine to produce particular effects in different areas. The Economic and Social Research Council in
Britain has invested a substantial proportion of its research funds in three major projects which involve detailed study of sub-regional areas:

* The Social Change and Economic Life initiative (SCEL),
* The Changing Urban and Regional Systems initiative (CURS),
* The Economic Restructuring, Social Change and Locality Programme (ESRC). (30)

The case study method is used in the present study to show that the problems affecting different homeless sub-groups can be traced to the direct and indirect effects of varying sources of homelessness which originate and interact at a variety of spatial scales.

THE GEOGRAPHIC CONCERNS

* There is an essential spatial dimension to the problem of homelessness, but geographic analyses to date are limited, both in number and in focus.

* A frame of reference which relates human activity to the space-society dialectic provides a basis from which to analyse conditions which influence regional variations in homelessness, and which produce local variations in the composition and concentration of the homeless.

* The significance of geographic differentiation within and between phenomena and places has been a traditional concern for geographers. The detailed examination of specific case examples provides a valid point of departure for linking local processes and aggregate data.
NOTES


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


9. For a review of this literature, see Pulcins, "Self-Help in Mental Health".

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. There are two notable exceptions. Bassuk's research, and the studies by Hopper and Hamburg discussed in chapter one, explicitly address the importance of space and place to an understanding of the dynamics of homelessness.


   There have been relatively few studies on the homeless mentally ill which have addressed geographic considerations:


17. Ibid. Pulcins reviews various contributions by geographers on the issue of bias in urban planning strategies: "it has been pointed out, for example, that 'least risk' zoning regulations are instrumental in restricting mental health facilities from some neighbourhoods, while consequently saturating those where least opposition is anticipated" (Wolpert, et.al., 1975; Segal and Aviram, 1978; Dear and Taylor, 1979, 1982). Joseph and Hall (1985) also comment that differential policies, or rather a variation in the translation of provincial policies as well as discrepant municipal bylaws are largely contributory to the varying levels of saturation of group homes between Toronto municipalities, and at a district scale, also within these municipalities. Furthermore, significant discrepancies in placement policies (of clients to facilities) within specific areas have been noted to encourage facility saturation in some neighbourhoods."

18. Pulcins. "Self-help". The formation of spatial concentrations of the mentally ill in Canada has also been analysed by Beamish who argues that the high concentration of service-dependent individuals in the inner city can be attributed to a formal process whereby patients are assigned to agencies in particular areas. In addition however, there is an informal filtering process whereby patients gravitate to inner city areas since they provide cheap rental accommodation, high concentrations of support facilities and more tolerant community attitudes to "deviant behaviour". See C. Beamish. "Space, State and Crisis: Towards a Theory of the Public City." Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Dept. of Geography, McMaster University, Hamilton, 1981.


20. Ibid.

21. Dear and Wolch, Landscapes of Despair. They go on to argue: "other commentators have drawn attention to the deep-rooted social changes currently affecting modern cities. Manuel Castells, for example, has referred to the essentially anarchistic process of contemporary urbanization in what he calls the 'wild city'. Stanley Cohen (somewhat more sinisterly) views the development of community-based care as an exercise in the dispersal of social control - in what he calls the 'punitive city'".

22. According to Pulcins, Dear himself has acknowledged that the specific areas in which empirical research were conducted (e.g. Hamilton and Toronto in Ontario, and San Jose in California), may be exceptional circumstances "because of the massive numbers of ex-patients discharged at one time, coupled with the existence of large scale areas fitting the description of the 'ghetto'." "Self-Help in Mental Health."

24. Duncan notes "The term (locality) has become, in similar but different ways, used as a shorthand for "place based relations between work and community" (Massey 1984), "local stratification systems" (Urry 1983), and the "key basis of collective identification in contemporary capitalism" (Cooke 1984, although indicatively he prefers in the end the notion of "region"). He outlines what the term locality is considered to entail:

i "locality" is a fashionable, but confusing and undeveloped term.

ii The concept does, however, refer to something important. Spatial variation and specificity are influential for social action and this influence is active as well as passive.

iii On logical grounds we would expect space, or at least spatial variation, to make a difference. This is, however, a passive contingency effect rather than an active causal effect. **This is our first level of socio-spatial interaction.**

iv Over and above this contingency effect, causal effects may be locally derived. **This is our second level.** Furthermore, a combination of these may create what can be called a 'locality effect'. The sum of locality derived causes is greater than the sum of the parts. In both these cases, our second and third levels of socio-spatial interaction, local variations are active in the sense of causally producing outcomes rather than just contingently affecting them. (Emphases added)

25. Causality is used in the realist sense of change being related to locally specific processes, as opposed to the Humean view of causality which holds that one event can only be the cause of the other if it occurs prior to it, and whenever the first occurs, it is always followed by the second. See A. Sayer. "The Difference that Space Makes". See also R. Harre. The Principles of Scientific Thinking, London: Macmillan, 1970

26. "What is Locality?"

27. Ibid. Duncan's paper has been the most useful in "unpacking" the central concepts of locality research. For example, he is one of the few authors who has taken the trouble to inform the uninitiated reader that the term 'locality' can refer to any sub-national place.

28. Duncan argues that this list is more or less a list of failures. "The literature is more or less agreed that if it wasn't for these concepts and the way they were used, then more and better work would have resulted (see Dunleavy 1980; Saunders 1979, 1980, 1981 for reviews)."
29. Ibid.

30. The ESRC approach differs from the other two in a number of ways which are relevant to the present study.
   i. The SCEL and CURS studies use a standardised survey approach to generate a comparable base of aggregate data with which to develop a comprehensive profile of economic change in specific localities. In the Sussex programme, each of the five localities are examined independently rather than as part of a comparative analysis.
   ii. The ESRC research relies more heavily on secondary data sources (from census, housing statistics, regional economic data etc., and stresses the importance of integrating this material with the knowledge and experiences of key individuals who are well qualified to comment on the trends in different localities.

The case study method followed in the present context is more similar to the ESRC programme than to the others.
THE DISTRIBUTION OF CANADA'S HOMELESS

They are visible in most Canadian cities -- people who for a variety of reasons, and for varying lengths of time, sleep in doorways, under bridges, in derelict buildings, in darkened recesses of back alleys, in the parks, or in makeshift shelters which are dismantled with the first light of dawn. During the day they wander the streets, trying not to appear conspicuous so as not to draw undue attention to themselves. Their routine often involves frequenting public buildings and spaces which afford some respite from the daily drudgery of securing food at the soup kitchen or the food bank; entering the revolving door into the tangled web of the social services system; re-emerging frustrated, out into the streets to continue a well defined but essentially meaningless itinerary until it is dark enough to hole up for the night, perhaps with some distilled elixir to block out the fear and loneliness for even a short time.

The homeless flotsam and jetsam of urban society are not a new phenomenon. What is new and significant, is that the traditional indigent and transient represent only a fraction of those who are homeless in Canada today.

A growing number of descriptive profiles of the homeless have been produced in response to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Usually evocative and often sensational, they reflect a growing, although in some cases reluctant recognition, that there are homeless people in every major metropolitan region in Canada who do not fit the traditional stereotype of the vagrant who has opted out of society with a bottle. Opinions differ widely as to the exact numbers involved, on the reasons why people become homeless, or indeed that a problem exists.
CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOMELESS AND MARGINALISED IN CANADA
The three excerpts below are indicative of how the homeless have been portrayed in Canada. They illustrate two related issues: the heterogeneity among those who are categorised as homeless, and the strategic role which the media have played in influencing perceptions about the homeless and the sources of their problems:

In many cases the roots of a homeless person (not unlike my own) can be traced from a moderate- to middle-class background complete with high school education. Many were married with responsibilities and well-paying positions. For every 'wine head' and 'space cadet' I have encountered, I have met five potential candidates for the arts, political sciences, engineering, mathematics, and physics fields, for the ministry, for the labour movement, even those who would have made excellent strategists on the battle fields. The socio-economic backgrounds of these people whom, for whatever reason, have become homeless are as diverse as their lives. There are numerous factors that come into play and contribute to a homeless person's condition. One possibility may simply be because people are human and, therefore, subject to human mistakes. Maybe they couldn't fully comprehend how to deal objectively with matters in their personal lives. Maybe they found it impossible to cope with a demanding system that can only offer expensive material rewards of dubious quality. Maybe the strain of competing against their fellow workers in their haste to 'reap the spoils' paradoxically drove some to alcohol and ruin. Maybe some never truly had a chance from the beginning and so were defeated before they began. Maybe some just gave up in frustration.

Much can be said about being homeless, but nothing can express the humiliating slap suffered to one's dignity and intelligence for being poor in affluent North America. A poor and homeless person may never have enough money, but he 'breaks the house' every time when it comes to frustrations. [Frustration] hovers around you like a cloud of enraged hornets and follows you into the hostel where you're assigned a bed among a group of people, some of whom constantly snore, break wind, fight, argue, and who smell horribly. You finally throw your arms in the air and explode when the following morning at breakfast you are seated across from someone who isn't capable of keeping the contents of his nose from running into his moustache and who scratches himself because he has lice. It's when you catch someone else's lice, even though you keep yourself cleaner than any micro-chip plant in Silicone Valley, that your frustration turns to rage. This is when an ominous metamorphosis begins: then you feel as though you have broken the 'sane barrier' and left sanity behind.(1)

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The inquest begins today in Toronto into the death of a homeless woman, who died of the cold in December while sleeping in the back of an abandoned truck. The expectation in some quarters is that the jury will recommend that Toronto establish more hostels for women.
If this happens, it will be like cavalry galloping out to do battle against machine guns; the generals will be exactly one war late...More hostels would be a band-aid solution and, in the long run, as counter-productive for the homeless as food banks are for the hungry.

The founding principle of emergency shelters for women...was that a limited two-week stay would be sufficient for the staff and woman-in-crisis to find legal assistance, medical services, financial support, housing or whatever else she needed. The premise worked well until a few years ago, when cheap housing all but disappeared from the major cities.

The result is a Dickensian stream of women going from one hostel to another until they give up in discouragement and die in trucks. The hostels have become revolving doors for women with psychiatric problems, women trying to deal with alcohol or drug addiction, women just out of prison, jobless women with poor skills and the look of neediness that employers shun, women who do a little prostitution when desperate, women so numbed by adversity that they have retreated inside themselves to hide, women who are ill, women whose families don't want them, women who don't want their families, women with broken bones and smashed faces who have fled abusive men, and mothers searching the want ads while their high-strung children dart about craving attention, craving stability.

They are citizens of the invisible half world that stretches across this affluent country, their existence one of chronic hunger, humiliation, constant danger from predators and entire days spent in a search for a warm place to sleep that night. The limbo in which they wander is visited by the media and embarrassed politicians only when one of them dies on the street.(2)

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I was on the road, with few breaks, from the early summer of 1980 to the beginning of 1983. The geography through which I travelled was in the west because this is where the transients head, in their thousands, to escape the prospect of freezing winters. Nearly 80% of Canada's food banks are in the three most westerly provinces. But Last in Line is a national story. The jobless, homeless men and women I travelled with were from all parts of the country. The number of homeless people in Toronto alone has been estimated at forty thousand.

Most of the people I write about are not tramps and bums but men whose skills we no longer think we need. When a man steps outside the world he knows, as I did, or is forced out, as most of my fellow travellers were, it is as if he has dropped off the world. It is happening to men and women from many walks of life. Normalcy, where I went, is a state of siege. The abyss where men and women with no homes or steady jobs find themselves is nothing less than a slaughterhouse.

Vancouver. Ten beggars to the block. The metropolis.

In stale rooms, amid bladdery pods of dried blood, are men with every known disability. Victims of knife fights and fishing boat accidents, men whose lungs have been collapsed and whose brains have been scrambled, men with glass eyes and plastic legs, men with broken hearts, addicts - the halt, the lame, the blind, the jobless. They wash down out of the engine of a labouring world to these rooms, like tailings from a mine. This is the sink. A garbage dump for humans. Nature's revenge. Skid row.
Hastings Street feeds off its own misery. The sullen, bullying waiters, the timid novitiate air of the slummers, the police patrols, the chairwarmers in hotel lobbies, the prurient social workers trying to squeeze from all of this an essence with which they are comfortable, which can be explained. And the pathetic walkabouts by politicians and press - people from another planet- when yet another household-cleaning product is dramatically exposed as a popular intoxicant. "What do they think goes on down here," one guy asks, "polo?"

Many of the men of skid row now were good workers, recently laid off. Initially, they had brought a confidence that they would be back at work soon; but as time went on with no sign of a recall, they seemed to develop an incapacity for considering consequences, an undirected recklessness. As their initial Cossack mentality toward work disappeared, they became more like serfs in their drunkenness, their suspicions, their crafty obsequiousness.(3)

While these excerpts are among the more powerful vignettes written in recent years, they provide only partial insight into the social, economic and cultural diversity of Canada's homeless, and only hint at the array of problems which they encounter daily. In the following pages a descriptive profile of the changing composition of the homeless in Canada is presented to illustrate that the homeless in the 1980's represent a diverse economic and social cross-section of Canadian society. They are increasingly likely to be older women, children and families; they include the young as well as the elderly; 'new poor' and the 'traditional poor'; handicapped and the able-bodied; those who have given up and those who are being passed over. Media sources, regional analyses and observations from field work in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec are used to support the argument that the homeless are not all deranged, middle-aged alcoholic men or bizarre 'bag ladies' living on the street by choice and rejecting assistance. As has been suggested recently:

Of course the stereotyped image of the homeless does have a basis in reality. These homeless are typically a small proportion who have the least resources to survive the economic and social changes imposed on them by an economic development to which they are surplus. They have reached the final stage of a process of social decline, a reaction to unemployment, poverty and personal crises with which they have been
unable to cope adequately. They are to the public the most visible of the homeless. At the other end of the spectrum however, are the perfectly ordinary family or individuals who have lost their home through inadequate income to pay a mortgage or rent, or through domestic breakdown, or perhaps as a result of a landlord's wish to sell the property in which they are living. This group, by far the majority of those classified as homeless, are those who, in a society that gives priority to those whom the economy needs and wants, do not have the skills or qualifications which that society needs just now, and through unemployment find that they cannot finance their own accommodation. (4)

OBSERVATIONS FROM FIELD RESEARCH

Preparing the 1987 report on the scope and scale of homelessness in Canada for the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat), and helping to organize a conference on homelessness in British Columbia provided me with an opportunity to meet and work with homeless individuals and people with a professional interest in homelessness. My experiences have included interaction with 'street youth' and runaways; single-parents living on low or fixed incomes who are experiencing problems on a daily basis trying to ensure adequate food, clothing and shelter for their families; mature and elderly people living in isolation; (5) people with physical and mental disabilities for whom basic daily survival on fixed incomes and limited resources is a constant struggle; Native Indians who have moved to the city without familiar support systems; and refugees who have fled perilous conditions in their country of origin but now find themselves adrift in an alien and sometimes alienating host environment.

The following gives some indication of the heterogeneity among the homeless.

British Columbia

Transients

The transients who sleep under the Georgia Street viaduct and the Burrard Street Bridge, in Stanley Park, on the beaches at the University Endowment
Lands, and in the warehouse district in the downtown eastside core, range from teenagers who have worked at odd jobs to finance their journey across the country, to the older men described in *Last in Line*, who prefer the mild climate of 'terminal city' to the frigid winters in Central or Atlantic Canada. Many of them are 'running from' previous negative experiences (family breakdown, substance abuse, prison, unemployment), and others are 'running to' what they perceive to be better opportunities and the chance of a fresh start. Their domain is in part restricted to those places away from public view where they are tolerated by the police. The people with whom I continue to interact are extremely eclectic, sometimes eccentric individuals with varied life histories and problems. What distinguishes them for my purpose is their lack of permanent housing, and their propensity to chronic homelessness.

**Hotel and Rooming House Residents**

There is now a considerable and growing literature on the residents in the downtown eastside neighbourhoods of Vancouver who occupy the single room hotels. They include poor individuals and families, veterans, refugees and those described as 'hard to house' because of anti-social behaviour and personality disorders. Personal observations concerning the range of different circumstances, experiences and problems among these groups is consistent with the views expressed by people who work in the area or have written of the conditions. The overwhelming majority of residents (80%), rely on some form of income assistance. Because of a steady decline in the available stock of low-cost accommodation coupled with the lack of security of tenure in the rooming houses and hotels, evictions and displacement are not uncommon occurrences. The area has developed a reputation for having
a high concentration of sub-standard housing, which in terms of size and monthly rent make the shelter costs among the highest in the city.(10) It has become a receptacle for people who for various reasons are no longer welcome in other communities, and have gravitated to the area because of the concentration of support services provided. This concentration of services is not matched by employment opportunities, and people can become trapped within a lifestyle which relies heavily upon the welfare system.

Street Youth

Among B.C.'s homeless are street youth, many of whom have run away from home, and many have been forced to leave. Their average age is around fifteen.(11) They include both 'full time' and 'weekenders' or 'kerb kids', who return home on Sunday night. Some estimates suggest that there are between 400 - 500 regular street children in Vancouver, and as many as 200 in Victoria.(12)

It was particularly disturbing to interact with individuals who had barely entered their teens but had been living, 'working' and sleeping on the streets for varying lengths of time. Tales of abuse (physical, mental, sexual and drug), prostitution and crime were common, as was the perception that street life was exciting, although this seemed to alter with the length of time spent there. It was also frustrating to hear from some of these young people that they are too old for support services for juveniles, yet not old enough to qualify for adult services; even if they seek help to alter their lifestyle, they are caught in a bureaucratic revolving door.

Single-Parent Families

There were 50,000 single families in the Lower Mainland in 1986, 90% of which were headed by women.(13) Their risk of becoming homeless is related
particularly to issues of employment, income, poverty and the shortage of affordable and secure rental accommodation which is suitable for raising a family. Many are occupying 'illegal' basement suites in Lower Mainland neighbourhoods. Those who are relatively unskilled have difficulty securing employment which generates sufficient income to pay the costs of day care in addition to the expenditures on food, clothing and shelter. Although in Canada 57% of single women with children work, in some instances reliance on welfare, while often inadequate, is as remunerative as employment. There is at least one, albeit unintended consequence; the mothers get the satisfaction of being with their children.

**Seniors**

British Columbia has an above average concentration of older people residing in urban areas (85% for 65 - 79 ages and 90% for those 80 and above), with 50% of the province's seniors residing in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.(14) Becoming homeless is a very real concern among three groups: mature, unattached and economically vulnerable individuals (predominantly female); low income seniors (particularly renters); and those whose health is failing (particularly among those 80 years and beyond). Not all seniors can make their own choices without assistance, but because of a lack of widely available, easily accessible and inter-connected services in B.C., those who need help experience difficulty in knowing where to locate and access it.

From experience gained through working with the elderly in B.C. since 1977, my sense is that two issues of critical concern relate to the affordability of appropriate housing for those with low income and limited
resources, and the isolation and loneliness which can occur as people grow older and family ties weaken.

The Mentally Ill

People with mental health problems have received a disproportionate amount of attention in recent studies of homelessness, some of which is predicated on poorly informed views of the mentally ill. According to a Ministry of Health consultation report on a draft plan to replace Riverview hospital in British Columbia, as many as 100,000 adult and elderly persons are afflicted with a major mental illness at any particular time, and three times as many have less severe disorders. (15) While a proportion of these people can cope on their own with the help of family and friends, a significant group requires specialized treatment, and follow-up community support services. Two main groups can be identified: those with an acute illness which requires short term hospitalisation and outpatient treatment; and those with a chronic illness who experience long-lasting symptoms and disabilities, repeated treatment episodes, dependent life style, and a need for indefinite community support services (diagnoses include schizophrenia, psychosis, organic brain syndrome, and major affective disorders). (16) The report is significant in the present context because it concludes that significant numbers of formerly institutionalised patients now live in local communities as a result of the improvements made in pharmaceutical technology, advances in psychotherapies, rehabilitation, and patient management methods, but that "a substantial shortfall in mental health services exists in British Columbia". (17) The report estimates that 25-30% of outpatient mental health patients can be described as "difficult" and "multi-system users".

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Two groups are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless: young people (ages 18 - 35 are over-represented), who tend to use proportionally more services, often in a revolving-door fashion: "often they have had little or no hospitalization, are non-compliant with traditional office-based treatment, have few personal care, social or job skills, and among whom substance abuse is often an exacerbating problem"; and fragile and vulnerable elderly who, because of their isolation, may not seek help: "when they do get help, there is a complicated interplay between physical illness, brain dysfunction, and psychological conditions which make accurate diagnoses and effective treatment extremely challenging". (18) Outreach workers in Vancouver and Victoria who are responding to problems faced by mentally ill people living in the community suggest that there is a shortage of appropriate homes for them and as a result, many live in inadequate conditions. At present organizations such as the Coast Foundation, St. James Social Service Society, Cool-Aid Society, the Community Care Teams and the Urban Core Homeless Committee are involved in identifying the homeless mentally ill and finding ways to connect them to appropriate community support services. (19)

The range of groups outlined above is sufficient to allow two general observations. First, the homeless in British Columbia are not restricted to one particular category or sub-group. The previous vignettes could have been expanded to include: urban natives; refugees; people who have been unemployed for extended periods of time; those who are vulnerable because they can only secure temporary or part-time employment; groups other than the mentally ill who are unemployable; those whose full-time employment does not pay enough for them to meet their basic needs. However, as will be demonstrated,
considerable correspondence exists between the variety of homeless groups in British Columbia and other regions of the country.

Secondly, although they have widely varying backgrounds, experiences and problems, two broad categories among the homeless can be differentiated. There are those (particularly among the older transients, youth and mentally ill groups), who are homeless in the sense that they live on the streets or rely upon the emergency shelter system for prolonged periods of time. They correspond to the "absolute" classification of the homeless employed by the U.N. Commission on Human Settlements. Others among the elderly, single-parents, single room hotel occupants and the mentally ill, correspond more closely to the U.N.'s definition of people "at risk" of becoming homeless because of their tenuous living and housing conditions.

**Alberta**

The Edmonton Coalition on Homelessness (ECOH), examined the scope of homelessness in the Edmonton CMA between November 1986 and February 1987. Their study, based on a comprehensive literature review, a survey of support agencies and interviews with professionals and homeless people, concluded that the homeless in Edmonton could be divided into four broad groups, each of which include chronically, periodically and temporarily homeless people:

1. The "absolute" homeless -- persons who have no housing alternatives and little or no income;

2. "Substandard unit dwellers" -- low-income persons who live in accommodation that does not meet basic physical standards of safety, sanitation, maintenance, privacy, access, adequacy and/or affordability;

3. "The sheltered homeless" -- low-income persons living in emergency or transitional accommodation; and

4. "The alienated homeless" -- low income persons living outside emergency or transitional accommodation with little or no social or health support network needed to maintain their housing.(20)
Twenty years ago, homelessness in Edmonton was a concept usually only associated with the Boyle Street community, the "skid row" area which housed the Salvation Army hostel and the single men's hostel. It was the home for transient labour moving between Edmonton, the northern industries or the agricultural communities. The period of rapid economic prosperity resulted in an increase in transient labour with a corresponding increase in shelter beds. At the time the survey was taken in 1986/87 however, nine "general client group categories" among Edmonton's homeless population were identified:

1. Single unemployable/employable men and women/ low income families;
2. Alcoholics and those in trouble with drugs;
3. Elderly;
4. Persons with psychiatric histories;
5. Immigrants;
6. Native Canadians;
7. Youth;
8. Disabled;

It is important to note that even among the "sheltered" category, less than a third of the homeless in Edmonton today can be classified under the traditional perception of the 'homeless' as mainly single, middle-aged males who are unemployable.(21)

Although the Edmonton survey recognised the difficulties inherent in establishing reliable estimates of the four broad categories of homeless, the report suggests that between 785 and 1,570 people are absolutely homeless in the census metropolitan area.(22) Using 1981 census data, a conservative estimate of the "substandard unit dwellers" indicated that 10,680 private dwellings were in need of major repair in Edmonton.(23) From a survey of emergency and transitional shelters, 1500 people were estimated to be among the "sheltered homeless" during an average month.(24) No data were provided on the "alienated" homeless.
Manitoba

We don't have the nouveau poor. Winnipeg doesn't get caught in the boom-bust cycle. We're always in the bust cycle. Many of the people in the soup kitchen are veterans of skid row. But others are still in the prime of their youth.(25)

Like many other major cities, Winnipeg is experiencing an increasing presence of homeless people. The city has a shortage of affordable housing for people on low or fixed incomes, and there is a significant native population, many of whom have difficulty assimilating into the prevailing white society. Their difficulties are often marked by an absence of stable past residency.(26) Many marginally functioning and chronically homeless individuals in the city core rely heavily on social services because their behaviour is such that they have exhausted the other options. They go through the revolving door of welfare, courts, criminal justice, health care, and alcohol treatment systems. Since few landlords will keep these individuals for any length of time, and many are barred from the Salvation Army hostel, their alternatives are to sleep in the alleys, on the riverbanks, in empty buildings, bus shelters, laundry rooms or at the Main Street Project emergency shelter.

The few reference sources which exist are limited to surveys of the city's skid row area, and in particular to those who frequently use the Main Street Project, which provides crisis intervention, emergency referral services, street patrol, emergency shelter, intoxicated persons holding area, sub-acute detoxification centre, case management and assessment unit, and a day treatment program in the heart of the city's skid row area.(27) Christopher Hauch's ethnographic study of Winnipeg's skid row area, and Richard Brundridge's contribution to an evaluation of the Main Street
Project, both point to certain general characteristics among this particular subset of Winnipeg's homeless population.

Hauch reviewed records of the clientele frequenting the Main Street Project between 1975 and 1979, indicating that in each of these years, approximately 3500 individuals used the services provided. While a certain number used the project once or twice, there were about 2000 regulars (averaging 8.5 contacts annually). According to Hauch's estimation, about 72% of the regulars were Native (treaty and non-treaty), 26% were Caucasian, most were middle-aged males with few marketable skills, and all were living in poverty. (28)

The 1986 review of the clients who frequently use the Main Street Project recorded the following information:

1. Most clients are male (79%), and under age 45 (75%). The average age of the hostel population is 37 years. Persons of native and non-native ancestry each comprised one-half of the population. Clients were relatively younger than Winnipeg's population aged 18 years-plus, and more frequently of native ancestry than the city's population; (29)

2. Almost all clients have been dependent on some form of public assistance and, as a group, have had very high levels of unemployment or underemployment;

3. A high degree of mobility within Winnipeg has marked the hostel population - nearly 75% of clients experienced two or more address changes in the twelve months prior to their most recent admission; about 10% have been mobile between Winnipeg and other parts of Manitoba, and 17% between the city and other parts of Canada;

4. Nearly 75% had been assessed as frequent abusers of alcohol;

5. Among sub-populations, females, persons under age 25, clients of native ancestry, and those assessed to require some assistance in terms of 'mental ability' tended to be more disadvantaged and more likely to deviate from the average for all clients in terms of residence and assessment characteristics.

Brundridge, and staff at the Main Street Project, suggest that the 'typical' client of the project is:
Male, native, between 18 and 33 years of age, educational attainment between grades 7 and 12, an unskilled worker, who is now and for at least the past twelve months has been unemployed. He has given up the search for work, and subsists for the present on social assistance. He is likely to be living alone in Winnipeg, and has a history of moving about within the city. It is likely he will spend between 2 and 6 weeks at the hostel this admission.(30)

Ontario

The majority of those categorised as homeless are spatially concentrated in Toronto and Ottawa, although having reviewed media sources and the proceedings of a series of regional conferences undertaken throughout 1987, it is evident that the problem is not confined to these two cities.(31)

The problem in the outlying municipalities is less apparent, and the homeless are less visible. Battered women are staying with abusive mates, or returning to them from shelters or refuge with friends, because they cannot find affordable accommodation. People are subject to the strains of living 'doubled up' - two families in a space meant for one. For example, Metro Toronto Housing Authority estimates that 25,000 are living illegally with the 100,000 legal tenants in the 32,000 subsidized units which the Authority oversees.

Among the many reports on homelessness in Ontario, the overwhelming majority argue that the lack of affordable housing is the single most important precipitant. Historically, Toronto and Ottawa have had identifiable populations of inner-core transients, chronic and episodic homeless people. Their composition and problems are similar to those of people in skid rows in other parts of the country, and are described in detail later.(32) However, evidence from studies conducted prior to and during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless suggests that in addition to these traditionally poor and socially marginalised groups,
increasing numbers of families (two- and especially single-parent) and employable singles (particularly younger people), are becoming homeless and remaining so for longer periods than in previous decades.

The media in recent months have highlighted the plight of families who have been reduced to sleeping in tents in Ontario, because they cannot obtain decent and affordable housing:

Campgrounds in and around Toronto have become makeshift shantytowns in a prospering, job-rich society. Their residents are part of a new group-the working homeless. The new-style bedroom community presents a vivid picture of the gap between rich and poor, and illustrates the extreme shortage of rental accommodation in the greater metro area... In Metro, the vacancy rate is 0.4%, which means that 426 units out of 262,860 are available at any one time to prospective tenants. In Mississauga, the vacancy rate is 0.2%, giving 51 units available out of 30,251. In Brampton, the rate of 0.3% gives 13 units out of 9,425. The Census Metropolitan Area has an average rent of $987 for vacant 2-bedroom units. In the most recent census, there were 502 units reported available out of 314,198.(33)

There has been considerable coverage of the plight of single mothers reduced to placing their children in custody because they are unable to provide food, clothing and shelter for them:

Desperation had set in when Heather Walker dropped her two girls off at the Toronto Children's Aid Society last week, and then booked herself into St Michael's Hospital for psychiatric help. The 30-year old single mother says she is mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausted from trying to find decent living quarters and at the same time, raise her two children in a slum in the west end. 'I just couldn't take it any more. Leaving those kids was the hardest thing I've ever done... My little one thinks I deserted her, but what else could I do? I had nowhere to turn and I wouldn't... couldn't take them back to that room.' The room she refers to is the apartment she rents for $400 a month - a room 2 meters x 4.2 meters (7 feet x 14 feet), so small that the only furniture in it is a small dresser, a chair and two end tables. The three sleep on the floor. 'Whether you're in beds or on the floor, the bugs still crawl all over you. It's so hard to sleep when you have cockroaches all over you, and it's even worse when you have to sit there and watch them crawling all over your own kids.'(34)
The emergency shelters, hostels and transitional houses (including group homes, safe houses for battered women, and half-way houses for the deinstitutionalised, etc), are operating at or close to capacity and are functioning less as short-term facilities for people in crisis, the purpose for which they were originally intended. As the cost of housing continues to rise and the stock of affordable accommodation declines, more and varied groups are losing their already tenuous grip on security and stability. For example, it is estimated that the number of households on waiting lists for assisted housing is currently more than 30,000. In Metro Toronto alone, it is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 families are without adequate shelter, a third of whom are between the ages of 18 and 24:

Their stories of despair and hopelessness seem straight out of Charles Dickens' 19th century England, yet in 20th century, booming, 'world class' Metro, such misery is common. They are, for all intents and purposes the modern homeless, victims - along with their children - of Toronto's conversion to yuppie heaven. They are not yet street people. But they are getting toward the edge as they camp out with friends or relatives, at hostels or wherever they can find a roof. While the housing shortage in Metro is nothing new, its effect on children has been increasingly noted by social service workers.(35)

Similar images can be found in Ottawa, where the poor have traditionally occupied the area adjacent to the Byward Market, and the sprawling public housing developments:

We've all seen them - the ragged people who wander around shopping plazas, fish through garbage bins and sleep on park benches, they are called derelicts, rubbies, and winos, and they have been around since people first congregated in cities. But joining them in the hostels and food lines these days is a new and growing breed of homeless - younger men and women whose survival depends almost entirely on the goodwill of others. They're being haunted by twin demons - a lack of emergency housing and jobs - and they can't get off the treadmill. Homes for the Homeless, an organization formed recently to focus attention on the plight of the homeless and push for emergency shelters and affordable housing, estimates that there are at least 800 homeless in the Ottawa area. All who work to help them say unemployment, lack of job skills, and a shortage of decent, affordable housing contribute to their plight, and their problem is getting worse.(36)

58
In a week-long series of articles published by the Ottawa Citizen in June 1987, the following profile of poverty in the Ottawa-Carleton region was presented:

* In March 1976, there were 3,060 general welfare cases. In February 1987, the figure was 12,188.

* In 1976, fewer than one quarter of the people receiving welfare were considered able-bodied; now more than 70% are employable but can't or won't find work.

* A decade ago, soup kitchens were a dim memory of the depression. Today, amid our conspicuous affluence, there are at least a dozen.

* Once the elderly and the unemployable dominated the welfare rolls, but a decade of swift social and economic change have created a new class of underprivilege; single mothers, ex-psychiatric patients and people under-educated for an increasingly high-tech world.

* In ten short years, the rapid decline in blue-collar labour has transformed Ottawa-Carleton's welfare caseload.

* Every night up to 1,000 people have no bed of their own. There are two parts to the housing crisis. One has to do with the homeless and the decline in accommodation for them; the other deals with the increasing lack of affordable shelter for people who otherwise have some order in their lives.(37)

The preceding description illustrates the diversity among the homeless in Ontario, but does not, and indeed cannot adequately reflect the social, psychological, emotional and economic devastation associated with being unable to live in a safe, decent and affordable home.

Quebec

The information about the homeless in Quebec is disproportionately concentrated on the two largest cities, Montreal and Quebec City. Montreal is reputed to have the largest homeless population outside of Toronto (estimated between 10,000 and 30,000). The poor are being squeezed out of the downtown rooming houses which had sheltered them for generations.

The expansive and expensive gentrification of the inner city has resulted
in a drastic reduction in the rooming-house stock. The number of rooms went from 15,972 in 1977 to 10,779 in 1982, a drop of 33 percent in the space of five years. The impact was greatest in the downtown area where rooming houses have given way to boutiques, businesses, offices, and high-priced apartments. But as the following excerpt shows, the homeless are not confined to the 'roomers':

When we think of the homeless in Quebec, we immediately think of those whose main difficulty in finding a place to live is due to their lack of income. We think, among others, of the single people whose major source of income comes from welfare assistance and guaranteed income programs. This is often the case with old people, the majority of whom live beneath the poverty level. We also think of the physically disabled whose limited autonomy, coupled with a lack of income, exacerbates their housing problems. We also think of young people on welfare who have been unable to find work because of the recent recession. We think of the ex-inmates and the people suffering from mental or physical illnesses who return to the community after having spent time in an institution. And finally, we think of the roomers, whose profile looks more often like that of the destitute and the impoverished.(38)

The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless has been a significant catalyst for raising awareness in Quebec of the precarious situation faced by women (particularly female-headed single-parent families), for whom there is a recognised dearth of emergency and transitional shelter; and young, single, employable individuals, who receive $180 in social assistance per month. For many young people it is a 'Catch 22' situation: no fixed address, no welfare cheque; no rent money, no home.

Each night in Montreal an estimated 5,000 youth sleep in the Metro, bus stations, or in furnace rooms of apartment buildings.(39) There is growing recognition that women are sleeping out in the open, in places such as Atwater Park, in apartment house lobbies, and in boarded-up buildings:

On ne connait ni l'age de cette femme, ni son nom, ni son histoire. Elle vit et dort dans un escalier pres du Forum. Elle se nourrit de la collecte des poubelees. Durant les grands froids de Janvier, elle se refuge dans les entrees de Metro ou immeubles. Le phenomene de sans-
abri, trop souvent discute abstraitement en termes de statistiques, de pourcentage et de changements demographiques, c'est aussi le sort d'une femme, d'un homme ou d'un adolescent qui lutte pour survie, ici meme, dans les rues de Montreal.(40)

The director of a placement centre for indigent women who led a task force enquiry into homelessness in Montreal in 1987, estimates that more than 3,000 women are living perilously in Montreal at any given time. The task force considered the homeless in Montreal to be a group of people with serious housing problems whose situation is exacerbated by mental health problems, inadequate incomes, and, especially for women, public attitudes of stigmatization and victimization:

Plusieurs groupes composent les sans-abri. En effet, des causes multiples et des phenomenes complexes ont conduit des milliers de personnes a l'etat de sans-abri. Main on peut affirmer que personne ne nait sans-abri, a tout le moins, hors de tout reseau familial et social.(41)

The Atlantic Provinces

Stark as a field of snow, the pattern of Wayne Jobson's life is fixed and unremitting: by day a search for food, and by night a quest for warmth. At 37, Mr. Jobson has been "on the street" since 1976. The events that put him here are phantasmagoric, the half-remembered history of another lifetime. But there is no sanctuary from the here and now for the Sydney native - particularly when a gale whistles through the streets and the temperature dips below zero. "You know, I think I upset them because I'm dressed kind of ragged. But if I'm crawling through a gutter trying to stab something with a fork, they should realize it all connects, that we're all part of the same thing. The men will acknowledge me, they somehow relate to me, but the women don't even want to see me. It was different in Montreal. There, everyone seemed to understand that there were people like me.(42)

The homeless in Atlantic Canada share many of the characteristics described so far. Poverty and unemployment are perennial, if not endemic to the four provinces, and as was revealed in a recent conference on women and housing held in Halifax, housing for the majority of women in Atlantic Canada is too scarce, too expensive and provides little or nothing in the way of amenities or choice of accommodation.(43) In October 1985, a broadly-based
coalition of community groups called "housing for people coalition", produced an Emergency Declaration to highlight the growing crisis in the availability of affordable housing in Halifax.

A group of angry mothers in Halifax have no trouble defining adequate shelter or affordable housing. They represent heads of one-parent families, part of the growing numbers of Canadians joining the welfare class from the middle class. "No, I suppose I didn't think when I was married, when my husband and I lived in a really nice house, that things would be like this... When you're trying to find a place, they tell you,'we don't accept social assistance people', or 'we're trying to hold down the children population here, we only want two kids in a three bedroom apartment.' And I say, 'look, I've got three kids, what do you want me to do, shoot one?'(44)

Reliable data on the extent of homelessness in Atlantic Canada, and the diversity among the homeless have proven extremely difficult to find. Requests have been made on several occasions to provincial housing ministries and corporations, and to front line advocates, mostly with little success. However, as the final quotation from a cross-country survey indicates, there is little reason to suspect that the eastern provinces are immune from the problems evident in the other jurisdictions:

Whatever else may unify a nation of such disparate pieces as this one, it is clear from a journey across the country that the poor have no regional boundaries. They occupy one country, poverty, and wherever they may happen to live, whatever their age or the language they speak, the similarities in their skewed lives unite them and make them one country, indivisible.(45)

A CLASSIFICATION OF THE HOMELESS IN CANADA

The term 'homeless' has been applied to so many different types of people that it has become an abstraction which is of limited value as an accurate definition. As Peter Marin has suggested, "it has become a catch basin to describe all of the people who have been disenfranchised, marginalised or scared off by processes beyond their control".(46)
Two general tendencies can be observed in Canada:

(i) approaches which limit the focus to those who occupy the bottom two 'tiers' of the shelter system in Canada - the streets, and emergency shelters or temporary housing.\(^{(47)}\)

(ii) approaches which broaden the definition to include those whose vulnerability places them at risk of losing their homes.\(^{(48)}\)

This ambiguity about who should be included among the homeless is related in part to the absence of reliable empirical estimates, but also to the fact that the most common reference sources, particularly from the media, use many different labels and identify widely differing sub-groups. While at one level this supports the thesis that the homeless constitute a wide spectrum of Canadian society, but it also highlights the lack of clarity surrounding this issue.

The contents of more than two hundred articles, reports and broadcasts by local and national media were reviewed to identify descriptions of the homeless in Canada. The data were compiled from a series of library searches and clippings files supplied by the information divisions of UNCHS(Habitat) in Toronto and New York; from the IYSH Secretariats in Ontario and Quebec and other provincial focal points; and from personal reference sources. Between 1985 and 1988, at least thirty different synonyms were used on more than one occasion to describe Canada's homeless. (Table 1)
Table 1  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ill-housed/lack adequate shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Hostel dweller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Slum-dwellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Roofless/houseless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Squatters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Roomers, boarders and lodgers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Shopping bag ladies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Single older men on welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Native indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Unemployed/unemployable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Working poor/new poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Low-income singles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Victims of economic recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A new class of underprivilege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A scraping-by class/underclass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Hard to house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Evicted families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Throwaways/runaways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mentally ill/ex-psychiatric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Anxious seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Poor families/needy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Battered wives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Abused/abandoned women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Victims of gentrification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Society's cast-offs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Street people/derelicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Vagrants/destitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Drifters/transients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from the table that the distinction between the composition of the homeless and the reasons why they become homeless is often obscured.

In February 1987, the nationally syndicated news magazine Maclean's, ran a ten page cover story using reports filed by twelve reporters and seven photographers, in which the homeless were described as members of a sub-population which is both changing and growing:

[There] is evidence that converging economic and social forces are producing new classes of homeless people...including disaffected young people, psychiatric outpatients, single mothers, the unemployed or the poorly paid - and others shut out by the steep costs of city housing...They survive in ways that would not be possible for many people.(49)

The disturbing nature of homelessness does not permit it to be ignored, but at the same time, it raises questions as to how the issue is handled when it is covered.(50) The media have played a significant role in shaping perceptions about the homeless, and influencing the agenda of issues being discussed which relate to homelessness. They provide at least some
indication of the distribution of the homeless in Canada's urban centres, and are a counterpoint to romanticised images of the "carefree wanderer".

It is also common however, for homelessness to be uncritically equated with poverty, and for the homeless to be portrayed as belonging to an underclass or residual component of society. Despite the widespread media attention, the bulk of the coverage focusses on the homeless as a special human interest story, not as an issue of public policy, and consequently, only passing reference is made to the causes of homelessness. The problem with this approach is that one cannot understand the causes of homelessness simply by examining the homeless, unless one accepts the argument that they bring it upon themselves.(51)

The superficial coverage of the causes of homelessness is also in part a reflection of the simplistic statements made by some advocates of the homeless when they are interviewed, and is indicative of the lack of cohesion among advocates and special interest groups. The complexities involved in the issue are not being presented in a way that probes the roots of homelessness, and there is little meaningful dialogue with the homeless. Their situation tends to be considered newsworthy if it is sufficiently sensational or heart rending to capture the attention of an audience instantaneously. This method of reporting eschews in-depth analysis.

Despite the limitations inherent in the data sources used to this point, they do provide at least some insight into the range of homeless groups in Canada. It is suggested here that the composition of Canada's homeless include some parts of the following groups:
The following observations can be made from the preceding discussion.

There are people who, for various reasons, are inadequately housed. They include those who are literally without shelter, those who are sheltered but not housed, those who are housed but lack a home, and people who are at risk of becoming homeless because of their housing problems.

While housing is an important dimension of homelessness in Canada, uneven economic development has produced regional variations in the incidence of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, low income and rates of social assistance, placing many people on the economic margins of society.

There are also those among the homeless in Canada whose mental, physical or social health limits their ability to sustain independent participation within mainstream society. This is particularly evident among the mentally ill and service-dependent who have become socially marginalised.

Although any one of these housing, economic or social conditions can have a devastating effect on the homeless, they are more often inter-related and compounded as the following matrix shows. While perhaps generalised, the matrix illustrates the synergy of the conditions rather than mutually exclusive categories.

The following examples illustrate one way of interpreting the matrix.

As a result of their economic circumstances, the majority of the groups identified are vulnerable to becoming homeless. However, in a number of cases, (e.g. among poor families, single-parents and poor singles), this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POOR FAMILIES</th>
<th>EMERGENCY SHELTER RESIDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES</td>
<td>ROOMING HOUSE AND SRO RESIDENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POOR SINGLES</td>
<td>TRANSIENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELDERLY</td>
<td>SUBSTANCE ABUSERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH</td>
<td>UNEMPLOYED/UNDEREMPLOYED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN NATIVES</td>
<td>MENTALLY ILL/DISABLED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following examples illustrate one way of interpreting the matrix.
economic insecurity also has a bearing on their housing options. It can also trigger related social problems (indicated by 0*), but these are generally secondary to, or contingently related to the main economic and housing preconditions.
The Synergy of Conditions Influencing the Composition of Canada's Homeless

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Economic Conditions</th>
<th>Social Problems</th>
<th>Housing Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor Families</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Parents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Singles</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O X*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O X*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transients</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abusers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter Resids.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRO/Rooming House</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Natives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled (Ment/Phys)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally Ill</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underemployed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = Major Problem  O = Secondary But Related Problem  
* = Applicable to specific sub-groups.
In the case of the transient or substance abuse groups, social problems (here broadly defined to include personal, inter-personal as well as health concerns), are usually the main pre-conditions which trigger homelessness. From this perspective, therefore, economic and housing problems, while undeniably important, are secondary.

It is recognised that the matrix as presented is embryonic, and will benefit from further modification and elaboration. For the present it serves as an alternative, albeit rudimentary, to what at times appear to be arbitrary classifications of the homeless.

THE HOMELESS IN CONTEXT

Insights gained from personal interaction with a variety of homeless people, advocates and professionals across the country, and a wide range of descriptive material from secondary sources serve to illustrate three related points:

* The homeless in Canada are not a homogeneous group of deranged social misfits. The broad range of categories and labels used to describe various sub-sets of the homeless population is indicative that they constitute a broad cross section of society.

* The available evidence suggests that the homeless are predominantly concentrated in the urban centres, and that they are evident to varying degrees in the majority of the provinces. At present however, there is no reliable estimate of their numbers nationally or in any specific geographic location.
* Three main groups among the homeless in Canada can be discerned: there are those who are inadequately housed, people who have become economically disenfranchised and those who can be described as socially marginalised. These groups are not however limited to one particular sub-set of the population, reinforcing the argument that the problems faced by the homeless are usually inter-related and compounded.
NOTES


5. 'Mature' refers to people in the pre-retirement age cohort, particularly single women for whom the risk of homelessness is often considerable, but about whom little is currently known.

6. These observations have been corroborated by students pursuing research topics and by friends and colleagues who have accompanied me or introduced me to homeless people in these areas.

7. It was instructive for me that when I was given the responsibility of compiling the proceedings of a conference on homelessness in B.C. in May 1987; professionals who work with homeless transients in Vancouver in places such as The Lookout, Triage, Club 44, or The One Way Drop-in centre, characterized them as "drifters, dreamers, the old and young, men and women, substance abusers and system abusers, runaways and throwaways, natives and ethnic minorities, prostitutes and villains, the mentally ill - the poor and the downtrodden". See, A Place To Call Home: a Conference on Homelessness in British Columbia. Report of conference proceedings and seven background papers. Arthur L. Fallick and J. David Hulchanski, General Editors, 1987.

8. These observations have benefitted considerably from the insights given to me by John Jessup of the Social Planning Department, City of Vancouver; John Cashore and Lawrence Bantleman of the First United Church Social Housing Society; Joe Wai and Ron Yuen whose architectural designs and sense of commitment to the residents of the area have been a source of knowledge and inspiration; Patsy George of the B.C. Ministry of Social Services and Housing, and members of a broadly-based coalition who came together during 1987 to organise the B.C. Conference on Homelessness.

9. See for example, "Expo '86: Its Legacy to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside". The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association, August 1987, (particularly the extensive chronology of newspaper and media reports produced by Kris Olds), and "Gentrification in Canadian Inner Cities: Patterns, Analysis, Impacts and Policy". David Ley, October 1985, prepared for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
10. From a presentation by John Cashore and Lawrence Bantleman, First United Church Social Housing Society, at an invitational seminar on "Shelter for the Homeless: The Scope and Scale of Vancouver's Problem". Centre for Human Settlements, University of B.C., January 1986.

11. Based on information provided by the Association for Street Kids in Victoria at the B.C. Conference on Homelessness, and at a provincial conference: "Off the Street", at the University of Victoria, September 1987. Also corroborated by the district manager of the outreach program in the Ministry of Social Services and Housing during a presentation at The Women's University Club of Vancouver, October 29, 1987.

12. There are indications that the problems identified here are not confined to Vancouver and Victoria. However, because at least some data are available on these cities they are being used to illustrate what appears to be a general and growing tendency across the country. (See for example, La Jeunesse Quebecoise et la phenomene des sans-abris. Yves Lamontagne et.al., Presses de l'Universite du Quebec - Quebec Science Editeur, 1987).


At the B.C. Conference on Homelessness, a workshop focussing on homeless women identified the most vulnerable groups (in addition to single-parent mothers), as including the mentally handicapped, teens, older single women, battered women, deinstitutionalised mental patients, childless women, and urban core women, particularly those with chemically dependence. For many of these women being homeless entailed living a transient lifestyle, isolation, living with violence, lack of community and limited housing choices beyond illegal suites.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid. p.4

18. Ibid. p.3

19. Observations based on personal correspondence and informal interviews.

21. Ibid.

22. This figure is based on the estimate by the Canadian Council on Social Development that the absolute homeless in Canada constitute between 0.1% and 0.2% of the national population.


24. These figures do not include rooming houses or housing considered to be inadequate on the basis of affordability.


26. While Natives are in the minority in Winnipeg, they are over-represented in the city's skid row and inner core areas. For example in 1976 between 40,000 and 60,000 natives resided in Winnipeg, at a time when the city population was 578,000, and that the highest concentration (25,000) was in the downtown core (comprising about one third of the core population).

27. Two reports in particular have been used: Christopher Hauch. *Coping Strategies and Street Life: The Ethnogrpahy of Winnipeg's Skid Row*, Winnipeg, Man: Institute of Urban Studies, Report No.11, 1985; And Brundridge, Richard. *Housing the 'Unhouseables': A Case for Long-term Supportive Housing for Winnipeg's Chronically Homeless*. Prepared for the Main Street Project Evaluation Report, December 1986. I have also had interviews with the director of Main Street Project, Mr. John Rodgers in person and by correspondence between 1986 and 1988.

A report commissioned by the Manitoba Housing Ministry will be released shortly. It is anticipated that this report will have a more comprehensive overview of the homeless in Winnipeg.


29. Brundridge, *Housing the 'Unhouseables'*.

30. Ibid.


32. A detailed description of the Ottawa homeless was profiled in a week long series by *The Ottawa Citizen* between June 6 and 12, 1987, entitled "Poverty: The Other Ottawa".


36. The Ottawa Citizen, August 29, 1984


42. The Globe and Mail, December 1983.


44. CTV - W5, January 26, 1986.


46. Peter Marin. "Helping and Hating the Homeless: The Struggle at the Margins of America". Harpers, January 1986. Describing the American context, Marin identifies at least ten groups who are traditionally packed into the single category of "the homeless":

i. veterans;
ii. the mentally ill;
iii. physically disabled or chronically ill;
iv. elderly on fixed incomes;
v. men, women and whole families pauperised by the loss of a job;
vi. single parents without the skills or resources to establish new lives;
vii. runaway and abused children;
viii. alcoholics and substance abusers;
ix. immigrants;
x. the traditional tramps, hoboes and transients.


51. This way of thinking is still quite prevalent. For example, when the popular talk show host Donahue presented a group of homeless Americans to television viewers in 1983, members of the studio audience jeered at the down-and-outs on the podium. One well-dressed woman rose and angrily informed them that her fore bears had arrived in America with nothing, yet had made it in this land of opportunity. Certainly, she declared as the audience chorused approval, the homeless today could do the same if they worked! See M. Hope and J. Young. Faces of Homelessness. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1987, p.27.
Homelessness is not an easily defined or precise term. It has been used in the literature inappropriately but commonly:

1. to describe those who are homeless;
2. as a catch-all phrase for the problems experienced by the homeless;
3. as the end result of these problems (the state of being homeless); and
4. as the process by which people become homeless.

Part of this confusion can be traced to the wide range of definitions which are employed, and also to the lack of conceptual clarity between homeless people and the problems which they experience. The definitions which appear most frequently in Canadian studies highlight this conceptual ambiguity.

DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

Three reports produced by the Community Services Department and the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, explicitly define homelessness:

First, in the study, *No Place To Go*, homelessness is defined as:

... an increasing problem in Metropolitan Toronto, affected by multiple causes interacting with each other, i.e. a decline in affordable rental stock (especially rooming houses) in centrally located areas, low vacancy rates in the rental market, high levels of unemployment, and provincial policies regarding deinstitutionalization.(1)

The study was based on a survey of hostels, and a sample of social service agencies during 1982, and concluded that there were at least 3,400 persons without a permanent address in the metropolitan area at that time.(2)

Second, The Social Planning Council defined the issue as having its roots in the crisis of housing affordability for low-income people:

The issue of homelessness has reached a level of urgency not experienced since the Great Depression. People with low incomes in Toronto are undergoing a crisis in affordable housing. For them the shelter crisis cannot be simply called an 'emergency'. It is a long-term state, a permanent emergency.(3)
The report suggested that the renewed need for emergency housing was due to three related factors:

* an increase in the number of people requiring emergency accommodation;
* an increase in the length of time people remain in emergency hostels;
* a shift in the population of hostel users toward a younger clientele.

and that the permanent emergency was due to:

* high interest rates;
* low rental vacancies and construction;
* insufficient public housing construction;
* inadequate social assistance and shelter subsidy rates;
* 'deconversion'; and
* the disappearance of inexpensive hotels, rooming houses and boarding homes.(4)

Third, a report by a Task Force on housing for low-income single people in Metropolitan Toronto attempts to correlate sources of homelessness with five specific sub-populations:(5)

1. Persons unable to find affordable accommodation due to temporary unemployment.

2. Persons displaced due to conversion, de-conversion, sale or demolition of dwellings.

3. Persons with chronic and perpetual housing problems.

4. Transients dependent on support services and facilities.

5. Youth: with family problems; with situational problems; and with emotional problems.(6)

The general thrust of these studies of homelessness in Metropolitan Toronto is with housing issues, particularly the pressing concerns over affordability and availability.

In contrast, the Single Displaced Persons Project, an informal network from downtown Toronto churches and social service agencies, employs a considerably broader definition:
Homelessness is the condition of low-income people who cannot find adequate, secure housing at a price they can afford. The most obvious element of homelessness is the lack of housing; but just as 'home' is more than physical shelter, 'homelessness' includes a lack of this base for the rest of life's activities. 'Home' is associated with personal identity, family, relationships, a role in the community, privacy and security, and the possession of personal property. Homelessness, or the lack of a 'home' affects all these areas of an individual's life. As a society we tend to respond to homelessness by using a set of labels. We have a tendency to seek explanations of the problem not in socio-economic (structural) terms, but in discrete personal problems which can be 'diagnosed' and 'cured'. The homeless are then considered ex-mental patients, handicapped, alcoholic, lazy, stupid, or even 'socially retarded'. When we cannot find adequate diagnoses, we tend to blame the victim for his/her situation. By focusing on the most visible and eccentric individuals we sustain the myth that the majority of homeless people are happy with their poverty, choose not to work, and seek to 'bum' off the rest of society.(7)

The SDP group characterises homelessness as "a cycle of having and losing housing, without choice, resulting in instability and apparent transience", a position similar to that adopted by Hopper, that homelessness is both a condition and a form of survival strategy.(8) This is closest to the definition which I have adopted in this dissertation.

The final approach to defining homelessness stems from research undertaken to prepare the Canadian submissions and resolutions for the IYSH by the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University.(9) According to Murray and Fallis, the problem has three dimensions:

A housing dimension - analysed in relation to price and availability of new and existing units; gentrification, and the decline of the old rental stock;

An income/employment dimension - analysed in relation to poverty, dependency (the non-working population in proportion to the working population), and income security; and

A social/psychological dimension - discussed in relation to family and household breakup, divorce, aging, ethnicity, single parent responsibilities, personal identity, and special needs groups.(10)
AN ANALYSIS OF HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

While certain general themes emerge from these definitions, no single factor exclusively or successfully explains why people become homeless. This supports the thesis that homelessness is, in effect, the manifestation of a series of synergistically related conditions. However, at least ten recurring issues are evident which appear to link homelessness in Canada to a range of individual, social, economic and housing-related conditions:

* HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
* DISPLACEMENT
* DEINSTITUTIONALISATION
* LACK OF ADEQUATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES/FACILITIES
* POVERTY
* UNEMPLOYMENT
* INADEQUATE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES
* FAMILY BREAKDOWN
* INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY
* SOCIAL ATTITUDES (11)

While any one of these conditions can adversely affect an individual, a family or an entire community, they are more often inter-related and combine to create multiple problems for the homeless. The matrix below highlights the synergy among the economic, social and housing factors which contribute to homelessness in Canada.
### The Synergy of the Conditions Contributing to Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Homelessness</th>
<th>Economic Conditions</th>
<th>Social Problems</th>
<th>Housing Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Affordability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deinstitutionalisation</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Adequate Community Support Services/Facilities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Social Assistance Rates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Breakdown</td>
<td>X 0*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
<td>X 0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Responsibility</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
<td>0 X*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Attitudes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = Major Pre-condition  
0 = Related Condition  
* = Applicable to Specific Sub-groups.

Three examples illustrate a way of interpreting the matrix:

* Unemployment - Economic conditions can precipitate homeless-related problems (X), and these in turn can result in, or be exacerbated by related social (0) and/or housing problems (OX*). While the reasons for a person becoming unemployed vary considerably, they are commonly tied to a combination of local, regional, national or even international economic conditions. Unemployment per se may not necessarily result in a person becoming homeless. It is more often a pre-condition which triggers a series
of related problems: Unemployment insurance or social assistance benefits may
not be sufficient to cover the range of expenditures which were possible when
an individual was working; housing expenditures may rise as a proportion of
available income, savings may be depleted and any debts previously incurred
may be more difficult to pay. For certain groups (e.g. those on fixed or
low-income), the result can have a direct bearing on their ability to remain
in their present accommodation (X*), whereas for those with more discretionary
income, the risk of becoming homeless is increased (0), particularly if their
circumstances worsen. The combination of economic conditions and housing
problems can also trigger a range of related social problems (e.g. family
breakdown, emotional distress etc.).

* Deinstitutionalisation - in this case the economic conditions (0*
including the individual's resources as well as general economic
conditions), and housing problems (0* e.g the lack of appropriate and
affordable housing), exacerbate problems which relate primarily to an
individual being released from an institution into communities which are more
or less equipped to respond to their health and social problems (X). While
recognising the dangers of making sweeping generalisations about what is in
effect an extremely diverse population, the intention is to suggest the
synergy among the problems which are related to a precipitating condition or
event.

* Housing Affordability - is obviously a housing problem (X), but
affordability is also related to local economic conditions including
variations in the demand and supply of housing (e.g among low-income
families), as well as regional conditions. For example, while Ontario is currently experiencing an economic boom, this has exacerbated housing problems in many municipalities across the province, and has altered the composition of the homeless in the larger cities, particularly Toronto, as people migrate there in the hope of finding work. The high cost of living and skyrocketing housing costs are pointed to by homeless advocates and front line workers, as contributing to increased personal and social problems.

It was noted in chapter two that spatial variation can be expected to make a difference to the way social action is constituted and transformed. This suggests a promising line of investigation in the study of the geographic dimensions of homelessness.

The sources of homelessness in the matrix above represent a combination of conditions which contribute to regional variations in the incidence of homelessness, and to variations in the composition and spatial concentration of the homeless which are related to local conditions and events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions Contributing to Regional Variations in Homelessness</th>
<th>Variations in Composition and Spatial Concentration of the Homeless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY</td>
<td>DISPLACEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POVERTY</td>
<td>DEINSTITUTIONALISATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>LACK OF ADEQ. COMMUNITY SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INADEQUATE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS</td>
<td>FAMILY BREAKDOWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOCIAL ATTITUDES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82
A REVIEW OF ANALYSES OF HOMELESSNESS

A review of the growing international literature on homelessness corroborates the Canadian findings, suggesting that in many western industrialised countries, homelessness is related in varying degrees to at least three sets of problems:

* personal problems
* shelter or housing issues
* socio-economic conditions

Supporting evidence from selected sources is presented below.

Homelessness as a Personal Problem

There has long been a perspective which views the homeless as architects of their own misfortune - they have chosen to opt out of society. Much of the early literature on vagrancy and some of the more contemporary ethnographic and journalistic vignettes of the skid row culture and milieu, infer that due to impaired judgement or perverse will, the homeless choose and indeed prefer to live on the streets. This perspective conforms to what Hopper describes as the 'impaired capacity model', which accounts for the rise in homelessness by appeal to alleged differences in the homeless themselves. This attitude equates a small but readily identifiable sub-set with the entire homeless population, and is often used to blame the homeless for their situation.(12) There is no necessity to look beyond the individual for an explanation of the sources of the problem, and by implication, it becomes justifiable to argue that society as a whole has no responsibility for what is regarded as a self-inflicted predicament.

During a 1985 European summit on homelessness and poverty, Fr. Peter McVerry eloquently described the rationale behind 'blaming the victim':
The root cause of the continuing problem of homelessness is the attitude of both the public and of official decision-makers in society, the fact that we stigmatize and blame the homeless for their plight and as a consequence frequently mete out degrading treatment to them. Our attitudes to the homeless are part and parcel of our attitudes to others in society, to those who cannot survive adequately in a world where economic values are uppermost - the poor, the unemployed, all those who do not or cannot participate in the productive system of a society are not only marginalized by a society that finds difficulty in seeing a value in such persons but salves its own conscience by projecting the blame for their plight onto the victims themselves.(13)

He went on to add:

The homeless are typically those who have the least resources to survive the social and economic changes imposed on them by an economic development to which they are surplus and added to their burden is the burden of homelessness. They have reached the final stage of a process of social decline, a reaction to unemployment, poverty and personal crises (such as separation from a spouse, imprisonment leading to a disintegration of family and general social relations, alcoholism, etc) with which they have been unable to cope adequately. They are to the public the most visible of the homeless and so tend to create the stereotyped image of the homeless in the public's mind.

To become homeless is not usually a failure on the part of the individual but a failure of the social structure and social support systems that each society provides. It also reflects structures in the housing market, deficiencies in general housing policy and the frequency of relative poverty. (14)

Peter Marcuse has described it in the following way:

The leitmotiv for the evasive establishment reaction to homelessness is isolation. Isolate the problem intellectually, isolate the victim physically: deny the problem, blame the victims, or hide them away... If denial won't work in the face of everyday observations, then blame the victim. There's the homespun wisdom and the academic formulation. Homespun: the homeless are not like you and me. There's something wrong with them or they wouldn't be homeless. They're incompetent, crazies, drunks, drug addicts, kooks. They're social problems; we have other more worthy social problems to worry about.

The academic version is more dangerous. To get at the roots of homelessness, inquire who the homeless are. Some have mental problems? They need medical care. Others have substance abuse problems? Put them into a detoxification program. Many are children? Teach their mothers morality or, for non-catholics, birth control. Some are evicted because they can't pay the rent? Well, what can you do? Give them housing temporarily, but they just have to learn that the landlord comes first. Gone from consideration are the housing shortage, unemployment, cut-backs in social programs, gentrification and condominium conversions, escalating rents and housing-for-profit only. (15)
A more recent and somewhat more charitable variant on the "impaired capacity" perspective suggests that many of the homeless are the unfortunate casualties of policies of deinstitutionalisation which resulted in large numbers of mentally ill people roaming the streets in a state of perpetual confusion and alienation. Hopper however cautions against this form of explanation:

This fallacy of fragments taken for wholes not only reduces people to traits and ways of life to elicited 'strips of behavior', it also restricts the circle of enquiry to those forces which impinge directly on the population in question. 'Causes' of homelessness become synonymous with the catalogue of events that have displaced members of the class. Boundary conditions are invoked and persist, but no explanation is given for them. (16)

Two examples can serve to illustrate Hopper's point.

In 1983, Thomas Main reported on the results of a study of residents of emergency shelters in New York which attempted to establish links between the different subsets of the residents and sources of their problems. (17) The classification system identified five groups:

1. Psychiatric only
2. Alcoholic only
3. Economic only
4. Drug only
5. Physical disability only. (18)

The results of the study cast doubts on the validity of the classification:

Trying to categorize the shelter clients is very difficult. Indeed, the salient point to be made about them is that they are a very heterogeneous group. They have come to the shelters because of a variety of misfortunes and pathologies, and their housing situations before they come to the shelter are very diverse. The more one looks at shelter clients the less obvious it becomes that they share a common state, which may be straightforwardly defined as homelessness. (19)

Despite this characterisation however, Main takes a very conservative stance on the issue of homelessness. He criticises the approach of homeless advocates for not distinguishing between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'
homeless, arguing from his New York shelter statistics that many homeless are able-bodied, who choose shelters because they are free, when in fact they may have other housing options. He argues that this sub-group should be forced to participate in some sort of work requirement, and that the homeless advocates are so busy blaming the system that they miss the question of individual responsibility. In his most recent work, which will be reviewed later, Main extends his attack on advocates for the homeless well beyond the shelter setting from which his statistics were derived, suggesting that the issue has been blown out of all proportion; although somewhat to the detriment of his own position, he characterises the problem of homelessness as intractable, because "the great majority of homeless individuals, and possibly some significant proportion of homeless families, are afflicted with behavioral or medical disabilities or both." (20)

The second illustration of Hopper's caution against 'blaming the victim' involves a landmark study on the links between homelessness and the mentally ill in the United States, in which Ellen Bassuk made the following comments which have had significant repercussions in many subsequent analyses of the effects of deinstitutionalisation on people with psychiatric disorders:

More Americans were homeless last winter than at any time since the Great Depression. Several factors may have contributed to the swelling of the homeless population. The most obvious one is the recession. Unemployment reached a peak of 10.7% in November 1982, its highest level since the 1930's. The effects of unemployment are intensified by another problem: the dearth of low-cost housing. Recent cuts in government benefit payments may also have thrown some people onto the streets. Far more important however, in its impact on the homeless population has been the long-term change in the national policy for dealing with the mentally ill. My experience as a psychiatrist working with homeless people in Boston leads me to believe that an important change has taken place: an increasing number - I would say a large majority - of the homeless suffer from mental illness, ranging from schizophrenia to severe personality disorders. (21)
Bassuk's study found that about 40% of those studied had psychoses, 29% were chronic alcoholics, and 21% had personality disorders. However, despite repeated attempts by the authors to qualify the results of their study (it was conducted in only one emergency shelter), this particular excerpt has been used to support arguments to the effect that the majority of America's homeless are mentally ill. As a result, there has been a growing movement to isolate the problem (hence the appeal to 'pathology'), rather than to consider the complex dynamics which are beyond the sphere of the individual.

The two previous examples are intended to illustrate Hopper's concern that homelessness not be equated simply, or solely, with mental illness (or more appropriately, with the effects of deinstitutionalisation policies). It is not the intention here to give the impression that mental illness is not a significant precipitant of homelessness. To the contrary, the homeless mentally ill constitute an important sub-population from a geographic perspective, because in recent years, the locus of their treatment has shifted from the hospital to the community with significant implications.

As a recent editorial by Bassuk in *Hospital and Community Psychiatry* rightly points out, research into whether or not homelessness is a significant mental health problem is limited and contradictory, and estimates of mental illness in the United States range from 20% to 90%. "But most experts agree that a significant percentage of homeless people have diagnoseable mental illness, although public officials of all ideologies have failed to recognize the implications of this fact."(26)

Before reviewing analyses of homelessness as a housing issue, one other line of argument should be included in the present section, because it
examines the characteristics of the homeless in a unique and thought-provoking manner.

In 1982, Hopper and Baxter wrote an ethnographic study in which they first advanced the idea that some homeless people may intentionally adopt bizarre behaviour patterns or present a bizarre appearance as a protective device. (27) Hopper's 1985 article with Susser and Connover considerably extends this argument. They attempt to understand homelessness as a process, and situate it within a larger set of urban survival strategies employed by the economically disenfranchised and the socially marginalised homeless. According to this perspective, homelessness becomes a way of describing one aspect of a survival strategy which the homeless use in response to the circumstances which have made everyday life an increasingly tenuous affair. (28) Homelessness is seen as something which people in part, contrive to do - a way of managing under duress. It is therefore both a circumstance forced upon the homeless and one that allows (indeed requires), some manoeuvering on their part. Since being homeless - especially being homeless repeatedly - takes effort and work, it should be seen as both a condition and a response. (29)

The next section reviews analyses of homelessness as a housing issue.

Homelessness as a Housing Market Issue

An alternative thrust to analyses of homelessness locates the sources of the problems in specific inefficiencies within the housing market. For example, in a wonderfully entertaining paper, Marcuse argues that homelessness exists in the U.S. in part because the housing system produces housing only for profit, and the problem has skyrocketed because there is no profit in providing homes to the very poor. (30) According to figures
reproduced by Marcuse, housing for the very poor is decreasing in supply. The vacancy rate in many cities is below 3% which is considered to be the minimum for a healthy housing market with normal opportunities to move. Although there is a general housing shortage in the country, low-rent housing is in the shortest supply. Marcuse also argues that the economic restructuring of cities (with substantial governmental support), has contributed to this shortage:

There were always poor people living at the margins of subsistence. In the past they used to live in flop houses, in single-room-occupancy hotels, in the cheapest of cheap apartments. But such accommodations are in the path of urban "progress". Skid row after skid row is demolished as downtowns expand. Yerba Buena and South of Market in San Francisco, Presidential Towers in Chicago, the 42nd Street redevelopment project in New York, all contribute to replacing housing for the poor by housing for the rich.(31)

A number of other American studies have focussed on the links between homelessness and housing.(32) Freeman and Hall link the rise in homelessness to changes in the demographic characteristics of the population which have produced housing problems. They argue that increases in the number of female headed families and substance abusers, along with deinstitutionalisation, have gradually expanded the population at risk of homelessness.(33) Secondly, they point to a rapid increase, between 1979 and 1983 in the number of people with exceptionally low incomes (below US$3000). They conclude that the continued rise in homelessness after 1983 can best be accounted for by the coincidence of an expansion in the numbers of very poor households with a sharp fall in the numbers of low rent units available in central cities.

Similar links between housing and demographic change have been made in Western Europe. A project recently completed at The University of Delft in the Netherlands, looked at trends in homelessness across eleven Western industrialised nations (mostly in Northern Europe).(34) The report suggests:
Rooflessness is but a barium trace of difficulties facing very large groups within the household population as a consequence of housing market bottlenecks. Nor is rooflessness the only indicator. Others include an increase in average household size, sometimes accompanied by increased overcrowding, costly black markets flourishing in defiance of rent control legislation and the emergence of unauthorised occupancy.(35)

The main causes of homelessness were identified as housing demand, unemployment, the "deskilling" of the labour force and the trend toward underemployment, all of which are seriously affecting the younger generations. Jane Morton of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, a participant in the study, suggests that these causes are compounded by the impact of two major demographic 'bulges' on the housing market (those born during the peak postwar birthrate years who are now in their twenties and seeking to establish their own households, and those now in their seventies and eighties from the previous era of big families before the 1914 - 1918 war, who occupy almost one quarter of all homes), and by the fragmentation of existing households through relationship breakdown.(36)

In Great Britain, official definitions and statistics relate more to housing than to homelessness (hence the use of the term rooflessness). As a result, the homeless are generally considered to be limited to those (generally families) already in temporary accommodation, or people who apply to a local authority for temporary accommodation. The national Department of Health and Social Security identifies twenty categories according to the immediate cause of homelessness, whether actual or pending [form H41 (DHSS)]:

a. Action taken by landlord - other than local authority

   (i) court order for:
      (a) rent arrears
      (b) landlord wanted accommodation for use of self or family
      (c) service contract ended
      (d) landlord defaulted on mortgage
(e) other reasons

(ii) actions other than court order
(a) authorised increase in rent
(b) illegal increase in rent
(c) harassment
(d) other reasons

b. Local authority action
(a) rent arrears
(b) service contract ended
(c) other reasons

c. Other reasons
(a) unauthorised occupants
(b) family disputes
   (i) between husband and wife or cohabitees
   (ii) involving other relatives
(c) fire, flood and storm
(d) from hotel or other similar accommodation
(e) new to the area
(f) other reasons (37)

Two prominent British housing organisations, the Catholic Housing Aid Society (C.H.A.S.), and Shelter (National Campaign for the Homeless), use a broader definition which links housing with the quality of family life:

Home should be understood as a place where individuals and families can be themselves for better or worse, can obtain peace and security, and can flourish both physically and mentally. It should be an effective place for daily life, providing rest and relaxation and the strength for participation in our pressurised and competitive society. (38)

Thus, besides the 'statutory homeless', C.H.A.S and Shelter recognise a much larger group of 'hidden homeless':

1) Split Families - father, mother and children unable to live together;
2) The Severely Overcrowded;
3) Married Couples living in accommodation where children are not allowed;
4) Families obliged to live with in-laws;
5) Families having to pay rents which are excessive in relation to their income;
6) Fatherless families - mothers and children with no support;
7) Families in welfare department accommodation.
The most recent report by Shelter (Scotland), indicates that homelessness, as recorded by local authorities, rose by 70% in the two years ending 1985/86. In 1986 there were 26,000 families and single people officially recorded as having applied to their local authority as homeless. Their figures indicate that there has been an increase of 35% in the number of households on waiting lists between 1982 and 1987 (now estimated to be 200,000), and they conclude that there are now likely to be greater numbers of single and young people on these lists compared with the composition in 1980.(39) Using case statistics and a survey of housing authorities, 'immediate' causes of homelessness were identified as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Cause of Homelessness (April '85 - March '86) Scotland</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents, friends and relatives no longer willing to accommodate</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute with spouse/cohabitee - violent</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute with spouse/cohabitee - non-violent</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court order</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of service tenancy</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by landlord</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire, flood, storm etc.</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharged from institution</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost accommodation in hostel/hotel</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave up secure accommodation</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A more recent trend in the analysis of the links between housing and homelessness attempts to identify the spectrum of problems experienced by different sub-sets of the homeless. Watson and Austerberry's housing analysis in Great Britain adopts a feminist perspective, in which it is
argued that defining the characteristics of a home should be approached in terms of a continuum, with 'sleeping rough' at one end and outright property ownership at the other.(40) In between these polar extremes they suggest, is "an extensive grey area" ranging from hostels, hotels, temporary accommodation, sleeping on friends' floors, to insecure private rented accommodation, mortgaged accommodation and so on. They point out that the nearer to the 'sleeping rough' end of the continuum the definition of homelessness is made, the smaller appears to be the problem, and that politicians and policy-makers invariably invoke this limited definition, whereas advocates of the homeless tend toward the broader definition.

Charles Hoch in Chicago is using a somewhat similar analysis which treats any condition of homelessness as occupying a point in what he describes as "a continuum of uncertainty regarding housing".(41) According to this perspective, the total absence of shelter is merely the extreme end of that continuum, and what emerges is several levels of jeopardy. Hoch's approach has been modified by Vergare and Arce, who have developed a classification based on the duration of homelessness. They suggest three categories: the chronic - who are homeless for more than 30 continuous days; episodic - who tend to alternate for varying periods of time between being and not being domiciled; and the situational for whom homelessness is the temporary result of a life crisis.(42)

'Houselessness' (or 'rooflessness') does not provide a sufficiently encompassing explanation of the sources of homelessness, and as a result, more recent analyses are attempting to situate housing within a broader framework.
Hope and Young for example, have suggested that homelessness in London, particularly among the so-called new poor, can be traced to Britain's aging industrial society, mixed but often Darwinian attitudes toward the poor, and a long tradition of private charity that conflicts with the welfare state philosophy:

In London, growing numbers of families have joined the hard core homeless, the chronic alcoholics who live in and out of dormitory-like hostels, bed-sitter lodging houses, and missions. The chief factor in the rise of roofless families seems to be the decay of low-income housing under the Thatcher government. Public housing has been offered for private ownership, with tenants allowed first choice. An English house condition survey (1982) revealed that the sharp rise in homeownership has been a major factor in the deterioration of city housing stock; owners cannot afford to maintain it. At the same time there have been cuts in housing benefits for low-income people. The result is that housing starts (public, private and voluntary) in 1983 under the Conservative government were 50,000 less than the worst year under Labour in 1978.(43)

Finally under this category, Chester Hartman casts homelessness in the United States as a subset of the displacement phenomenon:

Homelessness is, in sum, simply an extreme manifestation of poverty, and homelessness is on the rise because poverty is too. Economic pressures on the poor and near-poor are intensifying while housing costs continue to climb. The result is an ever-widening gap between the shelter people can afford and the shelter they need.(44)

In this view, homeless people used to have a place to live, but they have been displaced by an array of forces, and some are not fortunate enough to be relocated. Unemployment, cuts in social programs, decline in housing stocks, the failure of deinstitutionalisation, and personal crises "all have a crucial political component as their root cause."(45)

The preceding reviews provide valuable insights into two important dimensions of homelessness. There are those whose problems can be traced to individual circumstances, both intentional or unintended. Secondly, people become homeless because they are unable to maintain secure affordable housing. It cannot be concluded from the research reviewed however, that
personal pathology or housing problems by themselves explain homelessness. Rather, they are necessary but not sufficient pre-conditions. This point is pursued in the next part of the review which examines analyses which posit structural explanations of homelessness.

Homelessness as a Socio-Economic Condition

In the past five years there has been an increase in studies which move beyond the personal pathology and rooflessness approaches to incorporate a broader analysis. The following review lends support to the thesis that homelessness results from the confluence of social, economic, political and physical shelter conditions which combine in particular ways and at varying spatial and temporal scales. This more comprehensive perspective suggests that one or more of structural conditions can act as a precipitant which triggers other dimensions. In other words, specific sources of homelessness (e.g. unemployment coupled with the loss of a home) can be a catalyst which precipitates other social problems such as family breakdown, alcoholism, malnutrition, depression, and sometimes death. Examples of the most comprehensive approaches are reviewed below.

In an analysis of the historical roots of homelessness in the U.S., Hopper et al. suggest that four causes can be advanced to explain the explosive increase in the numbers of homeless people in the 1970's and 1980's:

1. Rising rates of unemployment (especially among young and minorities);
2. Dire shortage of affordable housing;
3. Deinstitutionalisation;
4. Intensive changes in social assistance benefits and eligibility. (46)
These factors point to the relevant developments behind the precipitating events (eviction or the threat of it; loss of income; personal crises and others). But the dynamics behind such developments remain mysterious. Insofar as such factors are put forward as 'explanations', then they themselves are in need of challenging. Homelessness, as it exists today, may say as much about how the system currently 'works' as it does about how it 'fails'.(47)

They argue that decisive changes have taken place in the economy at large, in the housing market, and in government programs and policies for the disabled and dependent, which have resulted in a widening gap between the cost of subsistence needs and the resources available to meet them:

The homelessness phenomenon stems not only from changes taking place in the housing market but also from changes in the labor market (occupational structure, general economic decline, and household demography), in the structure of our urban areas, and in public policies designed for single 'dependent' populations. What we are witnessing in the 1980's is the culmination of structural trends developing over the previous decade that will continue to intensify, even during cyclical periods of economic recovery. Accordingly, it makes little sense to confine analysis of the problem to a scrutiny of those who are its victims.(48)

According to Hopper, it was in the period from the early to the late 1970's that the relevant factors fell into place and their combined force gathered momentum. In the early 1980's, as the economy worsened and housing markets tightened, a threshold was crossed and widespread homelessness resulted. The effects were differentially distributed:

Groups whose hold on a settled mode of life was already tenuous were the first to be affected: thus the arrival of ex-psychiatric patients and of young, jobless minority men on the streets and in the shelters was apparent in some areas by the mid-1970's. As the decade progressed and new forces responsible for homelessness intensified, the numbers of the homeless grew and their composition diversified.(49)

Hopper's research is particularly relevant here because it stresses the need to mesh micro and macro perspectives on homelessness as a way of identifying appropriate units of observation, and it recognises the importance of identifying the mediating structures through which the
influence of social structures (e.g. government, the economy, class interests, *inter alia*), are expressed at the level of individual lives.

Redburn and Buss present a somewhat similar argument to account for the recent rise in homelessness in the U.S.:

* A severe recession in 1982 and persistent high unemployment in some regions and population segments;

* reductions in national social program spending or new restrictions on program eligibility;

* shortages of low-cost housing, perhaps exacerbated by government housing and urban redevelopment policies; and

* the movement of state governments and the courts away from long term hospitalization of the mentally ill, combined with the failure to create adequate community support systems for those who, in the previous era, would have been institutionalized.(50)

In fact, the available evidence is not sufficient to say with certainty how much of the rise in homelessness is due to each of these or other factors.(51)

As they argue, this conclusion has significant ramifications:

If the USA accepts the creation of a permanent massive shelter system as the main response to homelessness, then it accepts also the permanence of a large population with no place to call home. A society that accepts this as a solution accepts its failure to develop effective approaches to prevention, its abandonment of reintegration as a goal for most of the homeless who need special help to live independently and its failure to create new permanent custodial settings for those who have been debilitated by poverty and life on the streets. Still unsettled is the extent to which the poverty and social marginality that characterize the homeless population are products of predisposing personal attributes—specifically mental illness and alcohol and drug addiction— and are not themselves primary causes of homelessness.(52)

Three influential regional studies of homelessness in the United States have also highlighted the synergistic nature of the problems. In 1986, a survey of hunger, homelessness and poverty in twenty five American cities, a U.S. Conference of Mayors concluded:
Identified most often as reasons for the persistence of homelessness in cities were: the shortage of housing affordable by low-income persons; changes in mental health policies combined with a lack of community services for chronically mentally ill individuals; and unemployment problems. In none of the 25 Task Force cities has the national economic recovery lessened the problem of homelessness. Other causes cited include inadequate levels of public assistance programs, the high cost of living, cuts in federal and state assistance programs, the loss of single room occupancy hotels and other low income housing, and migration of people from other areas seeking jobs but unable to find them. (53)

A report published by the Governor of the State of New York makes the argument that although data are scanty and the longitudinal studies necessary to establish causality non-existent:

...observers generally agree that the forces responsible for mass displacement throughout the 1970's and into the 1980's are:

Unemployment -- first appearing among those who were traditionally discriminated against or who were but precariously included in the labor market, but spreading to skilled workers and their families in the 1980's.

Scarcity of affordable housing -- the joint product of abandonment, urban renewal efforts mounted in the 1960's (fueled by tax abatements and generous profit-taking), rising fuel costs, and incomes which fail to keep pace with inflation.

Deinstitutionalization of the mentally disabled -- a revolution in mental health care, accompanied by a humane rhetoric and a sound understanding of the pernicious effects of long-term hospitalization, but which failed to mobilize the necessary resources to complete the job (providing housing and supportive services for ex-patients) once the hospitals were emptied.

Social service cutbacks and the culling of disability rolls -- a relatively recent phenomenon, begun in the spring of 1981 and accelerating to date.

The report concludes with the caution: "in reviewing the contemporary causes of homelessness, it is important to realize that the effects of these factors may well outlast the period of their operation." (54)

One year after Governor Cuomo's report, the New York State Department of Social Services submitted a report to the governor in which the following points were made:
It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to look for the causes of homelessness solely within the homeless themselves. Certainly alcoholism, drug addiction, or physical and mental disabilities have caused many to lose housing or fail to obtain it, or have prevented them from finding the services they need to maintain decent shelter. But the sudden and dramatic increase in this state in the numbers of homeless people whose only handicap is poverty cannot simply be explained with reference to social pathology or personal mismanagement. (55)

Three economic conditions were offered as partial explanations:

1. A large and steady decrease in the state's low-income housing supply over the last decade, particularly in New York City;

2. A sharp and persistent rise in poverty during the same period, fueled in recent years by an unusually deep recession and corresponding unemployment;

3. The high cost of housing combined with the failure of the state's public-assistance shelter allowance (before its increase this year), to pay for even minimally decent housing.

Contributing factors:

* Mental illness and deinstitutionalization
* Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
* Drug abuse
* Physical illness, disability and aging
* Youth. (56)

The problem of homelessness is increasingly only one expression - though perhaps the most extreme one - of the nature of poverty in this decade. In the past few years, homelessness has become less discriminating. We have come to refer to the entire class, old and new by one thing they all lack: a home. Yet that label of convenience should not fool us into believing that we have discovered some new and distinct problem. The many problems associated with homelessness, though formidable, are familiar. (57)

Finally, Kaufman argues that homelessness represents a multidimensional human services issue which touches many facets of the modern social welfare system. Homelessness is defined as "a condition wherein an individual on a given night has no place to sleep and is forced to be on the street or seek shelter in a temporary facility." (58) It is seen as a problem which has a variety of causes and includes a mix of people with differing needs.
The principal conclusion of Kaufman's research epitomises the general thrust of the previous analyses:

Homelessness represents the culmination of many social problems which have not been adequately dealt with over the years by federal, state, local housing and social welfare policies. While some people are quick to blame 'deinstitutionalization' of the mentally ill and retarded for the problem, others are just as quick to say that it is exclusively related to the serious shortage of affordable housing. The reality is that both of these and other causes as well are all important.(59)

HOMELESSNESS RECONSIDERED

* At least ten major sources of homelessness have been identified in Canada, including: housing affordability, displacement, deinstitutionalisation, the lack of adequate community support services, poverty, unemployment, insufficient social assistance benefits, family breakdown, individual responsibility and social attitudes.

* A review of the literature lends support to the thesis that homelessness is linked to individuals' actions and to social and economic conditions which combine to produce shelter problems for a wide range of homeless people. Under certain circumstances these conditions precipitate or trigger homelessness, whereas at times they are related events which exacerbate an existing problem.

* Many of the conclusions and generalisations in the analyses of homelessness are extrapolated from localised, one-time case studies. Little consideration is given to the geographic contexts within which homelessness is constituted and manifest, and it is not clear from the analyses whether particular places or locations influence the composition or concentration of the homeless, or the way in which particular sources of homelessness are produced and interact.
* A matrix illustrated the synergy among the sources which contribute to variations in the incidence of homelessness and to the composition of the homeless in specific spatial concentrations. It was suggested from this framework that the conditions and events which produce homelessness are constituted and become manifest at a variety of spatial scales, indicating that there are important geographic considerations which have a bearing on the problems facing the homeless.

The following three chapters address these geographic issues empirically in a series of related case examples. The first study examines economic and social conditions which contribute to regional variations in the incidence of homelessness, and to the changing composition of the economically disenfranchised homeless in Canada.
NOTES

1. Metropolitan Toronto Community Services Department and Planning Department. No Place To Go: A Study of Homelessness in Metropolitan Toronto. Toronto: 1983.

2. Ibid. One of the main conclusions of the report bears repeating: "The picture that emerges of those with no fixed abode is of a group that is predominantly composed of single males. A somewhat alarming trend is the increase in homeless individuals under 25, who comprise 36% of the homeless in hostels (excluding children in families). Other groups that have been on the increase include families and single women. Thus, the profile of the homeless in Metro developed from this study is contrary to the popular image of this group as being made up of men mainly from a 'skid row' lifestyle."


4. Ibid.

5. Metropolitan Toronto. Task Force on Low-income Single People: Final Report, Toronto: November 1986. The first issue addressed by the Task Force was a definition of the homeless or inadequately housed single population: "Those young and middle-aged 'homeless' and rooming house occupants, between the ages of 16 and 60, for whom hostels are not the appropriate type of accommodation but who are unable to afford rental accommodation in the private market because of the depletion of the rooming house stock, the cost of private rental apartments and their ineligibility for subsidised housing programs."

6. Ibid. The report also recognised, but did not address the needs of single persons with psychiatric histories who have been discharged into the community.


8. In a more recent paper entitled "From Homelessness to Home: a case for Facilitative Management", the authors argue that the roots of homelessness in Toronto can be traced to economic reasons coupled with prevalent societal responses which stigmatise the homeless and serve to perpetuate a system whereby they are considered 'victims', and blamed for their own misfortunes. They cite data on the effects of gentrification, renovation and de-conversion in the downtown core, and the impact of de-institutionalisation policies which have resulted in the poor becoming more economically disenfranchised and socially marginalised. Single Displaced Persons Group. Toronto, May 1987.


11. Peddie identifies a somewhat similar list from a review of the literature:

i. Cyclical and chronic unemployment;
ii. Inadequacies in the welfare system;
iii. The lack of affordable housing;
iv. Deinstitutionalization (particularly among the mentally ill);
v. Crises generated by family breakdown, marital disputes, discrimination in the housing market and landlord/tenant relations;
vii. Alcoholism, drug and substance abuse;
vii. The 'warehousing' of people in the emergency shelter/hostel system.

The principal sources used by Peddie include:

c. Metropolitan Toronto Community Services Department and Planning Department. *No Place To Go: A Study of Homelessness in Metropolitan Toronto.* Toronto: 1983.

12. Kim Hopper, Ezra Susser and Sarah Conover. "Economies of Makeshift: Deindustrialization and Homelessness in New York City", Urban Anthropology, Vol.14 No.1-3, 1985. According to Peter Marcuse, this approach has been articulated most fully in the United States by members of the Reagan administration (notably the President), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As an illustration, President Reagan made the following statement on ABC's Good Morning America on January 31, 1984: "What we have found in this country, and we're more aware of it now, is one problem that we've had, even in the best of times, and this is people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless who are homeless you might say by choice." As Marcuse noted, "It's always best to quote the President verbatim; one
might not believe it unless one is able to read the direct quote". Not to be outdone, shortly after these remarks were made, Edwin Mees opined that those who resort to using soup kitchens do so "because the food is free and that's easier than paying for it". Peter Marcuse. "Isolating the Homeless", Paper presented at the International Conference 'City Renewal through Partnerships', Glasgow, Scotland, July 7, 1987.


14. Ibid. The seminar arose from concern that homelessness existed throughout the member states causing profound misery and hardship to those affected, that urgent measures were required to alleviate the conditions endured by the homeless, and in the long-term, policies must be devised to eliminate homelessness. Delegates from voluntary groups and government reported common problems: unemployment, housing shortages in the cities, declining social benefits, and growth in evictions (the most severely hit group seeming to be young people). The conviction that government bears ultimate responsibility for the well-being of its citizens was manifest in the resolutions reached by the twelve nations. In calling for a European policy for the homeless, Senator Brendan Ryan commented, "It seems that, just as media writers and social scientists rediscovered homelessness in Ireland in the 1960's, so we are now discovering homelessness in Europe as a whole. There is now a substantial body of evidence to suggest that homelessness exists throughout the European member states and on a horrific scale."

15. Marcuse, "Isolating The Homeless".

16. Kim Hopper, Ezra Susser and Sarah Conover. "Economies of Makeshift: Deinstitutionalisation and Homelessness in New York City", Urban Anthropology, Vol.14, No.1-3, 1985. The psychiatric variation attempts to explain a social niche by invoking the traits of its occupants, but as Hopper et.al. point out, it ignores the significant time lag between the major waves of deinstitutionalization (1960's) and the appearance of large numbers of psychiatrically disabled on the streets (1970's). This approach also neglects the role of social context, other than "aftercare" in defining the practical consequences of disorder or disability.


18. The report, usually referred to as the Keener Report, was entitled: "Chronic Situational Dependency: Long Term Residents in a Shelter for Men", New York: Human Resources Administration, November 1982.

19. Main, "The Homeless in New York".


25. These estimates usually include those suffering from alcoholism. According to Stefl, "While the relative dominance of alcoholism among the homeless may be waning, there is still a group of hard-core skid row chronic deteriorated alcoholics whose life-style centers around the procurement and consumption of alcohol. This is the group of homeless men, generally middle-aged and older, who were the subject of considerable research attention in the past. They were frequently characterized as "disaffiliated", disenfranchised individuals lacking any kinds of social contact. Mary E. Stefl. "The New Homeless: A National Perspective", in Bingham et.al. The Homeless in Contemporary Society, Sage Publications, 1988.


26. Ellen Bassuk. "Homelessness: The Need for Mental Health Advocates". Commentary, Hospital and Community Psychiatry, Vol.35, No.9, September 1984. This edition contains a special section on homelessness which has one of the best discussions of homelessness and mental health issues found to date. See "Deinstitutionalization and the Homeless Mentally Ill", H. Richard Lamb. Lamb was the editor of The Task Force Report of the American Psychiatric Association on the Homeless Mentally Ill, which contains two comprehensive literature reviews on this sub-group by Leona L. Bachrach, and Anthony Arce and Michael Vergare.


28. Hopper et.al. use examples of hunger and the worsening condition of the habitat of the poor as two indicators of tenuousness. "Economies of Makeshift"

29. Ibid.

30. Marcuse, "Isolating the Homeless". The article has some very critical comments concerning how housing is perceived to be related to homelessness by Ronald Reagan: "Pure stupidity contributes to the inadequacy of the governmental response. From a Presidential press conference: 'I just read this morning in the paper about a needy family in New York that is being put up in a hotel, and the cost to welfare just for the rent of the hotel room is $37,000 a year. And I wonder why somebody doesn't build them a house for $37,000.' Marcuse also notes that the number of poor people in the U.S. is growing rapidly.
31. Marcuse, "Isolating the Homeless".

32. See for example, Jon Erickson and Charles Wilhelm, Housing the Homeless, Center for Urban Policy Research, The State University of New Jersey, 1986, for a wide range of articles and a comprehensive bibliography.


35. Ibid.


39. Evans, "Diagnoses, Prevention and Positive Action".


42. Cited in a forthcoming publication Housing the Homeless and Poor: New Relationships in the Welfare State, by Alex Murray and George Fallis (eds.), York University, Toronto.

43. Marjorie Hope and James Young. The Faces of Homelessness, Lexington Books, Toronto, 1987. Their study of London corroborates the impressions of other observers: government delays in rent subsidies, cuts in housing benefits for single unemployed people, a growth in illegal evictions, and a surge in gentrification, at the expense of low-income housing. (See for example p. 263).


47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


51. Ibid. p.69.

52. Ibid.


56. The report suggests that youth (both independent and in families), represent the fastest growing population of the homeless. Some of this development is clearly related to the increase in family breakup, in childbearing by young and inexperienced parents, and in poverty. Some is related to child abuse and other family violence which may be increasing or may be simply better understood and documented in recent years.

57. Ibid.


59. Ibid.
CHAPTER FIVE: ECONOMIC PRE-CONDITIONS

FOR THE EMERGENCE OF HOMELESSNESS
This case example examines trends in three related economic factors which are considered pre-conditions for the emergence of homelessness among those on the margins of the economic mainstream in Canada. It extends the argument made at the outset, and illustrated in the matrices in chapter 4, that homelessness is related to a combination of economic problems which include, *inter alia*:

* Poverty;

* Welfare dependence and inadequate social assistance benefits;

* Unemployment and underemployment.

While any one of these problems can have devastating effects on an individual, a family or an entire community, it is demonstrated here that these problems are commonly inter-related and compounded.

Homelessness in Canada can result from a range of social and economic problems, for individuals and families, for communities and for society as a whole. The current concern with homelessness reflects in part an increased public and professional awareness of the issue which in some measure can be attributed to the designation of 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. However, an examination of historical conditions reveals that homelessness can be traced, at least in part, to economic conditions. It is not the purpose here to claim that these economic conditions necessarily cause, or by themselves account for spatial variations in the incidence or persistence of homelessness in Canada. They illustrate general economic trends which were prevalent across the country at specific times, and suggest at least some correspondence with the changing composition of the homeless in recent years.
Data are presented to show that poverty, unemployment and inadequate social assistance have been persistent and at times pervasive problems in Canada, and that their effects have varied both regionally and in terms of those most affected. During times of economic crisis, such as occurred during the depression of the 1930's, poverty and unemployment were linked to high levels of homelessness. Since there was only a rudimentary system of public assistance during the first half of the century, the onus was on individuals to support themselves and their families. This often entailed the heads of households leaving homes and communities to search for employment opportunities in other parts of the country, and contributed to large-scale inter-provincial migration during periods of economic recession.

By the 1950's and 1960's, a social welfare 'safety net' had been established to mitigate against the economic crises such as had been produced during the Depression, and to address the poverty and sub-standard living conditions which prevailed.(1) While this did not eliminate homelessness, with the commitment to social welfare established and a buoyant economy, conditions generally improved throughout the country during the late 1960's and 1970's. Nevertheless, a significant number of Canadians continued to live in poverty and experience unemployment, and homelessness persisted.

Recent suggestions that homelessness is once again on the rise in Canada are supported to some extent by examining the trends in the incidence of poverty and unemployment which resulted from the poor economic conditions associated with the recessions of the 1970's, and which have continued into the 1980's. The argument is corroborated by examining recent trends in the number of people relying on income assistance, and analyses of the adequacy of income assistance rates across the country.
The emergence of the welfare state in Canada did much to ameliorate the economic conditions which contributed to homelessness. However, the recurrence of homelessness on a significant scale has occurred at the same time as the country is experiencing increased levels of poverty, high rates of unemployment, and in particular, a general weakening of the welfare consensus in the 1980's. As a result, those on the margins of the economic mainstream face at least an increased risk of homelessness. This claim is supported by examining the provision of income assistance in the different provincial jurisdictions, and illustrating the inadequacies of this assistance among low-income groups in Ontario and British Columbia.

Regional and temporal variations in the economic conditions identified support the argument that while homelessness in Canada is primarily manifest at the urban scale, in community and individual problems, it is not fundamentally a problem of cities. Although the analysis relies on aggregate data, it shows that the spatial impact of these trends is local. In this context, the geographer, not unlike the social planner, is concerned with disaggregating these data, demonstrating the localised implications on the lives of the homeless, and identifying the factors which are directing the course of homelessness in communities.(2)

HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA: THE EARLY YEARS

In the early decades of this century, attitudes toward the homeless, and particularly the poor, were grounded in the 19th century belief that poverty was a product of individual failing rather than of the social or economic structure. As Guest suggests:
Attitudes toward the poor and explanations of poverty in the first two decades of this century still reflected the nineteenth century belief that poverty was not a product of the social or economic environment. Poverty was explained in individual/moral rather than economic terms—it reflected deficiencies in the individual, and therefore any assistance given tended to be Social Darwinist in style and punitive in intent. It was left to private charities and municipalities, and assistance was given on an emergency not continuing basis. With the prevalent values of individualism and the ethos of conservative free enterprise flourishing, little effective community response to poverty and substandard housing conditions emerged, and attitudes toward the poor were disparaging.(3)

A review of homelessness in Canada between 1900 and 1960 by Hulchanski and Bacher demonstrates from archival research that the federal government's response to this issue retained some of those views. The sub-headings in their study illustrate the dominant government response in relation to the social and economic conditions of the times:

2. The Great Depression: Internment Camps and "Maintaining the Work Ethic"
3. Resisting the Rise of the Welfare State during WWII
4. Resisting Social Housing Programs During the 1940's and 1950's.(4)

Their review of the extent and nature of homelessness during Canada's formative years suggests that unemployment, poverty and substandard housing conditions were historically the most common precipitants of homelessness in Canada. While unemployment tended to be cyclical, poverty and inadequate housing which in some areas resulted in slum conditions, were more endemic:

The City of Toronto closed some 500 cellar dwellings, placarded 390 homes, and demolished 100 houses (in 1911). By 1915, it had shut another 1,007...In Vancouver and New Westminster, public health officials ordered the destruction of whole Oriental communities. In Winnipeg, public health inspectors boasted they had solved the city's housing problems "by dint of stern repression and frequent prosecutions". Hamilton's public health officer...called for a corps of inspectors to go about systematically "looking for trouble"...(believing that) only the "drunken, lazy and improvident" experienced homelessness.(5)
The authors trace the links between homelessness and major economic crises. For example, the severe depression of 1913-1915 produced one of a number of unemployment crises in Canada. Since there was no provision for unemployment assistance during this period, families essentially had to provide for themselves. As the western frontier was opening up, their search often led them to the resource industries as migrant workers, and to the skid row areas which grew up to accommodate them.

There is no reliable estimate of the number of homeless people in Canada prior to the Great Depression. It was only as a result of the devastating impact of the Depression and its aftermath that at least some indication of the extent of the problem can be found. To complicate matters, the Depression was considered to be an economic problem, and as a result, the plight of the estimated 100,000 homeless unemployed males who were drifting across the country was not considered in relation to the sub-standard housing conditions which prevailed during this period. Nevertheless, it would appear from the sources available that homelessness in the 1930's and 1940's consisted of at least three economic dimensions which have endured to the present: unemployment, poverty, and inadequate social assistance.

THE WELFARE STATE 'SAFETY NET'

The Canadian welfare system has its roots in England's Elizabethan Poor Law Legislation of 1601. The core tenet of the Poor Law was the assumption of public responsibility for relief of dependent persons through local parishes which acted as the equivalent of modern-day municipal governments. Until the 1920's, social assistance in Canada closely resembled the Poor Law system, but as a result of the Great Depression, when almost
25% of the labour force was out of work, and an estimated 15% of the population relied on some form of income assistance, the situation was fundamentally altered. Economic pressures gradually moved the provision of income assistance from a private, charity-based system to a publicly-funded one.

Since 1927, a series of pieces of legislation has resulted in the evolution of the contemporary social welfare system:

1. 1927 OLD AGE PENSIONS ACT
2. 1941 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
3. 1943 FAMILY ASSISTANCE
4. 1951 OLD AGE SECURITY ACT, OLD AGE ASSISTANCE ACT, BLIND PERSONS ACT
5. 1954 DISABLED PERSONS ACT
6. 1956 UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE ACT
7. 1966 CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN (9)

The Canada Assistance Plan attempted to consolidate the previous "patchwork quilt" of independent schemes into a more comprehensive arrangement of income assistance. The legislation was enacted because of the need to stimulate the economy rather than as a direct attack on the social conditions, and despite the recommendations of the social welfare pioneers of the 1930's, particularly the Committee on Post-War Reconstruction. According to Mishra:

The post-war welfare state rested on two pillars - one Keynesian and the other Beveridgian. Keynesianism stood for the government's ability to manage the economy from the demand side in order to ensure a high level of economic activity and full employment. The Beveridgian notion of social insurance against the hazards of the market economy, was a social 'model' which formulated clear principles of state intervention and responsibility for maintaining minimum standards of life. The hallmark of this approach was a network of universal and comprehensive social programmes providing adequate benefits to all without any stigma of charity and as a matter of the rights of citizenship in a modern democratic community. An assumption

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common to both Keynes and Beveridge was that the forms of state intervention and service provision would complement the market economy. The government was to be involved in the equitable distribution of services and programs, leaving production in the hands of private enterprise.(11)

Ontario was typical of the way social welfare emerged in Canada. As Dear and Wolch suggest, action on social policy in the period between 1946-50 was minimal, although a significant amount of planning was taking place which would be felt later.(12) The 1950's was a period of rapid acceleration in the provision of social services and intensive capital investment in physical facilities. In the five years between 1957 and 1962, there was a sharp rise in federal funding of social policies, and the provincial government responded by building up the human resources and social services network. However, the Canadian Assistance Plan which in 1965 formalized the federal funding of welfare programs, had a tremendous impact on the development of social policy in all the provinces:

The "full flowering" of Ontario as a service state occurred between '67 and '71. During the 25 years following WWII, the role of the state shifted from that of minimal regulation (in the forties) to that of investor-builder (in the fifties) to that of provider of services (in the sixties).(13)

Mishra extends this analysis to the national and international levels, arguing that there was a widespread acceptance of the idea of the welfare state in Anglo-American countries during the 1950's and 1960's, but that the consensus broke down in the 1970's and has contributed to the problem of homelessness in Canada in the 1980's. He suggests that a number of problems emerged to undermine the welfare state:

The broad consensus around the mixed economy and the welfare state weakened a good deal as the 70's wore on. As Keynesianism and other social theories of the centre, which served either as a practical guide to state intervention or as its intellectual underpinning lost credibility, radical critique of the welfare state (from the right, left
and feminists) gained in prominence. In particular, the ideas, analyses and prescriptions of the new right made a good deal of headway in virtually all western countries.(14)

In this view, the strong economic growth which had occurred in the three decades after the war, and which bolstered Keynesian economic theory, rapidly disappeared with the economic stagnation and high inflation of the early 1970's. The subsequent decade was marked by recessions, levels of unemployment which paralleled the Depression, and continuous budget deficits which increased national and provincial debts, and ushered in a crisis in confidence in the ability of the state to manage the mixed economy.(15)

Three indicators are used here to corroborate this argument. The following data suggest that while economic conditions generally improved across the country during the 1960's and 1970's, low income, poverty and unemployment continued to pose problems for those on the fringes of the workforce. It is shown subsequently that levels of social assistance have been insufficient to counteract these problems and therefore at least the risk of homelessness. The data illustrate that the economic pre-conditions for the emergence of homelessness varied regionally and among the demographic groups most affected.

ECONOMIC PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Variations in Income Distribution

The late 1960's and 1970's were periods in which Canadian families and unattached individuals experienced rising average incomes, but this trend has been reversed in the 1980's.(16) Real income decreased during the early 1980's, resulting in a significant increase in those Canadians officially categorised as low-income. The gap between rich and poor is continuing to
widen, particularly as the average incomes of low- and middle-income Canadians decline in this decade. The following statistics illustrate some the general trends:

* In 1986, the bottom 20% of the population earned 3.5% of all income compared with 43.3% earned by the top quintile.

* Families in each quintile had lower average incomes in 1986 than in 1980, with those in the bottom two quintiles suffering the largest percentage decreases.

* The average earnings of women in the mid-1980's were almost the same in real terms as 1977, whereas average earnings for men have declined steadily during the same time interval.

Prager (1988), provides a more historical overview of Canadian income data:

* In 1951, total income for the lowest quintile was 4.4%, and had only risen to 4.5% in 1984.

* In 1969, 31.8% of income among those in the lowest quintile came from earnings, while 50.4% came from government transfers; by 1984, the percentage of income from wages fell to 24.5%, and government transfers rose to 62.4%.

* The decline in earnings is even more dramatic among those in the second lowest quintile: in 1969, government transfers accounted for only 15.7% of total income, and earnings for 64.6%; in 1984, in contrast, government transfers accounted for 34.2% while earnings were 47.2%.

The data for the second quintile doubtless includes few members of the entrenched underclass and more of the working poor who are more responsive to economic opportunities. One might hypothesize that the increasing dependence of this quintile on government transfer payments may point to the failure of the economy to provide sufficient numbers of adequate jobs.(17)
Average Income for Families and Unattached Individuals: 1969-1986

Variations in Poverty Trends

Poverty in Canada declined substantially during the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's. As the following graph illustrates, in the late 1960's more than 20% of families and over 40% of unattached individuals were living below the poverty line. By 1980, these proportions had decreased significantly (12.4% and 39.5% respectively).

Families and Unattached Individuals Living in Poverty: 1968-1984


N.B. This chart uses 1969 based Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-offs-1978 based statistics not available.
Canada's total low-income population grew steadily throughout the 1970's, but the composition of the poor underwent interesting changes:

* The 'working poor' have declined steadily over the years both in absolute and relative terms. In 1973, there were 513,400 working poor households, representing 9% of all young family units. By 1977 there were 425,800, constituting 6%. As a result, the proportion of all poor family units who were working poor declined from 60% in 1973 to 47% by 1977. However,

* The number of 'other poor' families - those unable to earn more than half their income by working - increased from 340,900 (5.9%) in 1973 to 484,500 (7.2%) by the late 1970's. The other poor are now the predominant group among the poverty population.

* The number and percentage of 'near poor' family units - those with incomes above Statistics Canada's low-income cutoffs but below the Senate Committee on Poverty's poverty line - have increased over time and at a faster rate than the poor. Their numbers jumped by 42% between 1973 and 1977.

By 1980, the economic recession had hit Canada significantly. With the onset of the recession in the 1980's, the steady decline in the number of poor people ended and a steady incline began (which would be the dominant trend until the middle of the decade). Each day in 1982 and 1983, 1,100 men, women and children were added to the number of poor people (Canadians with incomes below the poverty line increased from 3.5 to 4.3 million, a 23% increase in 2 years). Three groups were particularly hard hit: young families (heads under 25); young unattached individuals and female headed families (mostly single parents).(18)
Families and Unattached Individuals Living in Poverty: 1980-1986

The most recent data available indicate that despite recent economic improvements, most notably in the reduction of those unemployed, the number and percentage of poor Canadians have been higher throughout the 1980's than at the beginning of the decade:

* 3.7 million Canadians (14.9%) remain poor. This includes 12.3% of all families and 34.3% of unattached individuals (38.5% unattached women, 29.2% unattached men).

* 38.7% of families headed by women are poor compared to 9% led by men. The poverty rate for children in female-led, one-parent families ranges from a high of 76.4% in New Brunswick to a 'low' of 49.8% in Prince Edward Island.

* More than half of low-income families are working poor: 55.7% are headed by someone in the labour force and 26.7% by a year-round worker. By contrast 61.1% of poor unattached individuals are not in the labour force (many are elderly).

* There has been a 'feminization of poverty' in the sense that women face a much higher risk of poverty than men and make up a larger percentage of the poor. 56.1% of all low income Canadians are women (56.4% of low-income people between 16 and 64 years of age); 71.7% of the elderly poor are women (82.3% of unattached elderly with low incomes). However, the feminization of poverty has not increased during the 1980's.

* Poor families which rely on government transfer payments (old age pensions, unemployment insurance and social assistance) rose from 43% in 1969 to 55.5% in 1986, with a corresponding decline in the proportion that count employment earnings as their chief source of income (from 50.9% in 1969 to 37.8% in 1986). The proportion of unattached individuals who get most of their income from government transfers has changed very little (57.8% to 58.1%).

* The real success story is the reduction in poverty among Canada's elderly. In 1980, 61.5% of unattached seniors were below the poverty line. By 1986, 42.7% had low incomes. The poverty rate for families with heads 65 or older declined from 41.4% in 1969 to 14.2% in 1980, and to 9.5% in 1986. This is due to improvements in the retirement income system, such as federal guaranteed income supplement for the low-income elderly and the maturation of the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans.(19)

An indication of regional variations in the incidence of poverty during 1986 are displayed below by province and by community size.
Families and Unattached Individuals Below Poverty Line By Province: 1986

Families and Unattached Individuals Below Poverty Line By Community: 1986

Variations in Unemployment Rates

Drover and Hulchanski characterise the situation of the unemployed in Canada which is relevant to a geographic investigation of homelessness:

It is now recognised that there are two kinds of unemployed in an urban economy. One group is comprised of the mobile unemployed who can move to a new location if jobs are not locally available. Many urban areas have seen a great deal of outmigration of the 25 - 40 year old group, i.e. family age adults. This can be a particularly serious problem for smaller communities where there is a great deal of chronic unemployment, since they lose the heart of their productive labour pool. The second group is the chronic unemployed, who are in a sense, captive within the urban community. Today, the chronic urban unemployed are increasingly comprised of three groups: the young; single-parents, usually women; and older workers displaced from the labour force. National and provincial social welfare nets have been slow to adjust to the new realities in the changing scope and nature of the urban unemployed. The issue is not simply jobs, but what kind of jobs we are getting. From 1973 to 1983, almost all of the two million new jobs created by Canada's economy were in the service sector, many of them part-time or temporary.(20)

Unemployment trends between 1976-1988 are shown below.

Regional variations in unemployment rates have been remarkably consistent for decades, with rates in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and British Columbia usually exceeding those in Ontario and the Prairies. However, Ostry and Zaidi have noted that when overall unemployment in Canada increases, it increases more in high unemployment regions, the duration is higher in these regions and so also is the incidence of long-term unemployment.(21) They also suggests that official unemployment rates are not an adequate indicator of labour-market distress since lower-than-average participation rates are often signs of hidden unemployment or underemployment. Unemployment rates varied considerably across the country between 1976 and 1986, but the overall trend was toward higher rates. Between 1980 and 1982, national unemployment rates rose by almost 50%. In addition, Canadians are now out of work for longer periods than in previous years; the average duration of unemployment...
had risen to 21.6 weeks in 1984, and the number of people without a job for a year or more doubled between 1980 and 1984. As a result, the sharp rise in unemployment in the first half of the 1980's triggered a significant increase in the number of poor Canadians.

Shaw has noted that relatively small numbers of workers account for a large share of all spells of unemployment:

These individuals have been called the 'chronically unemployed', meaning they experience frequent bouts of unemployment of relatively long duration. It is the long-term or chronically unemployed who are most likely to be pushed into poverty when jobs become scarce. Such unemployment is most prevalent among workers in primary industries, among workers in the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec, among those possessing skills which earn low wage rates, among poorly educated youth, native peoples, and older workers who have lost their jobs.(22)

This excerpt and the data above suggest that chronic unemployment and poverty are significant pre-conditions for the emergence of homelessness. However, as the data suggests, the risk of homelessness is not limited to those who are removed from the workforce.

Poverty, Jobs and the Working Poor

Many people continue to believe that the poor are all unable and unwilling to work, but this myth ignores a basic fact about poverty in Canada, that the working poor are a significant part of Canadian society:

Fully 60% of low-income family units headed by persons under 65 rely on work rather than government assistance for their inadequate incomes. Including the 513,400 wage earners who are family heads, the total number of Canadians in working poor families is close to 1.5 million.(23)

There were estimated to be over 425,000 working poor families and single persons in Canada in 1986, and their numbers are substantial in every province.(24)
### Annual Rate of Unemployment by Province for Period 1976-1988

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<thead>
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<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: StatsCan, Various years.
The country can be roughly split into two in terms of the composition of its working poor population. In the east - Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces - the working poor make up less than half the low-income population while 'other poor' families and unattached individuals - those who rely mainly on non-employment sources of income (e.g. social assistance, unemployment insurance and other government transfer payments) predominate. In the Prairie provinces and B.C., the working poor outnumber other poor households; two-thirds of Alberta's poor families are working poor. They are also highly urbanised. Seven in every ten live in urban centres, with an estimated 56% concentrated in large cities of 100,000 or more, more than 25% in small cities and towns, and the remainder in rural areas. Single persons are over-represented in comparison with their proportion in the general population. One in every eight unattached individuals is working poor and single persons comprise close to one half of all working poor households. However, among working poor family units headed by someone 25 or older, families with children predominate (59%) followed by single persons (31%) and other families (10%).

The working poor in Canada are an interesting example of a group who are highly susceptible to fluctuations in economic conditions, which can result in episodic periods of unemployment or underemployment. Their circumstances are considerably different from the chronic unemployed previously described, but to date little research has been conducted on whether this group experiences homelessness (presumably temporary) to any significant degree.
THE WEAKENING OF THE WELFARE CONSENSUS

When the world economy took a dramatic downturn around 1973, related in part to the Arab-Israeli war and the subsequent oil embargo, the federal and provincial governments began to speak increasingly of spending restraint. As a result, investment in housing and social service provision occurred at a much reduced rate. In Ontario, for example, provincial government expenditures increased fivefold between 1960 and 1970. By 1975, expenditures reached $9 billion, the annual growth of government expenditures had reached 25%, inflation had topped 10%, and the government debt had doubled in one year to reach $2 billion:

These trends prompted serious questioning of government spending, particularly on social programs. A special programs review committee (Henderson report) produced a report which established the philosophy behind the Ontario government's cutback program. The report recommended cutbacks to the number and wages of public sector employees, and reduced levels of social service; increasing costs of services and higher user fees; decentralization of provincial government responsibilities to municipal governments and ultimately to individuals. These three forms of restraint subsequently affected every area of provincial government spending on social services. The recommendations included the elimination of programs, cuts in grants to municipalities, manpower reductions and reductions in social security expenditures. The committee estimated that by 1977-78 this restraint program would have saved the provincial government $3,660 million.(28)

As the economic recession moved into high gear, governments introduced new policies which were intended to promote co-operation in the social service area. The three main policies were deinstitutionalisation, privatisation and voluntarism:

In these three "policies" and the elimination of other social programs the various levels of government have done violence to our social welfare system. So much so, that we now face problems that remind us of the Great Depression and the humiliation and hardship experienced by so many. The dream of the post-war years, that future Canadians would not have to feel the burden of poverty is no more! As the years go by, Canada is drifting back in time: the scenes of yesterday become the scenes of today - food lines, soup kitchens and neighbourhood charities.(29)
The 'social safety net' is showing signs of wear and tear. A weakening of the welfare consensus has exacerbated the problems facing the economically and socially vulnerable and the homeless. Because of the economic restraint policies introduced by both federal and provincial governments, those who rely on income assistance are finding it increasingly more difficult to afford adequate food, clothing and particularly shelter. An examination of the provision of social assistance benefits in the different provinces reveals that more people are relying on government assistance than ever before, but the benefits are seriously inadequate.

INCOME ASSISTANCE AND THE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

No province in Canada provides sufficient income assistance to single recipients to raise their income to the poverty line, and families fare only slightly better:

Despite great interprovincial disparities, there is one striking but unfortunate area of national consistency. In all provinces, the definition of basic requirements is so stringent that the welfare benefit levels calculated according to these standards permit only an impoverished existence.(30)

In 1986, the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto undertook a review of the adequacy of social assistance benefits in each of the ten provinces. According to their report, the range of incomes for single employable persons is 20.3% to 60.0% of the poverty line, and for single disabled persons, the range is 51.1% to 81.5%.(31) Among families, two parent/two children households do less well than one parent/one child households, with incomes ranging from 48.2% to 69.8% of the poverty line:

A significant downturn in the performance of the economy such as that experienced by Canada in the years 1982-1984 provides a test of the commitment of governments to care for the most economically vulnerable members of society...The overall pattern shows a consistency in which
provinces with the highest benefit levels (Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan) have either reduced benefits or limited increases to below the rate of inflation. The largest single reductions occurred in the single employable category where Saskatchewan and Alberta cut benefits by 41.9% and 24.2% respectively. The provinces of Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and British Columbia reduced the real purchasing power of recipients, after shelter incomes, in all household categories. (32)

The report documented the levels of assistance paid to families and singles in each of the provinces in 1985, and then calculated the monthly incomes after shelter costs had been deducted. The results are tabulated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY BENEFITS OF FAMILIES ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BY PROVINCE, 1985</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ADULT, 1 CHILD (4yrs)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TERM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEWF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVA SCOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW BRUNS</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUEBEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONTARIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANITOBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAKATCHEW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIT.COL</td>
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130
### MONTHLY BENEFITS OF SINGLE PERSONS ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BY PROVINCE, 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Short Term</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Short Term</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>414</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>695*</td>
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<td>375</td>
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<td>548</td>
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* Includes assured income for the severely handicapped.


### MONTHLY AFTER-SHELTER INCOMES OF FAMILIES ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BY PROVINCE, 1985 (LONG-TERM PROVINCIAL RATES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
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<th>Shelter Costs</th>
<th>Amount Remain</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<th>Amount Remain</th>
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MONTHLY AFTER-SHELTER INCOMES OF SINGLE INDIVIDUALS ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
BY PROVINCE, 1985. (LONG-TERM PROVINCIAL RATES)

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<th>Monthly Benefits</th>
<th>Shelter Costs</th>
<th>Monthly Shelter Amount</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>310</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* INCLUDES ASSURED INCOME FOR THE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED.


It should be noted that since these data were published, Alberta has reduced its social assistance rates by $150 per month to single employable people.

Two additional studies of the adequacy of social assistance rates were published in 1986. A British Columbia study found a significant gap between welfare benefits and the cost of basic living, based on taking the average of the maximum and minimum allowable rates for each type of household.(33) In each case welfare rates fell short of the cost of basic living. When examined in relation to the changes in the consumer price index, the real value of welfare benefits in B.C. decreased by 16% between 1982 and 1986 (even although they had outstripped inflation prior to this time).

The National Council on Welfare provides an indication of the assistance
available to different household groups. They calculated rates of social assistance for basic needs in three typical welfare households: a single person 19-25; a single parent with a two year-old child; and a two-parent family with two children aged 10 and 15. The calculations indicate that basic welfare incomes range from a low of 23% of the poverty line to a 'high' of 85% of the poverty line, and according to the report: "it is those individuals considered to be employable who are most severely treated under the current welfare system."(34) As the report noted:

There is no one set of categories common to all jurisdictions with respect to, for example, reasons for being on welfare. We do not know how long people remain on social assistance and how often they have to use the system. We have no idea of the actual average amount of benefits received by recipients in various categories, and no information is readily available on a province-by-province basis of changes in welfare rates over the years.(35)

The figures are shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Welfare Type</th>
<th>Social Assistance Annual Income</th>
<th>Total Annual Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line Gap</th>
<th>Total Welfare Income as %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Single Employable</td>
<td>$4,302</td>
<td>$4,330</td>
<td>$10,653</td>
<td>-$6,323</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
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<td>Single Parent/Child</td>
<td>$7,288</td>
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<td>-$5,194</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
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<td>Couple, 2 Children</td>
<td>$10,503</td>
<td>$12,777</td>
<td>$21,655</td>
<td>-$8,888</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
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<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>Single Employable</td>
<td>$4,541</td>
<td>$5,089</td>
<td>$10,653</td>
<td>-$5,564</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
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<td>$8,925</td>
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<td>63.5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Couple, 2 Children</td>
<td>$11,098</td>
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<td>$21,665</td>
<td>-$7,627</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
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<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Single Employable</td>
<td>$4,828</td>
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<td>$10,653</td>
<td>-$5,524</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
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<td>Single Parent/Child</td>
<td>$8,756</td>
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<td>-$3,806</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Couple, 2 Children</td>
<td>$10,832</td>
<td>$13,560</td>
<td>$21,665</td>
<td>-$8,105</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>Single Employable</td>
<td>$2,052</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$10,653</td>
<td>-$8,253</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
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<td>Single Parent/Child</td>
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<td>$9,101</td>
<td>$14,055</td>
<td>-$4,954</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Couple, 2 Children</td>
<td>$10,020</td>
<td>$12,733</td>
<td>$21,665</td>
<td>-$8,932</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Newfoundland:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare Type</th>
<th>Social Assistance Annual Income</th>
<th>Total Annual Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line Gap</th>
<th>Total Welfare Income as %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Single Employable</td>
<td>$3,389</td>
<td>$3,389</td>
<td>$10,117</td>
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<td>33.5%</td>
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<td>Single Parent/Child</td>
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<td>$13,340</td>
<td>-$3,781</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
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<td>Couple, 2 Children</td>
<td>$9,828</td>
<td>$11,954</td>
<td>$20,590</td>
<td>-$8,636</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Ontario, people on welfare exist on incomes which are 25% to 55% below the poverty line.(36) An examination of General Welfare Assistance recipients in Metropolitan Toronto concluded that:

If the assumption that General Welfare Assistance should be sufficient to cover shelter, food and clothing needs is accepted, then the results of the present study suggest that the current welfare rates are inadequate...A primary reason for that inadequacy appears to be the high cost of accommodation in Metro Toronto.(37)
There is growing evidence that a secondary welfare system has developed in the charitable sector because current welfare rates are insufficient to allow people to purchase both shelter and food:

32,453 people were in receipt of GWA in Metro Toronto in January 1986, of whom, 50% were considered to be employable. GWA rates were revised in January 1986. Since then, a single employable person has been eligible for a monthly allowance of up to $394.00 including a shelter subsidy of $115.00. Excluding the shelter subsidy, the basic allowance is made up of an ordinary needs component of $204.00 and a shelter allowance of $75.00 (this represents 27% of the basic allowance; if the shelter subsidy is taken into account, a single employable person is expected to spend $190.00 or 48% of the net GWA on shelter) - 87% of recipients are spending more than 50% of GWA on shelter.(38)

In the review of General Welfare Assistance in Ontario it was noted that supplementing the income of recipients without addressing the problem of the critical shortage of suitable housing for low-income people could simply serve to push up the price of what little cheap housing remains in the area.(39) One result of the trends outlined above has been a noticeable increase in the number of people relying upon emergency shelters and hostels across the country as a place of last resort.

While it is not merely the economics of poverty or unemployment alone, or meagre social assistance benefits which create homelessness in many parts of the country, there are obvious links between these conditions and the broad spectrum of homeless groups identified in chapter three. Emergency shelters are increasingly catering to people who have lost their jobs and could not afford to hold on to their homes. Long waiting lists face families trying to get into social and public housing units but in the meantime they are are faced with trying to secure affordable accommodation in extremely tight housing markets in addition to providing food and clothing.(40) Economic conditions do not cause homelessness but they do make a difference.
THE ECONOMIC PRE-CONDITIONS

* Homelessness in the first half of this century in Canada was primarily related to extreme economic conditions which produced large numbers of employable but unemployed men moving across the country in search of employment, and dependent on what little government relief was available. The economic devastation which was brought on by the Great Depression raised the consciousness of Canadians that homelessness was a substantial and serious problem which individuals could not overcome at will. But perhaps as important was the recognition in the aftermath of World War Two that a return to economic prosperity did not eliminate the problem. Poverty and sub-standard housing conditions were considered areas of high priority in the period of post-war reconstruction, and it was recognised in some quarters at least, that homelessness continued to be linked to unemployment.

* The 'social safety net' matured in the early 1970's into a comprehensive and progressive system which positively affected the standard of living of most Canadians. The social welfare consensus coincided with the rapid growth of the Canadian economy and the real effect of social welfare policies began to show in the '70's when the number of poor people declined. However, there is evidence to suggest that a growing discrepancy was taking place between rich and poor Canadians even at this time of relative prosperity.

* The evidence clearly indicates that homelessness in Canada is not, and never has been solely a question of shelter, or housing. It is closely related poverty, unemployment, and inadequate levels of social assistance which have varied in intensity both temporally and spatially.
* In recent years, the composition of the poor and economically disenfranchised has altered, in part because of the strengths of the welfare system, and in part because of its weaknesses.

* The case example provides a good illustration of how the reciprocal relations between social structures and individual agency are influenced by spatial relations. While homelessness is predominantly found in the urban centres in Canada, the economic pre-conditions examined were shown to be constituted and manifest at a variety of spatial scales.

These points will be raised again during the following case example which examines the importance of community for the inner-city socially marginalised and homeless.
NOTES

1. It should be noted however, that these problems were still generally considered by government to be episodic failures of the market place which required government intervention. See H.P.Oberlander and A.L.Fallick Housing Canadians. Vancouver, B.C.: The University of British Columbia, Centre for Human Settlements, 1988.


4. John C. Bacher and J. David Hulchanski. "Keeping Warm and Dry: The Policy Response To The Struggle For Shelter Among Canada's Homeless, 1900-1960", Urban History Review, October 1987. The authors illustrate this with an excerpt from 1912 report by the Associated Charities of Winnipeg, which has a familiar ring in certain contemporary quarters: "Unfortunately, the large majority of applicants for relief are caused by thriftlessness, mismanagement, unemployment due to incompetence, intemperance, immorality, desertion of the family and domestic quarrels. In such cases the mere giving of relief tends rather to induce pauperism than to reduce poverty".

5. Ibid. They suggest that this attitude prevailed until at least the 1930's. "An article in a Canadian social welfare journal appropriately entitled "The Social Worker's Attitude to Housing" asserted that improvements in the housing conditions of the poor depended upon moving "to another section of the city, persons who needed to be freed of the corrupting lure of friends and familiar places." William McCloy. "The Social Worker's Attitude to Housing" Social Welfare, 9, 1929


9. Ibid. "The flexibility of the Canada Assistance Plan combined with regional diversity have resulted, in effect, in a unique welfare system in each of the twelve jurisdictions in Canada. While all these programs have several key features in common, each is governed by its own set of regulations which make it different from the system in any other part of the country."

10. see Oberlander and Fallick. Housing Canadians.


13. Ibid.

14. Mishra traces the problems to:
   i. Unintended consequences associated with professionally and bureaucratically-dominated public services;
   ii. Clients became passive objects
   iii. The universality of the welfare state became less distributive and less beneficial for the poor.

15. Ibid. "By the close of the seventies, little was left of the promise of a "science of society". Economics, which was earlier believed to have come of age as a social science, was in deep trouble. Keynesianism was in disarray and neo-classical theories of market economy had staged a comeback...(And) long before economics proved to be an emperor without clothes, sociology and the social sciences more broadly conceived were found wanting as reliable guides to action".


17. Prager. "Poverty in North America".


20. Glenn Drover and J. David Hulchanski. "Future Directions for Urban Social Planning in Canada". The links between the incidence of poverty and unemployment can be shown by reference to Alberta and British Columbia in the period between 1981 and 1984. In Alberta, the rate of family poverty doubled (8.3% - 16.3%), and the proportion of unattached individuals with low-incomes rose from 26% to 31%. During the same time period, the unemployment rate tripled from 3.8% to 11.2%. In B.C., family poverty rose by 65% and the jobless rate by 116% in the four year period. By 1986, the trend had been reduced slightly, but as Smith suggests, there were still 105,600 families living below the poverty line, a 53% increase since 1980.


25. Ostry and Zaidi argue that seasonality of employment accounts for a major portion of regional disparities in unemployment. In the Atlantic Region, British Columbia and to a lesser extent Quebec, a large proportion of the industrial workforce relies on seasonal labour. At the same time however, when the duration of unemployment is considered, the average duration of unemployment rises in close concordance with the overall level of unemployment. Higher levels of cyclical unemployment are derived from both increased frequency (larger flows) and long duration: as economic conditions worsen, more workers are displaced from jobs and take longer to find work. This lengthening duration was apparent in every region of Canada over the recession of the early 1970's, although as the Economic Council of Canada pointed out (People and Jobs), the regional incidence of long-term unemployment at any time shows a persistent pattern, being higher in the Atlantic region, Quebec and British Columbia.


27. Ibid.


32. Ibid.
33. K. Melliship and B. Levens. *Regaining Dignity*, Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., 1986. The average cost of living is the mean of the most costly and the least costly family expenditures for each household size.


35. Ibid.

36. Ontario raised social assistance rates slightly in 1986, recognising that benefits to two-parent families were "grossly inadequate". As a result, these families received an additional $50 per month and other benefit increases (totalling 15.7% from $762 to $882). Social Infopac.


40. An interesting anecdote recently appeared in a political science paper which illustrates the prevailing attitude to poverty and income assistance recipients by the Social Credit government.

"In the 1980's family poverty grew faster in B.C. than in any other province in Canada. Between 1981 and 1986, families living below the poverty line increased by 53% in B.C. - to 105,600 families. With health care premiums increasing, extra user charges for seniors' long term and extended care facilities, the province refusing to co-operate to allow the Vancouver School Board to tap available federal assistance for a school meals program; and with a major reorganization of the social services ministry underway, allowing for fewer public services, the premier suggested that 'if we can help them (the poor) to get to know Jesus Christ ... they'll be much happier and their problems will be resolved much easier' and welfare recipients and women with unwanted pregnancies can turn to Christ 'for free'. Patrick J. Smith. "Perestroika".

41. According to Leonard Marsh in *Canadians In and Out of Work*: "It would appear, that some twenty years after the Depression, the single jobless become casualties and dependent on social assistance at pretty much the same rate as previously. In 1937, the best year of the Depression period, the number of normal wage earners on relief went from 7% to 8% of the total employee-force of the country."

42. Marsh notes that for the duration of the War, the economic environment continued to provide that anyone who had even a restricted capacity for employment could find it, and during the two years succeeding May 1945, the volume of unemployment insurance credits, voluntary and compulsory war-time savings, and re-establishment credits, provided a screen which obscured a
view of any unemployment problem which might exist. However, by the Autumn of 1947, increasing numbers of applications by employable persons to the city social service department and to private agencies made it apparent that in the transition from a war-time to a peace-time economy there were some employment casualties... Each year (up to '55) the problem (of unemployment) assumed large proportions, not only in Vancouver, but across Canada. By December 1958, not only had the volume of the single unemployed men become alarming, but the lack of shelter for them was appalling.
CHAPTER SIX: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY TO THE INNER CITY HOMELESS
LOUIE the SUN KING

Louie the Sun King they called
Him, Louie with all of the
Attention befitting One who knew the
Splendour. Knew it to wear
As a robe flowing with noonday sun.
Who wore it so prinely that simple men
Came to pay homage on the TTC with
No tickets left for the ride home. It did not
Matter then. All they ever wanted was a smile
From his toothless grin, his arm raised to
Salute the truth. What a sight he was.
Standing by the Salvation Army store,
A shopping bag strung loosely on the
Arm not raised, he had such an infectious smile.
He laughed at the pigeons who ate at his feet.
No, he laughed with the pigeons. A spring
Rain covered his smile with artificial tears.
He stood without blinking.
He was the kind of thief who stole your heart,
And was counselled to plead insanity.
He never knew he had any kind of power.
Once he awoke in a kind of revery.
He dreamed he would marry a slender woman
With golden straw hair beneath a wide brim
Of chantilly lace. His best feelings were of chantilly lace.
He told everyone about this event which would so
Change his life. He told the owner of Channon Court.
He believed what he said and was happy beyond
Tommorrow. He forgot about the date.
He stood outside the Salvation Army store and
Saluted for an extra long time. He grinned his best
Most toothless grin. He laughed at, with, pigeons.
He tried all of his tricks. It didn't matter.
He tired of trying to be soプリンvely.
He stayed in the rain too long, long after the others
Had returned on the TTC. Louie the Sun King,
A small voice called from far away. Kings don't
Stand like that, Louie. Kings don't lie.
He went home and spoke to someone who gave him a
Mock salute. He returned it, but it left a rancid taste.
He thought kings don't lie.
The inquest continues.

HARVEY SAVAGE. PHOENIX RISING. Vol.6, No.4, June 1987.
INTRODUCTION

The inner city has been historically a place of refuge for the homeless. The skid row milieu - the reservoir of cheap, poor-quality rooming houses and residential hotels, the hostels, drop-in centres, beer parlours and welfare offices - was the traditional home of the 'urban nomads', the seasonally employed migrant labour force and others who, for varying reasons have had difficulty coping with urban society.

In the following case example, it is suggested that as skid row areas have evolved, the composition of the homeless in these areas has altered. In particular, recent trends indicate a relative increase among socially marginalised and service-dependent groups, and a decline in the proportion of the economically disenfranchised for whom the area was historically a temporary refuge during periods of unemployment.

This transformation is shown to be related to the impact of two relatively recent processes, deinstitutionalisation and inner-city revitalisation (coupled with gentrification), which have significantly altered the composition of the homeless in Canada's inner cities - and transformed the community which many have made their home. From a geographic perspective, it is suggested that these processes, which combined to create and subsequently alter skid row, have contributed to making this milieu home by choice for some homeless, and by default for others. Examining the spatial impact of deinstitutionalisation and revitalisation within the context of the evolution of skid row, illustrates how various contingent local conditions have altered the composition of Canada's urban homeless.

Prominent writers such as Bogue, Rooney, Wallace and Vanderkooi who traced the development of skid row up to the 1960's and 1970's, have argued
that the function of skid row has shifted from what was once an "employment pool", into "an old age rest home", and that it will continue to exist simply as an agglomeration of social misfits - alcoholics, old men, poorly educated people, the chronically unemployed and the mentally deficient.\(^{(1)}\) They predicted that the population of skid row would decline as a result of improved welfare benefits, and as the demand for unskilled and casual labour declines with the increased trend toward automation. As a result, skid row would come to function as an open asylum, and despite social change, homelessness would persist in this area, although the future homeless would have different characteristics from their predecessors.

In one sense, the authors' suggestion that homelessness will be ceded to the skid row areas is questioned. Two related arguments are made.

1. The effects of homelessness have become more widespread.

Many parts of Canada have been going through a deep economic recession and at the same time, there has been a structural shift away from the traditional resource- and industrial-based economy. The response by federal and most provincial governments has been to fight inflationary pressures in the economy through monetary policies and restraint programmes which have increased unemployment.\(^{(2)}\) Canadian evidence suggests that the skid row areas have not markedly increased despite high levels of unemployment in the late 1970's and 1980's, and that the traditional association between structural unemployment, poverty and the high concentration of the homeless in the urban cores has altered. There are more educated, skilled, and middle-class people being affected beyond the inner city.

2. Skid row areas are being revitalised.

Evidence from Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg and Edmonton
indicates that the older sections of these cities have been experiencing considerable re-development pressures which have transformed the internal structure of many Canadian cities, reduced the stock of low-cost accommodation and strained the social welfare 'safety net'. This is partly related to the changing economic and social structure of the skid row areas as they become desirable areas for redevelopment and gentrification. The situation has changed from one in which the inner city was the place of last resort for those seeking refuge from harsh economic conditions, to one where it is becoming increasingly difficult to find low-cost accommodation. As Kasinitz suggests:

In recent years the downtown sections of many North American cities have undergone extensive renovation and revitalization. This "back to the city" or "gentrification" movement has been both hailed as an urban renaissance and condemned for disrupting urban neighborhoods and displacing inner city residents. While many types of land use in the inner core have been regarded as the very symbols of urban decay, they serve the vital needs of populations with few resources and alternatives. Gentrification has placed these powerless people in direct competition with relatively powerful actors for inner city space. The result may be at least a partial explanation for the growing ranks of the homeless on the streets of many cities.(3)

Skid row is no longer simply a refuge for those outside the mainstream of society. The changing composition of the homeless in these areas has also coincided with significant changes in land use, intensifying homelessness internally, and projecting it beyond the traditional boundaries.(4) These arguments are presented in detail below, beginning with the evolution of skid row.

In another sense however, the authors' prognosis of skid row becoming a repository for society's social and economic cast-offs has some merit. Deinstitutionalisation has indeed produced a new group of socially marginalised. Joining the core of 'single older men on welfare' who had
become the characteristic skid row resident of the late 1960's and 1970's, inner city areas have increasingly become the home of last resort for a growing number of mentally ill, who, because of limited options, are facing an increased risk of becoming homeless in the inner-city areas.

SKID ROW AS A HAVEN FOR THE HOMELESS

Skid row has been described as both a distinct geographic section of a city with certain recognisable features, and also as a human condition, in the sense that it symbolises a way of living and coping.(5)

Bogue has described the geographic dimensions of skid row:

...A district in the city where there is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns, employment agencies offering jobs as unskilled laborers, restaurants serving low-cost meals, pawnshops and second-hand stores, and missions that daily provide a free meal after the service. Perhaps there are also barber colleges, burlesque shows or night clubs with strip tease acts, pennyarcades, tattoo places, stores selling men's work clothing, bakeries selling stale bread, and unclaimed freight stores. Most frequently the skid row is located near the central business district and also near the factory district or major heavy transportation facilities such as waterfront, freightyards, or a trucking and storage depot.(6)

Bogue suggests that these characteristics were indicative of the essential needs of the early skid row residents - inexpensive food, shelter, clothing, temporary work, and "the social and emotional needs associated with them."(7) Duncan's description of the classification and use of urban space adds an additional geographic perspective which is of value in understanding the geography of skid row.(8) Duncan draws on a series of "folk geographies" to show how the tramps' classification of various areas, and their spatial decision-making are influenced by the 'host' population:

Skid row is thought of as an area which is morally bankrupt. The characterization of its inhabitants as morally defective leads to the conception of skid row as an open asylum...Occupying a very marginal
place in the prevailing concept of society, tramps are in a very poor position from which to negotiate for rights to use space. Their classification of areas within the city is largely shaped by the prime/marginal distinction of the host group. Similarly, their strategy of occupying marginal space is a direct result of the host's strategy of containment. The tramp, however, pays a price for using what is defined by the host group as marginal space...By occupying marginal space, the tramp acts out and reconfirms his social marginality in the eyes of the host group...The division of the city into prime and marginal space...is not in itself as important as the idea that the classification and use of urban areas by any group must be viewed in the context of that group's relation to other groups.(9) (emphasis added).

As Duncan suggests, differential mobility, access to space and inequalities in power to influence others' use of space are fundamental aspects of the moral order of the city landscape.(10)

While Duncan's focus is the tramp, many of his observations are pertinent to the broader cadres of homeless and poor in cities today. Consider for example, the following excerpts:

In a society such as ours, whose organization is based on individual property rights, a poor person will be viewed as a problem for the group controlling the area in which he lives. He possesses little property and hence has little stake in the existing order which functions primarily to protect property and ensure that orderly market relations take place.

Skid row is ceded to the tramps because the authorities realize that tramps must stay somewhere and there are definite advantages from the point of view of social control to keeping them together in one place.(11)

Duncan's observations about the tramps' use of space in the United States were written in 1978, and make no explicit mention of the homeless in America who are not tramps. However, by the mid-1980's, when homelessness began to receive more widespread attention, Lamb observed a growing and more diverse homeless population in the United States who are drifting from place to place, seeking refuge and anonymity in the inner city cores. Their use of space, particularly the marginal space to which Duncan refers, is in many respects similar to that of the tramp:
Some drifters wander from community to community seeking a geographic solution to their problems; hoping to leave their problems behind, they find they have simply brought them to a new location. Others, who drift from one living situation to another, can best be described as drifting through life; they lead lives without goals, direction or ties...Lack of money often makes them unwelcome, and they may be evicted from family and friends. And they drift because of a reluctance to become involved in a mental health treatment program or a supportive out-of-home environment, such as a halfway house or board-and-care home, that would give them a mental patient identity and make them part of the mental health system.(12)

A number of North American studies which have traced the origins of skid row, have analysed the extent to which structural forces have influenced the problems affecting the traditional and more recent residents.(13) The most commonly cited structural forces include:

1. The transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy;
2. Large scale unemployment;
3. Poverty (often associated with personal injury or misfortune); and
4. The breakdown of the traditional family structure, particularly the extended family.

The Origins of Skid Row

The transition to an industrial economy in the late 1800's and early 1900's involved rapid social change as the western frontier was opened up to exploit resources, and expand markets.(14) Since there was no provision for unemployment assistance during this period, families essentially had to provide for themselves when economic conditions were poor. The men left their families and communities to seek employment wherever they could find it. As the western frontier was opening up, their search often led them to the resource industries as migrant workers, and to the skid row areas which grew up to accommodate them.

Large numbers of unskilled and unattached men moved west and took up seasonal or irregular employment in crude living conditions. The work was
arduous, long and relatively low paying. Three basic industries: lumbering, the railroad and seafaring industries, required the services of large numbers of unskilled labour, and precipitated the development of skid row.(15) As the frontier began to be settled, skid rows developed in response to the employment needs of these resource-based industries:

It formed as a 'main stem', as the working man called it, with a number of necessary services concentrated on one street - a home and a market place for unattached non-permanent laborers.(16)

Vanderkooi suggests that the concentration of large numbers of unattached males in distinct geographic areas occurred without the traditional community relationships. After long periods of working in isolation, the laborers would head for the nearby towns, to be met by a plethora of institutions which had developed specifically to exploit them: the taverns, gambling places, houses of prostitution, stores and lodging houses. And as Rooney suggests:

All of these fused into a distinctive men's culture, characterized by differentiation and isolation, in opposition to the stable family-oriented community.(17)

Unemployment and Transience: The Growth of Skid Row

Skid rows functioned as an employment centre for migrant workers, a place to 'hibernate' during the winter; a centre for recreation, the supply and outfitting centre, and a year-round residence for casual workers.(18) However, as Bahr and others have pointed out, these areas are "inverse barometers of local economic conditions".(19) The severe economic depression of 1913-1915, produced one of a series of unemployment crises which were acutely felt in skid row areas across the country.(20)

Similarly, the Great Depression of the 1930's, which most observers consider to have been the most severe incidence of homelessness in
Canada, (21) was not only much larger in scope than previous ones, but as Garrow points out:

It magnified the problem of homelessness because previous methods of escaping an economic depression (by pursuing unskilled labouring jobs on the western frontier) had disappeared. Conditions in the USA were as severe, therefore Canadians could not emigrate out of the depression. (22)

The problem was particularly serious following the depression of the 1930's, and as a result of government vacillation in the 1940's. (23) In 1932, the Ontario government became concerned that "bands of idle men roaming about the country" represented a "threat to the peace of the community". As Hulchanski and Bacher point out, by the late 1930's:

The denial of relief by municipalities to homeless persons sparked a series of political crises in which authorities kicked the homeless from overcrowded hostels to federal relief camps, then to farms and summer railway construction, and finally to provincial relief camps. While chiefs of police, municipalities, and provincial governments had long advocated the establishment of "internment camps" for the single unemployed, "the parsimonious" Charlotte Whitton heavily influenced the form such camps eventually took. She warned Prime Minister R.B. Bennett that the estimated 100,000 homeless transients in western Canada were forming a "movement" that was a menace to law, order, property and security." Bennett accepted her advice that an "experienced military officer" be placed in charge of the system of "concentration camps." (24)

Studies of the conditions in the urban communities across the country during this period referred to the homeless men as 'transients'. (25) However, reports from Vancouver, Toronto and Winnipeg, identified important trends between the 1930's and 1960's which show that homelessness was clearly related to structural economic conditions. The geographic implications of these trends are highlighted below: (26)

1. Large scale internal migration since 1930 occurred in response to a variety of economic conditions ranging from depression to prosperity "and appears to be a permanent characteristic of our economy"; (27)

2. Since 1930, British Columbia and Ontario in particular have been receiving many more migrants than they lose, placing an added burden on already strained public assistance programs in these provinces; (28)
3. The steady growth in urbanization has accompanied the expansion of industrial activity. With this development the size of the industrial migratory labour force has increased and a larger sector of the community has become exceedingly vulnerable to industrial fluctuations. The twin growth of industrialization and urbanization, which appears to be continuing, places a steadily increasing burden upon public assistance programs.(29)

According to the British Columbia study, three main types of homeless transient could be discerned:

1. those who had adopted the traditional transient lifestyle, who were cut-off from family and friends;
2. seasonal and migratory workers transplanted from their home community because of poverty, lack of work or unsuitable living conditions;
3. unattached residents in urban core areas who had made skid row their home.(30)

The following quotation and statistics show that there was a dramatic rise in the number of people whose economic marginality forced them to rely on government relief in British Columbia during the peak of the Depression, but despite relatively significant improvements in the economy after the War, poverty and unemployment, particularly among unattached individuals remained significant throughout the 1950's:

At the peak of the depression, 18% of the population was on relief or social allowance; in 1938 this had dropped to 0.8%, and during the mid-war years only 7,804 persons were in receipt of aid in an estimated population of 900,000 (0.8%). Gradually, however, this percentage increased such that by January 1960, 40,176 individuals were dependent on social allowance (2.5% of the population). From 1943 to 1960, the population increased by 44%, whereas there was an 84% increase in social allowance recipients (excluding other social assistance recipients such as old-age, disabled and blind recipients, and children in care).(31)
Recipients of Relief (including Relief Camps) Or Social Allowance in British Columbia: 1933 -1960 (32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>ALL RECIPIENTS</th>
<th>SINGLE INDIVS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. % of Pop.</td>
<td>No. % of Pop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>694,263</td>
<td>121,234 (18%)</td>
<td>27,816 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>817,861</td>
<td>66,574 (18%)</td>
<td>12,769 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>7,804 (0.8%)</td>
<td>3,970 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1,082,000</td>
<td>11,956 (1.11%)</td>
<td>5,599 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1,248,000</td>
<td>14,746 (1.18%)</td>
<td>5,502 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1,544,000</td>
<td>22,509 (1.5%)</td>
<td>6,838 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1,570,000</td>
<td>36,112 (2.3%)</td>
<td>10,058 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,606,000</td>
<td>40,176 (2.5%)</td>
<td>11,349 (28%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The propensity of the transients to migrate toward the larger urban areas can be seen in the following table which traces the increase in welfare recipients between 1956 and 1960. The table shows that in five years, the number of all social allowance recipients roughly doubled in the province at large, in Region II where there is the greatest concentration of the population, and in Vancouver where they tended to concentrate in the inner city core. As the report noted:

Undoubtedly, the rate of social and economic dependency is increasing at a faster rate than the population; in fact in the past decade ('50 - '60) over three times as fast, this despite a relatively favorable economy and a richly endowed province. (32)
Changes in the Composition of the Skid Row Population

In the aftermath of the Great Depression, there was a concerted effort to establish a network of social welfare programmes which would act as a social 'safety net'. Unemployment insurance, family allowances, universal health care and old age pensions were introduced, and by the mid-1940's, an Emergency Shelter Program had been established to address homeless-related housing problems. The membership of Canada's skid rows altered at this time both numerically and in terms of its composition. The vast numbers of those made homeless by the depression had been reduced as a result of WWII and the economic 'boom' which ensued in the period of post-war reconstruction.(33)

As fewer migrant workers located to skid row, the area became dominated by those excluded from the labour market due to either personal injury or misfortune:

These misfortunes, which included permanent or temporary disability, sickness, alcoholism or old age, impeded the attainment of steady employment. This resulted in such severe financial problems for the affected individuals that they had to re-locate to skid row because of
its cheaper living costs.(34)

A brief overview of the transformation of Vancouver's downtown core will serve to illustrate this point. The original city core comprising Gastown, the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown was historically a sea of hotels and beer parlours with woodframe and brick structures which ranged in size from 3 to 10 storeys in height with 30 to 225 rooms:(35)

As the city changed and matured, these environments did not. The owners, operators and clientele clung to a way of life that increasingly passed them by leaving them in a backwater of deteriorating, filthy rooms, smelly beer parlours and dingy streets.(36)

In 1961, the area contained 21,000 people, mostly older single men; by 1981, their number had shrunk to just over 16,000, and by 1986, to 13,000:

All the problems typical of such environments existed. Crime rates were high - mostly perpetrated against each other; drunkenness, panhandling, drug abuse, prostitution, knife fights, unsavory businesses and unsavory characters are all part of the scene. An environment which breeds death, disease and despair.(37)

Over 80% of the residents were, and continue to be on some form of government assistance. Many have drinking, hygiene, emotional and behavioral problems; a number have various other disabilities; a visible proportion are Native Indians who suffer from alcoholism, discrimination and lack of self-esteem and hope.(38)

The transformation of the skid row population away from an "employment pool" can be seen in the following descriptions of the residents in the area in 1973 and again in 1987:

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY HEALTH SOCIETY 1973

What follows here is a broad outline of the types of resident one would expect to find on the basis of what is known of Vancouver's skid road and what can reasonably be inferred from other sources. Frequency of occurrence of the types outlined should be treated as "educated guesses". It should also be noted that the four categories are not mutually exclusive.
a. Unemployable elderly, ill and handicapped
This category includes three main sub-groups: a) the elderly who cannot work or cannot find work; b) those not in the labour force due to physical incapacity or ill health; c) all others supported by pensions and social assistance recipients classified as unemployable. Estimates of the size of the sub-groups suggest that about 60% of the population aged 15 years and over fall into this category.

b. Unemployed under 65, transients and drifters
This category includes those who are able to work but for various reasons choose not to do so. The numbers in skid road falling into this category are particularly hard to determine and are influenced by a seasonal influx of young people attracted to low cost accommodation and proximity to Gastown. Employable welfare recipients resident in the area are included here, and together with the younger temporary residents probably amount to 20% to 25% of the population under 65 years of age.

c. Chronic alcoholics and heavy drinkers
Estimates for this group have been quoted at between 25% and 45% of the male population. A modest estimate of those impaired to the extent of being unable to work or care for themselves is 30% of adult males, or 25% to 30% of the total adult population.

d. Low paid, seasonal and migratory workers
Taking the number of single men of employable age receiving social assistance into consideration by the length of time receiving assistance, and estimates derived from other studies, it appears that about 10% to 15% of the adult population falls into this category.(39)

LOOKOUT EMERGENCY AID SOCIETY: 1987

Lookout was founded in 1971 as a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week facility which provides service to anyone who is destitute and requires accommodation. Lookout has two programs: emergency accommodation (42 beds) and long term tenancy (39 beds).

The majority of residents come from the Downtown Eastside, but there are also people who come from the surrounding municipalities. Lookout offers services to men and women with all types of problems: mental illness, chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, mental retardation, legal, physical ailments, etc. Increasingly, many residents have been through the 'system' numerous
times and have 'burned their bridges', or by their actions/behaviour, may have alienated themselves from others. (40)

The following table, taken from the 1987 records shows the variety personal problems and geographic considerations which relate to this particular socially marginalised group:

---

Profile of Residents and Concerns: Lookout Emergency Aid Society

**General information**

**Occupancy rate (%)**
- 1982/82 - 78%
- 83/84 - 82%
- 84/85 - 82%
- 85/86 - 87%
- 86/87 - 90%

**Total bed nights** 12878
**Total people** 1408 men; 392 women (20%).
**Ave. Length of stay** 7 days
**Ave. Age of client** 32 years
**Ave. Men per month** 117
**Ave. Women " "** 33

**Referral Sources on Intake**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>May'86</th>
<th>April'87</th>
<th>Total '86-87</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From out of Vancouver</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency services</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital/clinic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health/care team</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detox/alcohol/drug facil</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self/street</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>7</td>
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**Referral Reasons**

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<th>April'87</th>
<th>Total '86-87</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Violent history</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intoxicated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical needs</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychiatric problems</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol/drug abuse</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transient</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>266</td>
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157
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>Handicapped pension</td>
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<td>Other pensions</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Unemp. Insurance</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>8</td>
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<th></th>
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<td>Own accommodation</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric board home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest homes etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilit. Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detox</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Hostel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Received funds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Source: Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Annual Report, 1987

Summary

Skid row areas traditionally served as a temporary refuge for the seasonal migratory labour force. It was a place to ride out the winter, to enjoy the fruits of their labour, or to pass the time until another job was found. It also functioned as a relatively safe haven for the transient men who had opted out of society and were drifting from place to place. For them, the area contained services and a respite from the road. By the 1960's, however, the area virtually ceased to be a surplus 'employment pool'. Skid rows characteristically became the home of the 'single older man on welfare' and an assortment of 'social misfits'. Accommodation was cheap, and there was always the option of the missions, hostels and emergency shelters if a person needed a temporary place to sleep.
The strengthening of the social safety net in the 1940's, '50's and '60's, in conjunction with high economic productivity and low unemployment, reinforced a growing popular perception that those who relied on skid row were there because of personal failings, not as a result of structural conditions. The homeless began to experience the backlash of social stigma:

They were to many, non-productive people in a fully industrialized era— they had nothing to counter the scorn of the larger community and became more likely to "blame themselves" and not the social structure for their misfortunes. (41)

While substantial improvements in social welfare were introduced during the 1950's and 1960's, they did not eliminate the skid row population, although they did contribute to its changing composition. It was during this period that a new group was added to the residents of skid row, seeking cheap accommodation, drawn to the support services and thankful for a community which was less inclined to stigmatise those with mental disabilities. The following discussion traces the process through which the deinstitutionalisation of mental patients into the community altered the composition of the socially marginalised in the inner city.

DEINSTITUTIONALISATION

Studies of the homeless in the major Canadian cities which have investigated the characteristics of residents in the emergency shelters, hostels, rooming houses and on the streets, concur with similar research in the United States and elsewhere, that there are identifiable links between homelessness (actual and potential), mental illness (particularly chronic conditions) and deinstitutionalisation. (42) It is argued here that the process of deinstitutionalisation resulted in a fundamental shift in the locus of care, from the institution to the community.
Geographically, this argument is used to illustrate how structural processes and the actions of individuals have combined to produce identifiable spatial concentrations of service-dependent and socially marginalised groups within the homeless population which were not traditionally associated with Canadian inner-city areas.

While it is shown that the reflexive relations between structure and agency have important spatial consequences, there is another dimension to this issue of the changed locus of care which is geographically significant. Recent evidence points to the fact that a growing number of the homeless have never been institutionalised, suggesting that it is particularly important to examine the spatial factors which contribute to homeless-related problems.

The analysis extends Hopper and Baxter's argument about the adaptive strategies employed by the homeless (what they describe as Economies of Makeshift) to incorporate a discussion of how environmental and situational factors aggravate and sometimes precipitate homelessness. The introduction of a geographic perspective into an analysis of the effects of large scale deinstitutionalisation broadens the traditional scope of inquiry into a discussion of the difference which a particular environment can make to a person's mental health. As Dear and Wolch have suggested, the inadequate provision of a community-based support service network, coupled with poor urban, economic and social conditions, transformed the inner-city from an 'incipient ghetto' into a 'coping mechanism' for the service-dependent homeless. These individuals are chronically unemployed, socially isolated, highly dependent on the social welfare network and subsisting below the poverty line. In their efforts to cope outside the institution, they gravitate to inner-city locations in search of cheap
accommodation, access to welfare and the support of other service-dependent people. These characteristics are frequently absent elsewhere in the city, which in part accounts for the spatial concentration of this new cadre of socially marginalised groups. However, because of their reliance on the social welfare network, and as a result of their limited ability to survive in the economic and social mainstream, the attraction of the inner-city is transformed into a dependent relationship which can exacerbate their already significant problems:

The inner-city landscape is one in which a rapidly increasing demand for assistance is met by diminishing capacity to supply both shelter and services. The population at risk in this system must be regarded as "potentially homeless". The subsequent experience of a single adverse event is sufficient to tip this marginalized population into homelessness... (Thus) the fate of service-dependents in the community has been the conclusive factor in the creation of the new ghetto. (45)

Three related sets of issues are examined below:

1. The relationship between deinstitutionalisation, urban revitalisation and homelessness;

2. Geographic approaches to the study of deinstitutionalisation and revitalisation; and

3. The significance of the inner-city to the socially marginalised homeless as a community, and a place to call home.

Deinstitutionalisation as a Precipitant of Homelessness

In 1946, a photographic essay in Life magazine shocked and incensed the American public with chilling revelations of naked patients in run-down, overcrowded wards in the Philadelphia State Hospital. Forty-two years later, the chronically mentally ill are once again at the centre of a heated public debate following the highly publicised case of a former New Jersey secretary who became the first person to be removed involuntarily from the streets of New York for psychiatric evaluation. (46) In a relatively short period of time, concern over the way in which society responds to people with
mental disabilities has shifted from "the back wards" to "the back alleys". The focus of this concern centres around two related and often controversial issues: deinstitutionalisation, and society's responsibility for providing appropriate and adequate support to socially marginalised homeless people.

For the purposes of this dissertation:

* Deinstitutionalisation implies granting asylum in the community to a largely marginal population, many of whom can cope only to a limited extent with the ordinary demands of life, have strong dependency needs, and are unable to live independently;(47)

* Although homelessness among the chronically mentally ill is closely linked to deinstitutionalisation, it is not the result of deinstitutionalisation per se, but rather of the way in which it has been implemented;

* It is the lack of systematic and comprehensive planning for structured living arrangements and for adequate treatment and rehabilitative services in the community which has resulted in many unforeseen consequences, such as homelessness.

The tendency to equate the concept of homelessness exclusively with the lack of a permanent roof over one's head, deflects attention from what is believed to be an essential deficit of homelessness, namely, the absence of a stable base of caring or supportive individuals whose concern and support help buffer the homeless against the vicissitudes of life.(48)

In order to demonstrate how deinstitutionalisation has precipitated homelessness, and the contingent effects which it has triggered, attention is directed initially to the United States. As Gittelman observes, "no other industrialised country has reduced its public mental hospital population as rapidly, or has left such a large proportion of them homeless as the U.S."(49)
According to Stefl:

Deinstitutionalisation, or the systematic depopulation of state and county psychiatric facilities, can best be illustrated with statistics. In 1955 there were 559,000 residents of public psychiatric hospitals. By 1981, that figure had dropped to approximately 122,000. Deinstitutionalisation was not, conceptually at least, an abandonment of responsibility for the chronically mentally ill. Instead, the intent was to provide better and less expensive care in the less restrictive community setting. Architects of the policy intended that dollars would follow the patient into the community mental health system; this has simply not occurred in necessary measure. Most notably, appropriate community residential placements, which would provide a variety of structured and therapeutic living situations, have not been made available. Policymakers also did not anticipate the resistance of community mental health centres in providing a full range of services to this most difficult group of clients.(50)

A number of studies have traced the history of deinstitutionalisation in the United States, making the case that homelessness is a legitimate mental health issue.(51) It is suggested here that E. Fuller Torrey's book, Surviving Schizophrenia, presents the most comprehensive analysis, although it is interesting to note that his work is not referenced by any of the research on the homeless mentally ill found to date.(52)

Torrey argues that until the mid-1950's, virtually nobody asked what came after the hospital, for the simple reason that once committed, almost nobody left the hospital:

Schizophrenic patients entered state hospitals with one-way tickets and stayed there until they died. Even today, one of the hospitalized patients for whom I provide psychiatric care has been in the hospital continuously since 1909, when he was 20 years old. In the past this was a relatively common finding.(50)

A dramatic change took place in the 1950's, as patients began to be released from mental hospitals. This process occurred in two distinct waves:

It is important to note the different proportion of released patients who went to their own homes in the first 200,000-patient reduction (1955-1968) compared with the second 200,000-group (1968-1980). In the first group, two-thirds of the patients were released to their own relatives' homes.
In the second group only one-quarter went to their own relatives' homes. The other three-quarters went to a variety of places, but especially to foster homes, boarding houses, nursing homes and cheap hotels. (54)

Four major reasons are commonly cited for the unprecedented shift away from state institutions: the introduction of anti-psychotic drugs such as chlorpromazine which provided a simple means of calming the psychotic and suppressing their hallucinations and delusions; (55) a new philosophy of social treatment; and what Torrey describes as, "a diverse mixture of judicial, political and economic interests... (which) made strange bedfellows". (56)

In the late-1950's, a Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health was established in response to public outcry which gained momentum with each new media expose of the deplorable and inhumane conditions in many of the state asylums, and in response to the increasingly vocal concerns of many mental health professionals. The Commission published a very influential book in 1961, *Action for Mental Health*, in which community alternatives to state hospitals were recommended. In 1963, President J.F. Kennedy presented these recommendations to Congress. (57)

By the late 1960's, "deinstitutionalisation" had become a catchword, and according to Torrey, what had been a relatively orderly return to the community up to this point, became a disorderly exodus in the second period. In the earlier period, it tended to be those who were relatively able and prepared to return to the community (and particularly their families) who were released, whereas, "the second group was woefully unprepared".

A number of additional developments in the 1960's accelerated the process of deinstitutionalisation. For example, Lamb suggests that two significant federal developments in 1963: *Aid to the Disabled Act (ADT)*, and *The Mental
Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act, made the mentally ill eligible for the first time for federal financial support in the community, and provided a strong incentive for the development of community-based programmes.(58)

Other researchers have pointed to sweeping changes in the commitment laws in various states, brought about by civil rights groups, as evidence of attempts to mandate better patient care.(59) For example, a widely cited suit filed in Alabama, (Wyatt v. Stickney) "frightened many states, and realizing that they could not provide better care, discharged the patients and thus absolved themselves of the responsibility."(60) In California, the 1968 Lanterman-Petris-Short Act made the involuntary commitment of psychiatric patients a much more complicated process.(61)

The judicial developments outlined above were reinforced by economic considerations, as state legislators sought to shift some of the fiscal burden on to federal and local governments. State mental hospitals often represent one of the largest single budget items, and as long as patients are hospitalised, they are the financial responsibility of the states alone. In the community however, patients receive federal support through Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income and food stamps, as well as support from local law enforcement agencies and emergency health and mental health services. Therefore, by moving the patients from the hospital to the community the state saved substantial sums of money.

Torrey describes other mitigating circumstances which gave momentum to deinstitutionalisation:

Adding impetus to all this were liberal social and political forces which pictured hospitalized mental patients as mistreated captives needing to be liberated. A "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" mentality was in vogue throughout the 1970's and was shared by the media. Mental health
professionals promoted the idea that many of the patients who had been hospitalized for years suffered primarily from the effects of institutionalization rather than from the symptoms of their disease, an idea which gained currency from sociological analyses, such as Erving Goffman's Asylums. It was radical chic to liberate the poor mental patients and return them to the community.(62)

In summary, the deinstitutionalisation movement proceeded without adequate planning for the needs of the patients.(60) As a result, many experts now contend that a significant proportion of the chronically homeless have histories of mental illness, and that although deinstitutionalisation did not necessarily cause their homelessness, it was a contributing factor. They suggest, in addition, that the proportion of the chronically homeless who are mentally ill is increasing, in part because the emergency shelters and support services which would normally serve as a safety net, are being used more and for longer periods, by other homeless groups. The result is a visible increase in the number of mentally ill who were previously 'at risk', but who are now homeless.

Deinstitutionalisation in Canada

There are a number of parallels between the United States and Canada in the approach to the mentally ill. For example, until at least the 1950's, families who chose to care for their handicapped children in their own homes found themselves extremely isolated: on one hand, the local community was at best indifferent to their support needs, but more often was openly hostile. There were few, if any, specialised services, and children with mental illnesses were excluded from the educational system, often being cared for as well as educated by their mothers at home.(61) On the other hand, professionals, particularly among the medical and social services community, and the clergy, relied heavily on institutional and custodial responses.
Secondly, the main factors which resulted in the shift toward deinstitutionalisation in the United States, (with the exception of the legal suits brought against the states), were similar in Canada: the introduction of psychotropic drugs, new techniques in psychiatry, changing attitudes toward mental illness, concerns for fiscal conservatism and negative sentiments toward deinstitutionalisation.(65)

In a 1986 review of the history of psychiatric care in British Columbia, The B.C. Medical Association documented the trend toward providing community-based care.(66) Their chronology, reproduced in part below, highlights developments toward deinstitutionalisation in Canada.

A Chronology of General Hospital Psychiatry

1639 Hotel Dieu du Preieux Sang, Quebec City. The first hospital admitting patients with both physical and mental problems.
1862 Mental patients excluded from British Columbia's first general hospital, the Royal Columbian. "No insane person shall be admitted on any pretext in the hospital"
1902 Albany Hospital, New York. First fully-fledged department of psychiatry in a general hospital in North America.
1919 Mental health survey in B.C. recommends psychiatric units in general hospitals.
1943 Parliamentary Special Committee calls for general psychiatry beds in all hospitals.
1951 Total psychiatric beds in Canadian general hospitals = 318.
1959 Total psychiatric beds in Canadian general hospitals = 1,331.
1961 Only 62 of the 10,000 general hospital beds in B.C. are for psychiatric patients.
1962 "...All general hospitals should have psychiatric services..." Resolution of the Canadian Psychiatric Association.
1970 Total discharges from psychiatric units of general hospitals in Canada = 37,566.
1978 Total discharges from psychiatric units of general hospitals in Canada = 70,881.(74)

According to the authors:

The process by which the chronically mentally ill were shifted from the institution to the community (deinstitutionalization) was widely supported by those concerned about the deleterious and dehumanizing effects of the
large institutions. They noted that once dependence on the institution was formed, it was very difficult for the longer term mentally ill to live in the community. It was hoped that this new approach to maintaining those with chronic mental disorders in the community would provide a benevolent, non-institutional milieu in rehabilitative programming, employment opportunities and the potential to bring each person to his/her optimum level of functioning. The general hospital was to serve as a back-up to the community so that the mentally ill could continue in close relationship to their families and social environment...(68)

The report went on to state:

There has been a reduction of approximately two-thirds of the mental hospital beds from the peak bed numbers. The remaining beds are used for those who are too impaired to be discharged and to provide space for brief admissions. General hospital psychiatric beds have not yet replaced mental hospital beds in adequate numbers. Both the general hospital wards and the mental hospital are full and there is a rapid and futile turnover of patients so that people are admitted, treated briefly and sent back to cope in the community. However, it has been reported that the caseloads of community mental health workers have been strained to capacity and that now, often only perfunctory and emergency care is available. It has also been reported that there are gross deficiencies in the number of spaces for patients in programs that aim at a social rehabilitation model and that there is often inadequate housing available to the chronically mentally ill. And so, the classical revolving door keeps revolving with many needless readmissions brought about by the failure of adequate community resources. The shift of patients from the mental hospital to the community and general hospital has been compromised by underfunding in the health care system.(69)

The remarks and data by the British Columbia Medical Association are supported by other sources. For example, a recent task force report in Ontario suggests:

What began approximately 20 years ago as enthusiasm for the idea of discharging people with chronic psychiatric illness from mental institutions into the community has evolved into sober reappraisal of the often tragic consequences of inadequate follow through with these people. The policy of deinstitutionalization has too often been accompanied by a serious lack of community resources needed to replace institutional care... These are people who live with great fear and courage - who spoke out with anxious voices at our public hearings to tell us of suicides; of the fear of being transferred in the night to a strange boarding home; of finding their meager belongings on the sidewalk; of what it is to lack a decent income or live barely beyond the level of survival. They told us of being barred from hostels or living in fear of others; of being taken by police from one hospital to another during a crisis, without help forthcoming. They told us of where they live, of some fellow boarders who move like zombies, eating silently together and then returning to their
boredom. It's a long story, often unpleasant.(70)

Dear and Wolch's analysis of deinstitutionalisation in Canada and the United States suggests that by the end of the nineteenth century, mental hospitals had assumed the form that they would retain until the post-war community health movement took effect. They suggest that there were 22 asylums across the country by 1922:

These institutions continued to expand in size and become increasingly overcrowded. Between 1932 and 1948, the number of psychiatric beds increased from 33,000 to about 42,000.(71)

Unfortunately, the remainder of the analysis focuses on the effects of deinstitutionalisation in Toronto and Kingston, Ontario, rather than the country as a whole. Their vignettes are nevertheless indicative of the general trends. The data below illustrate the impact of the community mental health movement in Ontario, particularly as a result of two influential reports: A Proposed Revision of Mental Health Programmes in Ontario, (1959) and The Mental Health Act, (1967). As a result of these reports, Ontario developed a series of programmes in which psychiatric, public health and social services were integrated in community settings. Bed capacity in psychiatric hospitals dropped from 16,000 in the early 1960's to 5,314 by 1976:
**Admissions, Discharges, and 'On Books' Population of Ontario Provincial Asylums for Selected Years, 1880-1976**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Provincial Population</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Discharges</th>
<th>'On Books'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,923,228</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>2,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>2,114,321</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>3,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2,182,947</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>5,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,572,292</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>6,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2,933,662</td>
<td>2,879</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>7,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3,431,683</td>
<td>2,469</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>10,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>3,787,655</td>
<td>3,224</td>
<td>2,257</td>
<td>15,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>4,597,542</td>
<td>4,334</td>
<td>2,686</td>
<td>18,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6,236,092</td>
<td>7,820</td>
<td>6,184</td>
<td>19,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>7,703,106</td>
<td>15,712</td>
<td>15,868</td>
<td>8,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>8,264,465</td>
<td>14,112</td>
<td>14,163</td>
<td>5,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Before 1909, the 'On Books' total taken as the annual number of patients under treatment.


The authors also point out:

In response to the decline in psychiatric hospital inpatient numbers, the government closed several facilities during the 1970's. The patients in these hospitals were discharged to a variety of settings including nursing homes, general hospital psychiatric units and the community. The reduction...was achieved partly through the transfer of patients...to 'residential units' or to 'approved homes'...including licensed lodging homes, nursing homes and residential care homes. Between 1965 and 1981, about 15,000 patients, 'whose primary needs were accommodation and board', were transferred.(72)

The overall Canadian picture is difficult to ascertain. However, the following data have been culled from a variety of sources:

1. According to Halsey, over the past twenty-five years, 80% of the psychiatric hospital beds have been eliminated in Canada.(73) By some estimates, at least 45,000 psychiatric beds have been closed since the 1960's.(74)

2. A 1987 survey found that at least 20% of those using emergency shelters on a particular night were current or ex-psychiatric patients. This was conservatively estimated to be about 25,800 people.(75)
3. Pulcins' 1985 analysis of community mental health suggests that in British Columbia in 1966, the locus of mental health care was clearly centralised in the provincial mental institution Riverview, with a case load of 7,554 patients. (76) The client load of all community mental health facilities accounted for 5877 others. By 1979, the situation had more than reversed. Typical annual caseloads at Riverview have reached a low of about 1,100 patients, whereas community facilities and boarding home programs have a total annual caseload of 12,600 clients. (77)

4. A 1987 report prepared for a conference on homelessness in British Columbia suggests that the actual hospital population of Riverview Hospital was reduced from 2,469, to 819 in 1985. (78) A 1988 study put the April in-patient population at 1,050 (and the capacity at 1,151). (79)

5. In Alberta, only 30% to 40% of the psychiatric beds which existed in the 1960's remain today (yet the provincial population has increased by 50%). A study of homelessness in Edmonton reported that in 1986, Alberta Hospital Edmonton averaged 120 discharges per month into the community. It was estimated that between one-half and one-third of all discharges return to their families; however, "it is known that over time, family breakdowns result in a significant number of these people being turned out on the street." Among the other figures reported: between 17% and 40% of hostel residents had either "known or probable" psychiatric histories; about 68% of persons on hostels' "barred" or "caution alert" lists have psychiatric histories. (80)

6. Researchers in Montreal estimate that almost 33% of the city's homeless have been hospitalised at some point for treatment of psychiatric disorders. (81)

7. A 1981 study in Toronto showed that about 7,000 patients were being discharged every six months, largely to a community that was unable or unwilling to cope with their housing and support needs. (82) The report estimated that approximately half of the homeless in Toronto have psychiatric problems.

8. The number of psychiatric beds in Toronto were reduced from 16,000 to 4,600 in 20 years. The area of South Parkdale, which is situated adjacent to the Queen Street Mental Health Centre has become home to over 12,000 ex-psychiatric patients living mainly in about 80 commercial boarding homes. Although more than 14,000 patients are discharged annually in Toronto, there are only 250 community-based beds providing special care for the mentally ill, mainly set up by voluntary organizations. The ex-patients are left to fend for themselves. They do so on $258 per month, unless permanently disabled ($364 1982 rates). (83)

9. The City of Ottawa Housing Department reported in 1986 that the Ontario government's policy of deinstitutionalisation has specifically affected the Ottawa-Carleton region in the following ways: between 1961 and 1976, the long-term care facility serving Brockville Psychiatric Hospital reduced its bed count from 1,757 to 487. The effect was that many patients were returned to their families or placed in local boarding homes;
approximately 400 psychiatrically disabled people live in domiciliary hostels (supervised boarding homes); during the 1979/80 hospital fiscal year, 2377 males and 2852 females were discharged from in-patient services; the most recent admissions data for all hospitals in the Ottawa-Carleton region that have psychiatric units (including the Royal Hospital), document a total of 3,542 admissions for 1984/85. 1,624 represent new admissions while the balance, 1981, account for readmissions; hostel operators note that higher numbers of users have psychiatric histories. (84)

The current situation in Canada can be summarised from a recent review by the Canadian Mental Health Association. They suggest that there are a number of problems with the way services are currently delivered, in that they tend to be fragmented, exclusionary, inadequate, discontinuous, isolating, segregating, paternalistic, custodial and stigmatising. (85) In addition, they suggest that people with mental illnesses live in the community on hopelessly inadequate welfare payments, and that social stigmatisation is promoting ghettoisation into already overcrowded hospitals or particular (usually less-desirable) parts of the city. (86)

As Dear and Wolch suggest:

Homelessness is a symbol of that part of the deinstitutionalization process which failed. In the case of the mentally ill, the geographical impact of deinstitutionalization ... was unanticipated. With the advantage of hindsight, the impact was destined to be felt most severely in the two existing incipient ghettos. First, there was the matrix of city health and welfare agencies, which had historically been established in the inner city. Secondly, there was the psychiatric hospital and its catchment, now essentially an urban-based service. Both of these zones have recently been augmented and extended by the addition of new welfare services that have sprung up to meet the needs of the deinstitutionalized. The dominant trends in this modern zone of dependence are the missassignment of many service-dependent populations and the privatization of service providers, including the proliferation of contract arrangements with voluntary and charitable agencies. (87)

Their recent analysis of service-dependent populations in the inner-city represents a significant evolution in geographic studies of the links between deinstitutionalisation and homelessness.
The links between inner-city revitalisation, gentrification and homelessness exist at three distinct levels. In economic terms, changes in the market value of space once occupied by the urban poor for cheap housing results in either their involuntary displacement or their pre-emptive relocation. At another level, the economic change in the land values is produced by changes in the labour market, associated with the trend toward a post-industrial economy and a demand for central city locations by the service and white-collar workforce. Thus, the housing options which remain for the poor are dictated to an extent by changes in the type of work now being performed in the central business district. At the third level, however, the links are sociological - the very existence of the poor and homeless in the inner-city is not compatible with the lifestyle expectations of the gentrifiers. The marginal spaces which were once ceded to the socially marginalised groups are becoming transformed into prime space, and efforts to displace them, or at a minimum move them out of sight, have noticeably increased. As Kasinitz notes in his analysis of the links between gentrification and homelessness:

During the post-war period, rapid urban and suburban growth intensified the distinction between public and private space to the point where (to paraphrase Baxter and Hopper) a spilling of private lives into public spaces - street life - was perceived as symptomatic of poverty, degradation, and social marginality. Hence, visual depictions of slum living generally show families on stoops or fire escapes, social workers endeavour to get ghetto youth "off the streets", the lowest form of destitution is to be "a bum on the streets", and the most degraded form of prostitution is to be a "streetwalker". Gentrification, in contrast, promotes the positive value of the street and of street life, which is to say, public life. The proximity of variety is one of the basic amenities of the urban centre. This positive view of density and human diversity has made its way from the slightly eccentric, fringe point of view first promoted by Jane Jacobs (1961) to a virtual tenet of urban planning orthodoxy with almost universally positive coverage in the press.
Kasinitz argues however, that this diversity does not extend to people who, for whatever reason, make middle class people feel uncomfortable:

The deinstitutionalized, the ex-offender, the addicted, the poor, sick and elderly, all bring to the central city a "diversity" that the new investors in cultural pluralism want no part of. Yet these people will not go away simply because their housing is eliminated. They remain on our streets and tax the strained resources of the remaining shelters. Therefore, the return to the city implies a return to civic responsibility for these, our weaker brethren. Unlike the suburb, the newly gentrified inner city cannot close its gates to marginal members of society.(89)

COMMUNITY RECONSIDERED

* Homelessness in the first half of this century in Canada can be traced in part to extreme economic conditions which produced large numbers of employable but unemployed men moving across the country in search of employment, and dependent on what little government relief was available. For many of them, skid row was an important economic and social community.

* The economic devastation which was brought on by the Great Depression raised the consciousness of Canadians that homelessness was a substantial and serious problem which individuals could not overcome at will. But perhaps as important was the recognition in the aftermath of World War Two that a return to economic prosperity did not eliminate the problem.(90)

* The past two decades have witnessed a number of important changes in the internal structure of Canada's cities, and in the composition of the homeless and marginalised groups in these areas. There has been a trend toward a proportionately more local population on skid row, and these areas have become a milieu which is both neighbourhood and home to the people who live there.(91) The strong sense of community which residents develop can be
attributed in part to the fact the area outside the rooming houses or the hostels functions as the "downtown living room". The streets are both an extension of peoples' "home" and serve as a vital amenity for the activities of daily living. This aspect has however, both positive and negative implications.

* On the positive side, the area contains a high concentration of services, facilities and programmes which function as a social safety net. Church groups and many non-profit organisations provide a wide range of emergency, transitional and long-term support, advocacy, shelter and community services. This ultimately saves the taxpayer money, because the costs of not having the community perform these services and functions to the local residents and the wider community have to be measured against the costs of social disintegration, greater and more widespread community deterioration and an increased demand for institutional facilities such as jails, mental institutions and social services.

* On the other hand, since there are a great many services provided in the area, it comes to be regarded throughout the entire region as a receptacle for people who, for a variety of reasons, are no longer welcome in other areas. They find an accepting environment here, but this also makes it increasingly difficult for service providers in the community to get a handle on the problems. Also, the concentration of support services exacerbates the degree of dependency on these very support mechanisms. They symbolically reinforce the fact that people are trapped within a lifestyle which relies heavily on the welfare system. Thus, the area can become a hard and
unforgiving place from which it is extremely difficult to escape intact.

* Deinstitutionalisation was sound in principle, but flawed in practice. Since the locus of care has shifted from the hospital to the community, the inner city is now a major lifeline for the socially marginal. However, a lack of adequate support services in the area has marginalised some people.

* Pressures on the inner city associated with revitalisation and gentrification are affecting the service-dependent and homeless. What was once considered 'marginal' space is now becoming 'prime'. With the depletion of the stock of low-cost accommodation, and significant cut-backs in the provision of social services, the homeless are being squeezed.

Revitalisation has drastically reduced the number of units traditionally affordable to the working poor and the unemployed in Canadian cities. This trend is having the effect of pricing government assisted, low-rental construction out of the land market, further restricting the production of affordable housing for those displaced by demolition and conversion activities. The low-cost stock which remains is deteriorating in quality as landlords pursue a strategy of disinvestment. As a result, the already overburdened hostel and emergency shelter system is experiencing increased usage for longer periods of time. It is by default, becoming permanent accommodation for those displaced in the inner cores.

* The case example illustrates how economic and social processes directly and indirectly affect the homeless, and have a bearing on the spatial manifestation of homelessness.
NOTES


2. According to an analysis by Garrow, the current "fiscal crisis", and the restraint economics which have been introduced to curb public sector expenditure has resulted in less funding being available for social services at a time when the demand for these services has increased considerably: "The impact of the "fiscal crisis" on the particular problem of homelessness has been especially severe in skid row, which has become the repository for the increasing numbers who have fallen through the social safety net (made painfully inadequate both by the large numbers of unemployed and by funding restraints)." Ian Garrow. "Revisiting Homelessness on Skid Row: Structural Unemployment in the 1980's," North York, Ont: Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 1986.

3. P. Kasinitz. "Gentrification and Homelessness", in Wilhelm and Erickson *Housing The Homeless*. The author seems to use the term gentrification to refer to urban renewal and inner city revitalisation as well as the more restricted use given to the term by geographers. The 'private' revitalisation has been undertaken with the aid of municipal planning departments, zoning changes, tax breaks, government grants, and therefore the distinction made between public and private sector initiatives is an unrealistic distinction.


5. Hopper and Hamburg's description of homelessness as a coping strategy illustrates this point well. "Economies of Makeshift".


7. Ibid.


9. Ibid. According to Duncan, "Tramps are forced to use a different system of determining usable space within the city. This system is based on an unstated scale of social value which host groups apply to different areas". The scale ranges from "prime" to "marginal" space. "This implies no inherent value in the space itself; on the contrary, the value is assigned to the space by a given group on the basis of how it uses the space".

10. Ibid. Moral order is used to connote the set of customary relations in a
given area and the etiquette governing its landscape; it constitutes what is believed by the dominant group to be the proper arrangement and use of artifacts and the proper form that interaction in that landscape should take. It stipulates what people under what circumstances are allowed to engage in what activity in what places.

11. Ibid.


13. See note 1.


15. Garrow. "Revisiting Homelessness".


17. Rooney. "Societal Forces and the Unattached Male".

18. Ibid. See also Bahr. *An Introduction to Disaffiliation*.

19. Ibid. Vanderkooi has documented that skid rows increased in size when there were large numbers of unemployed (e.g. during the depressions of 1885, 1929, and 1958; and at the end of each major war until World War II, when the emergence of the modern welfare state and the conversion of war-time technology into peacetime production provided alternatives to skid row).


21. Roberts, *The Globe and Mail*, Nov.5, 1984. According to some estimates, more than 300,000 people were left homeless out of a population of 10 million during the Great Depression.

22. Garrow. "Revisiting Homelessness".

23. The response by the federal government during these early periods was usually to try to stimulate housing construction or provide relief aid to the provinces. These measures did not however measure up to a systematic response to ensure the safety of the poor until the emergence of the welfare system in the 1950's.

According to Hulchanski and Bacher, the Unionist government of 1919 had introduced several progressive measures for providing aid to the provinces for home construction and relief for the poor. However, as the authors suggest, "The unionist government had made its moves toward the welfare state under the spectre of widespread industrial unrest so vividly illustrated by the 1919 Winnipeg general strike. However, its reforms came undone as the political climate became more conservative in the 1920's and as the prospect of labour radicalism and militancy declined."
By the end of WWII, many provinces had introduced income support programmes for single-parent mothers whose husbands had died in the war, and that by 1927, the elderly began to receive protection under the Old Age Pension Act, but because of jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments, these measures were only partially successful. Hulchanski and Bacher, "Keeping Warm and Dry".

24. The person chosen, General Charles McNaughton wrote "our purpose is not to attempt to care for 100 per cent of the single homeless men but to reduce the numbers in the larger centres of population to the point that they do not constitute a menace to civil authorities." Hulchanski and Bacher cite Lorne Brown. When Freedom Was Lost: The Unemployed, The Agitator, and the State, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987.

Two pieces of anecdotal information provide some insight into the situation of homelessness in 1936. When the summer railway construction projects were ended, some 1,400 transients moved to the city of Calgary, prompting a response from local officials that "panhandlers were present on every downtown street corner and had even started to invade the residential districts." In British Columbia, when financial pressures on the government led to the closure of its road and forestry workcamps, some 600 homeless men occupied the Vancouver post office and art gallery in protest against being denied relief payments. They were subsequently offered train fare out of B.C.!

25. See for example, Province of British Columbia, Dept. of Social Welfare Report on Homeless Transients in the Province of B.C. 1960. In July, 1960, mass unemployment was worse in British Columbia than anywhere else in Canada, and had resulted in an abnormally high incidence of social allowance recipients and a "re-appearance of homeless transients".

26. The study was initiated because "the reappearance of the homeless transient was constituting a major social problem in Canada."

27. Ibid. The report noted a strong tendency for migration to take place between adjacent provinces, and concluded: "In light of such substantial population movements, residence requirements for public assistance are an anachronism."

28. A 1949 federal report by the Department of National Health and Welfare documented that during the decade 1931 - 1941, over 5% of the population moved from one province to another, the majority heading to the larger cities which were undergoing rapid urbanisation. "Migration Trends Pertinent to the Provision of Public Assistance", Ottawa, Dept. of National Health and Welfare, 1949.

29. The British Columbia study was conducted in conjunction with other studies in Toronto and Winnipeg. Information on the homeless in these areas can be seen in the following table;
### Percentage Distribution by Age Ranges of Homeless Transients in Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver, and the Canadian Labour Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>WINNIPEG STUDY %</th>
<th>BRITISH COLUMBIA STUDY %</th>
<th>TORONTO STUDY %</th>
<th>CANADA'S LABOUR FORCE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Each of the studies undertaken noted that they experienced great difficulty in differentiating between different sub-groups among the transient men. However, as the Toronto report stated:

Reliable information indicates that these transients were not hoboes but frequently were among the most enterprising and energetic members of their former communities. They came from all walks of life with unemployment the major cause for their migration. (emphasis added).

30. The report to the Welfare Council produced in British Columbia focussed on the experiences of welfare offices in Prince George, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Nanaimo and Victoria - where there had consistently been a heavy concentration of single transient men. A transient was defined in the report as "a welfare problem and also homeless".

In the section of the report entitled Main Problem it was suggested that "Significantly, this group of men were well able to diagnose and present the major cause of this "transient dependency" or "dependent transiency" - whichever you will - as unemployment."

31. The report points out that the proportion of single individuals to all recipients was fairly constant, "20% to 33% for the "lean" years 1933, 1938, 1958, 1959 and 1960. For the "fat" years in between, 1943, 1948, and 1953, numbers in both categories are low, but the proportion of single recipients much higher, 37% to as high as 50%. Largely these latter individuals would be "unemployable" persons."

32. A major conclusion of the B.C. study was that it was not possible to distinguish between those who were transient because of temporary unemployment and those who were chronically homeless: "the problems of the transient (in relation to all unemployed employables) are obscured, or perhaps, if distinguishable, are usually ignored. We suggest services to the
homeless transient are not being provided for as adequately, or to the degree that are services to other social allowance applicants."

33. During the period of post-war reconstruction, it was recognised in some quarters at least, that homelessness continued to be linked to unemployment. For example, a 1955 report by the Vancouver City Social Planning Department suggested: "For the duration of the War, the economic environment continued to provide that anyone who had even a restricted capacity for employment could find it, and during the two years succeeding May 1945, the volume of unemployment insurance credits, voluntary and compulsory war-time savings, and re-establishment credits, provided a screen which obscured a view of any unemployment problem which might exist. However, by the Autumn of 1947, increasing numbers of applications by employable persons to the City Social Service Department and to private agencies made it apparent that in the transition from a war-time to a peace-time economy there were some employment casualties...Each year (up to '55) the problem (of unemployment) assumed large proportions, not only in Vancouver, but across Canada. By December 1958, not only had the volume of the single unemployed men become alarming, but the lack of shelter for them was appalling." Vancouver City Social Planning Department Survey Report, Assistance to Single Unemployed Men, December 1954 to July 1955.


34. Wallace. Skid Row as a Way of Life. see also Hulchanski and Bacher, "Keeping Warm and Dry".


36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. A similar profile of the urban Native has been presented by Christopher Hauch in his ethnographic study of Winnipeg's Skid Row:

"Data from the Main Street Project emergency shelter suggests that a unique skid row residential population exists. The size is estimated to be between 2,000 to 2,500; it is characteristically about 75% Native, mostly male, middle aged, and comprising individuals with few marketable skills. Income information was hard to ascertain, "but frequent homelessness suggested the relative poverty of the population. The native typifies many of the characteristics of the skid row resident, but his or her scenario for a meaningful life is probably the most dismal. Since birth, the Native has likely been dependent upon social assistance, and lacking technical skills, suffers high unemployment and concomitant low incomes. In search of opportunity, the native abandons the reserve and searches out the land of promise. Once situated in a large urban setting, he or she has escaped from the general economic deprivation and social disorganization of the former life."
This profile was corroborated in Brundridge's study Housing the 'Unhouseables' in which he suggested:

"The most visible resident of skid row in Winnipeg is the Native Indian. It was reported in 1976 that between 40,000 and 60,000 Natives resided in the city, at the time the city population was 578,000. The highest concentration (25,000) of Natives was in the downtown core comprising almost one-third of the total downtown population. Not surprisingly, the Native while being a minority in the city, is the majority of the homeless skid row population. Main street project, one of the largest skid row social agencies had a clientele of 64.6% Native in 1984-85."


According to the report, the major problems which characterize the skid road or downtown eastside area of Vancouver include:

i. Health and personal care problems of the local population
ii. Nutritional deficiencies particularly among the elderly and alcoholic groups
iii. Problems of income and assistance
iv. Lack of recreational and occupational facilities and opportunities
v. Inadequate accommodation and shelter provision

"These problems are interrelated in a complex pattern of cause and effect. Insanitary conditions and malnutrition exacerbate health problems that exist among the generally aging, single, male population. Lack of employment and income create needs for recreational outlets; rooming house existence, sometimes deplorably inadequate, denies access to 'home comfort' and companionship. Loneliness and poverty aggravate the drinking proclivities of the alcoholic; injury and disease often go untreated and uncared for; mental capacities become dulled by inactivity, old age, drugs and alcohol; self-neglect pervades the community.

Based on the 1971 census, the skid row population was estimated to be 7,060 (42% 44-64 years; 33% 65+; 12% 25-39; 7% 15-24).

40. Information supplied by Lookout administrative staff.

41. Garrow. Rooney, however, argues that this perception was not shared by the skid row residents. They had a different perspective on personal failings: "in the early part of this century, skid row men saw themselves as sharing potentially unifying economic interests which separated them from the resident working-class. For many, skid row was a positive reference group. Today's skid row residents perceive industrial failure as the common denominator which separates them from the working-class; but the perception of common industrial failure, unlike that of common exploitation, has not been the basis for any kind of organization among them. Instead, it has served to increase personal distance. The consequence has been that an individualistic interpretation of failure replaced a socio-economic ideology of oppression. Recent evidence points to people choosing inner city areas because of the availability of relatively cheap accommodation rather than a predisposition toward, or preference for "the skid row way of life".

42. See for example, Faces of Homelessness, and Hospital and Community
Psychiatry.

43. Hopper and Baxter, "Economies of Makeshift."

44. Dear and Wolch.

45. Ibid.

46. CBS 60 Minutes, January 10, 1988


48. Ibid.

49. M. Gittelman. "Developments in Foreign Psychiatry: An Introduction," Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 34:158 (February 1983). In the same volume, B. Morris argues that even in the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher, the number of mental hospital beds has been reduced by only one-half, and the reduction has been accompanied by an increase in hostels and rehabilitative facilities. "Recent Developments in the Care, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Chronic Mentally Ill in Britain," 34:159. These issues are also discussed in Hope and Young, Faces of Homelessness.

50. Mary E. Stefl. "The New Homeless: A National Perspective." In Bingham, Green and White, The Homeless in Contemporary Society. Sage Publications, 1988. Stefl uses U.S. Government statistics for her figures which were derived from a 1985 publication by Carl A. Taube and Sally E. Barrett, (eds), Mental Health in the United States 1985, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. On the other hand, Marjorie Hope and James Young suggest that the 1955 figure was 558,922 whereas by 1982, the figure was 125,200, which represents an increase in the 1980 figure suggested by Stefl. Interestingly, Hope and Young base their figures on a 1983 article, again by Carl A. Taube (with H.H. Goldman and N. Adams). "Deinstitutionalisation: The Data Demythologized," Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 34:132 February 1983. Unfortunately, Taube does not demystify the discrepancies in the numbers!

51. See Hospital and Community Psychiatry; Hope and Young, Faces of Homelessness; or Bingham, Homelessness in Contemporary Society.


53. Ibid. p.132.

54. Ibid. p.134.

55. Chlorpromazine was introduced into the United States from France in 1954.

56. Hope and Young present a similar argument, but they characterise the process in a slightly different way. They argue that the principal factors which contributed to deinstitutionalisation were: (i) the widespread use of anti-psychotic drugs; (ii) the growth of the movement upholding the civil
rights of mental patients, including the right to refuse institutionalisation unless there was a clear danger to self or others (a different interpretation to Torrey's "legal" impetus); and (iii) the development of the philosophy that most patients could be treated in the least restrictive setting possible, preferably in small, decentralised, multi-service facilities in their own communities, near their homes and families. "Hospitals should be used only for treatment of the mentally ill; nursing homes, board-and-care homes, and similar congregate facilities could house and care for them."

Torrey hinted at the strategic role which the media played in promoting this philosophy, but Hope and Young are more explicit. They suggest the philosophy grew out of a series of exposes revealing deplorable conditions in many state hospitals. "Before deinstitutionalization and the emphasis on patients' rights, some patients were physically mistreated or were submitted to experimentation. Some residents did not belong there. Husbands sometimes committed wives instead of dealing with underlying marital problems. Children might be committed because their parents could not deal with them."

For a detailed historical examination of women's accounts of psychiatric illness and institutionalisation, see Jeffrey L. Geller, Hospital and Community Psychiatry, vol.36, No.10, October 1985.

58. According to Robert E. Jones, soon after Kennedy presented the Commission's findings to Congress, the civil rights movement gained considerable momentum, and advocates for the mentally ill began to claim the right to the "least restrictive alternative": "thus, the presence of the insane on the streets was made possible by a medical triumph and a social rights victory." Robert E. Jones. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, Sept. 1983, Vol.34, No.9.


60. Fuller. Surviving Schizophrenia.

61. Ibid.

62. According to Richard Lamb, "some (now) clearly recognize that while many abuses needed to be corrected, this legislation went too far in the other direction and no longer safeguards the welfare of patients. We still have not found a way to help some mental health lawyers and patients' rights advocates see that they have contributed heavily to the problem of homelessness - the patients' rights to freedom are not synonymous with releasing them to the streets where they cannot take care of themselves, are too disorganized or fearful to avail themselves of what help is available, and are easy prey for every predator." Hospital and Community Psychiatry

63. Fuller. Surviving Schizophrenia. p133.

64. As Hope and Young suggest: "What we have now is a competitive, inefficient, inequitable, uncoordinated, non-system of state mental hospitals, VA hospitals and outpatient facilities, public clinics, clinics sponsored by voluntary agencies, private sanitariums, city hospitals with psychiatric wings, community mental health centers, private psychiatrists,
halfway houses, group homes, and rehabilitation programs - all of which are intended to offer some kind of treatment. Community-based housing ranges from luxuriously appointed group homes for affluent patients, to for-profit nursing homes, nonprofit nursing homes, foster homes, county poorhouses, jails, flophouses, SROs, emergency shelters - and the asylum of the streets. The Faces of Homelessness.


68. Ibid. The report provides a glimpse of the trend toward deinstitutionalisation in British Columbia: the provincial government opened the psychiatric hospital Essondale (now Riverview) on 1,000 acres of rural land. Soon after it opened, the hospital was as overcrowded as its predecessors. From 1930 to 1960, the total number of provincial beds, located primarily at Essondale increased dramatically: 1932 - 2,795; 1951-4,844; 1960 - 6,247. Due to population increase, however, the numbers of psychiatric patients in institutional beds per population remained relatively constant (395,416 and 369 respectively. This was reduced to 130 by 1978).

The impact of deinstitutionalisation can be seen in the following figures for Essondale hospital:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69. Ibid.


71. Dear and Wolch. Landscapes of Despair.

72. Ibid.

74. This figure has appeared on a number occasions in media reports although no source is identified. See for example, "Mean Streets" Vancouver Sun, Saturday March 29, 1986. This was a nationally syndicated column.


77. In the SPARC publication already quoted, Richard Watson of the B.C. Coalition of the Disabled, summarised the recent trends in deinstitutionalisation in British Columbia:

i. In 1976, Premier Vander Zalm (then Minister of Human Resources), introduced 'project LIFE' (Living Independently with Full Equality), out of which developed the Community Living Society (CLS) at Woodlands Hospital. The CLS, formed by parents of residents at Woodlands had a mandate to move the residents into the community. The concept died when Vander Zalm was no longer minister. The Throne Speech of 1981 revived the concept of community living and made a ten year commitment to close Tranquille, Woodlands and Riverview.

ii. In 1983, the Minister of Human Resources, Grace McCarthy, announced the gradual shutdown of the psychiatric institutions. The announcement was at first met with excitement, but later, workers in community programs complained that a sound process for transference into community living situations was not adequately planned.

iii. The Social Credit government under Bennett did not carry out the full process of deinstitutionalization. Nor did it provide the funding necessary to support community living for severely physically and mentally disabled people.

iv. Now media attention is focussing on the eventual shutdown of Woodlands and Riverview hospitals and on the question of safety for the outward bound psychiatric patients and the community. It appears to be a form of concern distinct from that aimed at mentally handicapped persons, but nevertheless arises from the same root problems: a lack of planning, preparedness and neighbourhood acceptance.

v. The B.C. Government Employees Union mounted a campaign in early 1986 aimed at warning the public of the dangers of de-institutionalization. Through the media, it presented horrifying propagandic predictions about helpless physically and mentally handicapped people being moved into the community, susceptible to neglect and abuse. It also drew a picture of psychiatrically violent people being loosed on the streets of Vancouver. Community and advocacy groups were highly critical of the BCGEU for this scare tactic, suggesting that was done to gain public sympathy over wage loss at the expense of vulnerable groups and public understanding. The
union subsequently apologised and the campaign was stopped. In a letter to the disabled community, the president of the union stated that the union's concerns were over the lack of planning for placement and community-based support services in the process of phasing out the institutions. "Deinstitutionalization: The Cast of Characters", Richard A. Watson B.C. Coalition of the Disabled. SPARC NEWS: Community Affairs.


80. The recent study by the Edmonton Coalition on homelessness suggests that persons with psychiatric disorders tend to have characteristics in common, and these contribute significantly to their vulnerability in terms of becoming homeless. They include:
   i. Unpredictability of behaviour caused by their illness and their medications; these may result in them being barred from the family home or other forms of accommodation;
   ii. high sensitivity to stress - the coping ability of these individuals is limited; quality of environment and availability of social support are important mediators of stress;
   iii. Impaired daily functioning - limited living, social and coping skills;
   iv. Lack of adequate or regular income - lack of training, employment retention problems, and instability of their medical condition make it difficult for them to secure and keep jobs, particularly in a depressed economy.

ECOH points out that stresses associated with marginal survival (brought on by lack of personal security and safety; physical health problems and economic hardship) often results in the mentally ill becoming disconnected from the support of people and agencies, and this in turn can exacerbate loneliness, loss of dignity and self-esteem, and isolation. Edmonton Coalition on Homelessness (ECOH). Homelessness in Edmonton.


82. Toronto, Mayor's Action Task Force on discharged psychiatric patients, Final Report, April 1984. ("Gerstein report")


The CMHA strongly stresses the necessity of fostering the development of a caring community which promotes and acknowledges the rights of people with severe mental disabilities:

The goal of successful community living requires the creation and maintenance of a system of supports and services with the following characteristics:

Individualization - the planning, arrangement and delivery of support are determined by the particular needs of the individual;

Comprehensiveness - the system responds to the needs of the whole person;

Integration - opportunities are maximized for the individual to participate in the mainstream of community life;

Adaptability - supports and services are monitored and adjusted to remain appropriate and responsive;

Co-ordination - effective and geographically appropriate co-ordination;

Developmental orientation - the individual is encouraged and supported to acquire the skills necessary to live, work and function in the community;

Mandated - clear and unequivocal designation of authority for service planning, co-ordination and delivery;

Non-stigmatizing and Safeguarded.

Dear and Wolch.

Kasinitz. "Gentrification and Homelessness".

Ibid. p.243.

According to Leonard Marsh in Canadians In and Out of Work:
"It would appear, that some twenty years after the Depression, the single jobless become casualties and dependent on social assistance at pretty much the same rate as previously. In 1937, the best year of the Depression period, the number of normal wage earners on relief went from 7% to 8% of the total employee-force of the country."

In one sense, therefore, the prognosis by Bahr and others that skid rows have evolved from "employment pools" to "old age homes" is partially accurate.
CHAPTER SEVEN: HOUSING AS A PRECIPITANT OF HOMELESSNESS
This case example addresses the importance of housing problems as a necessary but not sufficient pre-condition for homelessness in a way not previously explored in Canada. It examines whether the housing plight of the homeless is substantively different from what has historically been a perennial problem in Canada - housing low-income people.(1)

Two related questions are examined: is the housing dimension of homelessness simply the most recent formulation of the historical problem of providing adequate housing for people who cannot afford the private market? Or is there something unique about the current situation that sets it apart from past housing crises?(2)

The first proposition assumes that while there may be some interesting or even unique factors behind the current crisis of homelessness, the central issue confronting low-income households remains their inability to afford private shelter. This issue is, in effect, an income problem.

The second proposition on the other hand, assumes that there are differences between the housing issues facing today's homeless and the traditional challenge of providing housing for low-income people.

The argument presented here suggests that the second proposition more accurately reflects the current situation in Canada, in part because the changing composition of the homeless suggests that income is not the only factor causing housing problems. Efforts to solve the problem by increasing the shelter component of social assistance benefits, for example, have not been generally successful, since landlords often increase rents by a corresponding amount.

However, the case example also demonstrates that local conditions and events combine with broader social and economic processes, illustrating that
variations in the composition and concentration among four sub-groups of the homeless involves more than spatial contingency.

The first part of the chapter establishes two main points:

1. While the availability of low-cost housing has been a persistent problem in Canada, it is suggested that the housing problems which have affected the homeless altered at different times during the past century. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the two main sources of concern were related to affordability (particularly among the poor and working class) and the sub-standard condition of the housing stock in the cores of many cities. These problems prevailed at least until the 1940's. Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, housing played a key role in macro-economic stimulation, and in the 1950's, housing policies and legislation were introduced in an attempt to address seasonal economic fluctuations. By the 1960's and into the 1970's, the focus had changed. Housing played a key role in efforts to deal with poverty and regional economic disparities, although with the introduction of rent controls in the mid-1970's, the federal government began to use housing for economic pump priming as part of its wage-price control programme.

The result has been that while affordability has been a perennial problem, homeless-related problems in the early years were more related to sub-standard conditions, whereas since the mid-1970's, affordability problems are closely linked to the decreasing availability of low-cost accommodation.

2. Homelessness in Canada is not synonymous with housing. It is also related to general and locally specific processes which have combined in different ways, at different times and at varying spatial scales.

While certain housing-related problems can be traced to the operation of local housing markets and related local processes, these processess by
themselves are not sufficient to account for homelessness since they are reciprocally related to broader economic, social and political conditions and events which influence how homelessness is constituted and becomes manifest in specific places.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF HOMELESSNESS: SUB-STANDARD HOUSING IN CANADA

The historical evidence indicates that Canada began the post-WWII period with a large stock of aging and substandard housing, communities lacking municipal water and sewer services, and a substantial number of households living in crowded and slum conditions. These sub-standard conditions had been developing, almost unchecked, since the end of WWI. With rapid urbanization, large-scale immigration and the economic dislocations brought about by the wars, recessions and depressions, there was a growing concern about the need for increased social organisation within urban societies.

In 1887, A Royal Commission On The Relations of Labour and Capital concluded that "It is undeniable that workers are badly lodged in houses badly built, unhealthy and rented at exorbitant prices."(3)

Herbert Ames' extensive study of Montreal's "ordinary urban conditions", around 1897, identified "insufficient employment opportunities" as the chief cause of poverty among the "submerged tenth".(4) As Copp suggests in his account of poverty conditions among the working class in Montreal, the introduction of employment programmes, higher standards in house construction and sanitation, as well as more low cost rental accommodation were advocated.(5)

At the end of World War One, the lack of adequate housing at affordable prices was creating "conditions that menace the industrial, social and
political welfare of the entire country."(6) Overcrowding and deterioration in the quality of the housing stock had become a serious problem in parts of the country. In Toronto, a survey of 13,574 single family houses in 1918 revealed:

The dwellings under observation were found to contain 18,123 families, embracing 90,272 persons. In 4,383 homes, which contained 4,5,6,7 or 8 rooms, there were two families. In 402 houses there were three families, or more, and in 3,954 homes, in addition to the regular families, there were lodgers. Thus, out of 13,574 homes originally intended as single family houses, 8,739 contained 2,3 or more families, or lodgers. Moreover,...there were no less than 1,538 dilapidated houses, that is, houses unfit for habitation.(7)

These conditions were not confined to Toronto. Investigations by the Ontario Housing Committee found overcrowding and poor quality housing in sixty municipalities across the province and recognized a need for "action to relieve the housing shortage and the poor housing conditions".(8)

The severity of the situation was brought home to many by the influenza epidemic of 1918 which highlighted the fact that in many parts of Toronto, families were herded together in rear hovels which opened onto lanes.(9)

In an address to the Civic Improvement League of Canada in Victoria, B.C. in 1918, Thomas Adams, speaking on behalf of the federal government, made the following remarks:

Let us ask ourselves what the problems will be twenty years hence when the slum populations have multiplied more rapidly than other classes of population and our slum areas have grown relatively greater than now to our healthy areas, and the great cities are spread over double their present territory. There is hardly another social question to which it is more important that we should apply our energies, and there are few other social problems that can be effectively dealt with, without at the same time dealing with the problem of improving housing conditions.(10)

The poor housing conditions which had existed in the old cores of many cities had been largely ignored during the prosperity of the late 1920's, but they became the focus of widespread public attention with the emergence of a
series of local housing surveys conducted during the early 1930's. Reports were produced in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa and Winnipeg between 1932 and 1936. Two of the more influential surveys were the 1934 Toronto Report of the Lieutenant-Governor's Committee on Housing Conditions (Bruce Commission), and the 1935 Report on Housing and Slum Clearance in Montreal. In 1939, A.E. Grauer prepared a comprehensive national study for the Royal Commission on Dominion Provincial Relations which outlined the severity of the situation across the country. The title of the report is instructive: "Evidence Regarding The Shortage of Houses, Overcrowding, Insanitary and Undesirable Living Conditions and Slums Revealed by Recent Housing Surveys in Canada".

The Great Depression saw the collapse of the Canadian construction industry, bringing unemployment or loss of income to professionals and laborers involved in residential construction. This forced many professional, business and union groups to discover the reality of poverty in their nation, and led to a more socially aware approach to housing which called for the establishment of a minimum standard of shelter for Canadian families. The housing studies of the depression era generally concluded that the answer to the housing problem was the construction of subsidised low cost rental housing, but the federal government rejected this analysis:

Federal housing programs could not achieve a breakthrough in becoming accessible to the majority of Canadian families. Most federally assisted housing was built in exclusive suburbs, often on the basis of racially restrictive residential covenants. Federal intervention encouraged a mythology of the right of a middle class family not only to own a home, but to possess a newly constructed one in a suburban tract, built according to National Housing Act standards and financed by a NHA subsidized loan. Subsidized middle class home ownership during the depression helped foster a redirection of public attention away from the basic concerns of adequate shelter at affordable costs to the assumed right of the upwardly mobile to a newly constructed NHA home.
At the beginning of the Depression, homeless single men were either lodged by municipalities in "rough and ready" hostels, or were permitted to spend the night in jail. In the summer months the shelters were closed, and the homeless fended for themselves by sleeping out and begging for food.

According to the historical review of housing by Hulchanski and Bacher, although the wartime economy and military recruitment had removed the problem of single, unemployed and transient men, it resulted in a shift in the nature of homelessness. Families now faced the most acute shelter problems, both during and after WWII:

The key cause of homelessness during World War Two was the acute shortage of rental housing and the insecurity of rental tenure. The principal battle with respect to rent control was not the level of rent charged but rather the sale of rental property to home buyers in a hot real estate market when profits from such sales could be enormous.(14)

What had happened was that war workers, who had benefitted from receiving the wartime wage, and manufacturers who had obtained substantial war contracts, were moving into the cities and buying homes. Tenants who were already living in the urban areas, and even the middle-class salary earners had not shared the same war-related benefits, and were as a result, unable to compete with the buyers or defend their tenure. Evictions of renters during the post war years reached critical proportions in some urban areas, forcing The Wartime Prices and Trade Board to issue an Order-in-Council in 1942 restricting the repossessions of a property to situations where the landlord required it for personal occupation. However, because of concerted lobbying by the real estate profession, landlords and managers, this order was revoked in 1943:

On 1 May, 1944, Canadian cities would experience the full impact of the flexible provisions for eviction of tenants announced in the summer of 1943. In Montreal alone, some 5,000 notices to vacate were issued.(15)
Because of the rise in property values, landlords were selling houses they had previously rented, but with affordable rental housing in scarce supply, the evicted tenants had little hope of finding other places to live. However, the fact that many of those evicted were families of servicemen, prompted concerted action as illustrated in the following excerpt from a 1944 Vancouver newspaper:

A veterans' picket line to prevent the next threatened eviction of a serviceman's family was unanimously approved by more than 150 veterans, representing all ex-service organizations in the city, meeting in Legion Hall Thursday night to protest Vancouver's wartime evictions. Veterans cheered as Ed Sturgeon, returned soldier who served a year and a half overseas, rose to move that...on the 'first authentic case of a woman being evicted while her husband is in service,' a picket line be formed to prevent them from being forced out.(16)

The federal government generally considered the acute housing shortages of the early 1940's as a "necessary wartime sacrifice", as can be seen in their decision to promote public rental housing by establishing a Crown Corporation with the title Wartime Housing Limited in 1942. However, by 1943, the housing shortages had become so severe that they exceeded even the government's view of what could reasonably be considered as an acceptable sacrifice:

In Montreal "respectable middle-class families" were forced to convert stores into homes. Another 420 families in the city lived in "garages, empty warehouses, sheds and shacks." Some 4,000 families were "doubled up", while another 300 families "tripled up". Cellars, "summer cottages, tourist camps, trailers" and "boats and yachts tied up at local warehouses" became emergency family accommodation...The continuing housing shortages resulted in the federal decision to appoint Emergency Shelter Administrators in selected Canadian cities in January 1944...Despite the severe controls imposed, the problem of homelessness among families escalated to the point where the government developed a special Emergency Shelter Program.(17)

The emphasis of the Emergency Shelter Program was on ameliorating conditions in the congested urban centres across the country, and because of the extent of the housing problems, administrators of the programme were
under instructions to concentrate exclusively on cases of absolute homelessness. Those with some form of shelter were not to be included in any assistance, since according to the co-ordinator of the program, the government would be:

...confronted with countless families suffering inconvenience, discomfort and inadequacy...whom we are totally unable to help and whom we must recognize can only be assisted by the construction of more houses.(18)

In its first two years of operation, The Emergency Shelter Program had funded some 4,600 units, and although the shelters were built with the intent that people using them not be encouraged to settle in and cease looking for other accommodation, there were long waiting lists for them. Throughout the country, at least 200,000 households were living in overcrowded and often substandard conditions.

Because of the increasing risk to peoples' economic and social security, social reformers argued that society had a responsibility to ensure that the costs of progress did not fall excessively upon those who were least able to absorb them. A central thrust of the reform movement was that housing should be considered as a right as opposed to a market commodity.

Evidence of the widespread deterioration in many of the urban centres across the country which had been documented in the Bruce Commission and Grauer reports, were used to reinforce the claim that the provision of adequate housing was necessarily tied to the wider issues of social welfare and reform.

Some of the most perceptive and progressive champions of social housing innovations in Canada were members of Dr. C.A. Curtis' Subcommittee on Housing and Community Planning, part of the Advisory Committee on Post-war Reconstruction. The Curtis Report called for a programme of subsidised
rental housing for the lower two-thirds of tenant families in urban Canada. It maintained that the incomes of these families were too small to afford private market accommodation. The report reinforced the findings of economist O.J. Firestone that "the basic problem" of housing in Canada was the large proportion of the population "which cannot afford to pay rents which would make house-building a commercial proposition". (19)

The following excerpt from the Curtis Report supports the claim that housing problems in the immediate post-war period involved more than insufficient income:

The Subcommittee believes that provision for housing will have to include home ownership, home improvement, slum clearance, low-rental projects, and rural and farm housing. It is clear that while the problem may be more severe in one field than in another, there are needs in all fields and all groups will have to be provided for in an equitable and comprehensive plan. The backlog accumulated from the past and the program needed for the future are so great that we cannot afford to concentrate only on one branch to the exclusion of the others.(20)

The severity of the post-war housing shortage continued into the mid-1950's, yet the federal government terminated the Emergency Shelter Program in 1948 and Wartime Housing Ltd. in 1949.

All that remained was a small-scale public housing programme to assist low-income families, which produced a mere 11,000 units between 1949 and 1964.(21) Municipalities continued to operate emergency shelters without federal assistance until the late 1950's when the rental housing shortage eased. They were often in the form of barracks covered with a tarpaper roof, and partitioned into cubicles separated by particle board partitions. They were primarily to house families with children, since in general, families who were receiving welfare assistance were not eligible for public housing.

According to Bacher and Hulchanski, the history of housing Canadians repeatedly shows that attempts to meet the needs of the homeless and the
inadequately housed were consistently and systematically resisted by senior levels of government. The reason, they argue, relates to the difference between social need and effective market demand:

Assistance for the destitute is a social need which cannot be translated into market demand. On the other hand, the provision of subsidies and of changes in the mortgage system making possible the purchase of a single family house translates into the creation of effective (i.e., profitable) demand in the market-place. Meeting social needs is usually a minimal, temporary type of service offered on the basis of means tests at the discretion of the social welfare agency. In contrast, assisting home ownership has become a permanent part of Canada's housing system. The failure of housing policy to address the shelter needs of all Canadians even though the means and resources existed or were among the forces "within human control", demonstrates the overwhelming strength of individualist objections to all forms of collectivist social legislation except when political expediency demanded otherwise. (22)

This conclusion is supported in other analyses of housing policies and programmes in Canada. For example, the controversial report prepared by Dennis and Fish in 1972, suggested that housing policy in Canada has been directed solely at housing starts in order to increase the overall stock:

Little or no concern has been shown for the distribution of either the newly produced or existing stock; the price of that stock and the ability of consumers (low-income consumers in particular) to afford it; the environmental quality of the new housing produced; the condition of the existing stock, except for 'slum housing' which would have to be destroyed and replaced; the right to free and dignified use by the consumer of his home. Instead, reliance has been placed on the market to allocate the stock, set the price, determine the level of quality, and the protection of the position of the low-income tenant has been left to the provinces. (23)

This raises what the authors describe as "the public-private dichotomy" surrounding low-income housing since WWII. They show that the debate over housing in Canada has revolved around whether there has been a housing problem or whether the problem is in effect an income issue. (24) Their review of federal government housing policy concluded that in the early 1970's, the prevailing government position was that there was no immediate housing problem, that there was, in effect, an income problem for low-income
families likely to be displaced by redevelopment and unable to find satisfactory alternative accommodation. From this perspective, the poor have housing difficulties because they are poor, and therefore alleviating their difficulty is most efficiently achieved by income assistance rather than by housing assistance.

In a recent analysis of what he describes as "the decline and fall of the housing market", Harvey Lithwick addresses the housing - income dichotomy.(25) He argues that historically, housing in Canada has been viewed as a commodity. The implicit assumption has been that given adequate competition (particularly on the supply side), housing would be provided in accordance with consumer tastes at prices reasonably close to the social cost of production:

Under these circumstances, the major social problem would be the availability of housing to those who could not, because of inadequate incomes, compete in the market. This is more accurately seen as a poverty problem rather than an income problem. With the evolution of social thought, and better information on the realities of housing market performance, these facile assumptions began to be questioned.(26)

Lithwick demonstrates the incongruity in the federal government's position that housing problems were essentially income problems, by reviewing the interventionist role which the government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, played in housing Canadians in the post-war period:

Two explanations are possible. One is that the housing market was not working well, and hence intervention was required to improve its efficiency. This explanation is contradicted to some extent by the evidence that, in periods prior to the major interventions of the early 1970's, the housing situation of Canadians improved dramatically. After 1971, the growing level of intervention produced mixed results. Housing conditions continued to improve but affordability declined. If the intervention was not called for by market failure, a second and more plausible explanation is that more was expected of housing policy than the housing market could realistically be expected to deliver.(27)
Lithwick argues that the use of housing for economic pump priming has had a destabilising effect:

These heavy and often unreasonable demands on the housing sector have necessarily made the market less effective than it might otherwise be... but there are strong institutional reasons for favouring the housing route. Taxpayers tend to favour tangible forms of assistance to the poor (i.e. better housing) rather than income transfers, which it is felt, will be frittered away. Bureaucrats tend to favour programs that they can control... and politicians prefer the visibility of new housing projects over the more subtle, less identifiable achievements of the marketplace. (28)

In many if not most of the major cities across Canada, there are growing numbers of people who cannot find an affordable place to live. As the following table shows, vacancy rates in the largest cities in Canada have been very low over the past two decades, if one accepts that a vacancy rate between 3% - 6% is indicative of a healthy market.

---

**VACANCY RATES IN APARTMENT STRUCTURES OF SIX OR MORE UNITS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS, 1968-1987**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EDMONTON</th>
<th>HALIFAX</th>
<th>MONTREAL</th>
<th>OTTAWA-HULL</th>
<th>TORONTO</th>
<th>VANCOUVER</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE CURRENT SITUATION: A CRISIS OF AFFORDABILITY?

Although not officially acknowledged, the Canadian shelter system has four tiers:

1. Private Sector Permanent Housing (both owned and rented)
2. Government-Subsidised Housing in which tenure is conditional
3. Temporary and Emergency Shelters
4. The Streets

Within these tiers, four sub-groups within the homeless population can be differentiated on the basis of their shelter or housing problems. The first three categories relate to those who might be described as homeless, whereas the fourth group can best be described as homeless, in the sense that they may well be presently living in a dwelling, but are 'at risk' because they lack security, choice or control over their housing and living arrangements:

1. Those without shelter
2. Those who have shelter but lack a house (e.g. in hostels)
3. Those who are housed but lack a home (e.g. in hotel and rooming houses)
4. Housing problems among those 'at risk'.

Those Without Shelter

The terms 'transient, derelict, vagrant, destitute, drifter and bag lady' have all been used to refer to those who, for various reasons, make their home on the streets. These 'urban nomads' historically have been small in number but fit the most common perceptions and stereotypes of the homeless. Their way of life tends to make them hostile to open interaction with others. This group includes:

(i) those who become homeless because of some temporary crisis (e.g. eviction, abusive relationship, illness etc.);
(ii) those who experience episodic periods of homelessness (often labelled 'hard to house' because of disruptive social behaviour, those who move frequently between emergency shelters and the streets, and others who undergo varying periods of hospitalisation, institutionalisation or incarceration and who sometimes have no permanent shelter);

(iii) the chronic homeless: those who have opted out of society as well as those who (often for medical reasons) are incapable of functioning within a sheltered (but relatively independent) setting, and wander the streets.

Sheltered But Not Housed (Emergency Shelter and Hostel Users)

A second group of homeless people are becoming increasingly dependent upon a nationwide network of emergency shelters, missions and hostels operated by municipalities or religious groups, as their housing of last resort.

It remains unclear exactly how many people live this cyclical existence of temporary addresses, although church and social workers agree that their number is growing and that their composition is changing.(29)

The hostels which were originally intended as night shelter for transient workers are increasingly becoming permanent homes for those who have no jobs, families who are ineligible for, or have been cut off from family and social support benefits, and those who cannot afford any other options.(30)

Many of those who run the shelters and hostels suggest that the homeless with whom they come into contact have certain characteristics in common:

* they have multiple problems - physical, mental, social and/or economic difficulties which influence their status in society.

* They are commonly isolated from community, family and social networks which form a vital part of the traditional social 'safety net'.

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They end up in hostels by default, because of the lack of affordable housing alternatives for low-income singles. A recent Metro Toronto report argues that the lack of affordable housing is "the single most important factor impacting on the hostel network", and that "without such options, the hostel system, by default, is pressured into becoming a second-tier subsidized housing program". (31)

In what community workers describe as the "welfare catch-22", people who have inadequate incomes get caught in a merry-go-round of temporary housing situations -- staying with friends/relatives, in rooming houses or cheap hotels -- because without money they lose their accommodation; with no address they cannot get social assistance to secure first and last month's rent. The cycle perpetuates - no money, no rent; no rent, no address; no address, no money - until some turn to the hostels, and others who refuse to be stripped of their possessions and their dignity, to the streets. (32)

While emergency shelters fulfill a definite function as the accommodation of last resort for some of Canada's homeless, there is evidence that this type of shelter is being used by some on a more permanent basis than was ever intended, and that many of the shelters are ill-equipped to provide anything more than a place to sleep.

In certain cities, notably Toronto and Montreal, organisations which run emergency shelters are opting to renovate them into permanent lodgings for their long-term clientele. An important debate is currently underway concerning the role this type of housing plays in perpetuating the cycle of poverty and homelessness, with some arguing that permanent affordable homes are required and as a result, emergency hostels should not be relied upon by the homeless; while shelter proponents argue that they are desperately needed precisely because there is insufficient housing for low-income people. The outcome of the debate will have important repercussions for the future of this type of accommodation, and by implication, this category of the homeless.
Housed But Lack A Home  (Hotel and Rooming House Population)

The third, and by far the largest group commonly identified among the homeless in Canada, are those who reside in the rooming houses, single room occupancy hotels and low-rent apartments in most inner city cores. They may appear at first glance to be permanently housed, "but in reality they are frequently under threat of sudden and arbitrary eviction, or because of the substandard condition of the dwelling, lack a home in any adequate sense."(34) Evidence from Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto indicates that the stock of low-rent accommodation in the urban cores is rapidly diminishing,(35) and that gentrification, revitalisation and escalating rents are having a serious impact on the housing options and living conditions of the poor and disadvantaged:

Characterized by the common distinction of low-income, this population includes the elderly, the de-institutionalized mental patient, the chronic alcoholic, the unemployable and the handicapped. The rooming house, or the single room occupancy hotel or small apartment in a converted inner-city house has often been more than shelter. For many, its internal relationships and interwovenness with the network of services and friendships in the urban neighbourhood have been family and home. This group is also the most rapidly growing...they cover an extremely wide spectrum which includes immigrants, refugees, people halfway between prison and normal life and between psychiatric institutions and community, battered women, the physically handicapped, native people, the dispossessed and vagrants.(36)

The composition of the roomers, boarders and single room hotel residents of Canada's skid row areas has been changing considerably in recent years. Twenty five years ago in Toronto, the average homeless man living in the city core was middle-aged (between 36 and 44), single or divorced, out of work and with little hope of finding a job.(37) Today, while there are still many middle-aged and elderly men, significant numbers of Toronto's homeless are under 30, the proportion of women has increased (particularly among young mothers and women over 60), as has the number of families.(38)
The plight of the 'roomers' revolves around three related issues:

* the rapid depletion of low-cost housing stock

* a lack of security of tenure for tenants,

* the fragmented nature of the support service network which they require to maintain their relative independence within the community of their choice:(39)

The dilemma is that they are without jobs and, therefore, without money to pay for housing. Without a stable place in which to live, it is difficult to look for work. They become almost totally dependent on a social system established to help them exist on skid row but not to assist them in moving to a more stable environment. Their lives revolve around institutions, charity and handouts.(40)

This treadmill is perpetuated in part because of the lack of effective linkages between housing and the required social support services.

Housing Problems for People "At Risk"

There are those in Canada who, while not completely without shelter or housing, are "at risk" in the sense that their continued well-being or normal expectations are threatened. This group includes inter alia, those with low and fixed incomes, the hard-pressed middle class, frustrated families, anxious seniors, and social housing tenants.(41) The problem is particularly acute for women (of all ages) who are the primary consumers of rental housing, but because of the income disparities in earnings between men and women, it is also a problem for low-income women who own their homes.(42)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation recently recognised that there are increasing numbers of people who require low-rent, permanent and secure accommodation at a time when the stock of appropriate types of affordable housing is diminishing. They developed an index of 'core housing need' in 1982, which identified households that would have to spend more than 30% of their income to obtain suitable and adequate housing in their locality.
Using this measure, the 1987 National Consultation Paper on Housing indicated that more than 500,000 rental households cannot afford physically adequate accommodation, and nearly 200,000 homeowners have serious affordability problems. The report also identified that a growing number of housing units require rehabilitation. At a time when the residential construction industry has been experiencing considerable instability, there has been a simultaneous decline in rental construction and in rental vacancy rates. As a result, many people are finding themselves in a precarious situation because of where and how they are housed, rather than because of personal characteristics.

The range of housing problems among the four groups identified above supports the claim that affordability is only one of a number of related conditions which can precipitate homelessness. In the sections to follow, it is shown that affordability is closely linked to a combination of locally specific and more general economic and social processes which have produced changes to the internal structure of cities.

CHANGES TO THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF CITIES: GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Chronic housing shortages have been reported in most of Canada's largest cities. With low vacancy rates, people on low and fixed incomes have to compete in the housing market with others who have more income. Low rates of social assistance mean that the poor are trying to compete in inflated housing markets with diminishing (in real terms) financial resources. In addition, urban redevelopment during the late '70s and early '80s has resulted in a decline in affordable housing that used to be available to people on low incomes, while the private sector continually argues that it
is not profitable to build low cost housing for the poor. As the number of affordable rental units decline, there has been a corresponding increase in people seeking emergency shelter, and resorting to the streets.

It is important to see these developments within their broader contexts. The Canadian economy is shifting away from an emphasis on manufacturing toward tertiary and quaternary functions. Geographically, these activities tend to be concentrated in the downtown cores of what economists describe as 'command' or 'control' cities within the urban hierarchy - particularly Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax.

Considerable pressure to intensify and expand the Central Business District and the older housing stock surrounding it has resulted in the displacement and relocation of many of the poor, young, elderly and the disabled who have traditionally relied on this stock for affordable accommodation. This internal restructuring of cities has echoed through the low-cost end of the housing market resulting in people paying higher rents, and others relying on the hostel system for increasingly longer periods. The table below shows the high cost of apartment rentals and vacancy rates in the major metropolitan areas in 1987.
AVERAGE PRICE OF VACANT APARTMENTS IN APRIL 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METROPOLITAN AREAS</th>
<th>VACANCY RATES</th>
<th>BACHELOR STUDIO</th>
<th>ONE BDRM</th>
<th>TWO BDRMS</th>
<th>THREE BDRMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALGARY</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>$301</td>
<td>$403</td>
<td>$511</td>
<td>$516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHICOUTIMI-JONQUIERE</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>$240</td>
<td>$318</td>
<td>$365</td>
<td>$381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDMONTON</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>$306</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td>$457</td>
<td>$498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALIFAX</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$514</td>
<td>$691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMILTON</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>$274</td>
<td>$364</td>
<td>$444</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KITHCHENER</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$395</td>
<td>$608</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONDON</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>$283</td>
<td>$419</td>
<td>$579</td>
<td>$658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTREAL</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>$330</td>
<td>$377</td>
<td>$434</td>
<td>$457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST. CATHERINES-NIAGARA</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$340</td>
<td>$463</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HULL</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>$330</td>
<td>$396</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTTAWA</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>$365</td>
<td>$466</td>
<td>$641</td>
<td>$747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUEBEC</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>$334</td>
<td>$381</td>
<td>$451</td>
<td>$493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGINA</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>$286</td>
<td>$395</td>
<td>$464</td>
<td>$542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT JOHN</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>$269</td>
<td>$285</td>
<td>$346</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John's</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>$368</td>
<td>$406</td>
<td>$516</td>
<td>$421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASKATOON</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>$261</td>
<td>$366</td>
<td>$433</td>
<td>$474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUDBURY</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>$255</td>
<td>$280</td>
<td>$451</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THUNDER BAY</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>$269</td>
<td>$423</td>
<td>$555</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TORONTO</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>$616</td>
<td>$854</td>
<td>$966</td>
<td>$936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROIS-RIVIERES</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>$288</td>
<td>$313</td>
<td>$347</td>
<td>$363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANCOUVER</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>$351</td>
<td>$437</td>
<td>$620</td>
<td>$755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>$304</td>
<td>$355</td>
<td>$434</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINDSOR</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$455</td>
<td>$689</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINNIPEG</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>$280</td>
<td>$438</td>
<td>$561</td>
<td>$606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Reprinted in *The Globe and Mail*.

Ley has suggested that gentrification has probably been the single major contributor to the crisis of affordable rental housing in many large Canadian cities. He argues that the large number of households displaced from affordable housing occurred because of the reshaping of the housing stock through deconversion, condominium conversion, renovation or redevelopment for higher income households. In reviewing the literature on revitalisation and
gentrification, Ley argues that four common explanations are commonly given:\thf 46

1. A demographic argument which provides an important explanatory context for the timing of inner-city revitalisation. The demographic changes include: (i) the growth in numbers associated with the baby boom and echo; (ii) a significant reduction in household size; changes in lifestyle preferences; and more women entering the workforce; and (iii) with an increasing population came a spatial extension of metropolitan areas and longer journey to work;

2. Changes in the housing market which are related to consumer preferences associated with the demographic changes. The argument represents an extension of neo-classical urban economics. As new housing stock in the suburbs inflated rapidly in price during the '70's, and as mortgage rates compounded affordability problems, households turned either to smaller and cheaper new central city apartments or townhouses, or renovated older inner city single family or row houses.

While agreeing that this seems to be a plausible argument in Canada, given that affordability has been the major component of the urban housing problem of the 1970's, Ley argues that it is flawed. As with the demographic thesis, it views inner city revitalisation as temporary or at best cyclical, but "there is no basis for concluding in Canada that revitalisation is a temporary phenomenon". He also suggests that an alternative, Marxian conceptualisation of the housing market thesis which identifies supply rather than demand criteria as uppermost in triggering revitalization, is also unsatisfactory as an explanation.
3. An economic argument based on the premise of a post-industrial metropolitan economy oriented toward services and a white-collar employment structure:

Here is the labour market whose growing presence since 1970 has introduced a new dimension to the inner city housing market. This group is held to be distinctive enough that some theorists refer to it as the new middle class or, more simply, the new class.(47)

4. The pro-urban lifestyle. This is essentially a cultural argument, suggesting that "the landscape, social groups, and public and private amenities of the centre city evoke a set of alternative and positive values and associations to middle income settlers".(48) As Marcuse ascerbically describes it:

The gentrification of people that is happening through the evolution of a sophisticated consumerism, not only as to goods but of culture, the environment, and crucially of residential space, is thus a mechanism to provide a motivation for and satisfaction with continued integration into unproductive and humanly meaningless jobs, where quality of performance is important but usefulness of result is not. The gentrification of space is both a by-product of, and contributes further to, this process.(49) (emphasis added).

Ley characterises the relations between his four explanatory factors in the following diagram:

```
Demography    Housing
   \   /       |
    |   |  \\
Economy       Quality of Life
```

In this causal system, the economic base offers the primary effect upon rates of inner city revitalization; quality of life offers a secondary, but independent effect; the housing and demographic factors do not seem to introduce strong separate effects.(50)

The suggestion that housing does not seem to introduce a strong separate effect may seem at odds with analyses of the links between revitalisation,
displacement and homelessness. As has been suggested previously, the decline in the stock of affordable accommodation for people with fixed or low-income is one of the major precipitants of homelessness in Canada. And as Ley himself suggests, "Gentrification has probably been the single major contributor to the crisis of affordable rental housing in many large Canadian cities". These findings are not contradictory if it is accepted that homelessness results from the confluence of a number of inter-related processes, of which the housing market is one necessary but not sufficient factor. While agreeing that housing does not introduce a strong separate effect, it does have a significant contributing effect. As Marcuse points out:

The "housing" of the homeless is in one sense determined completely by the housing market, the commodity character of housing: no money, no housing... (But) The form of "housing" the homeless get, where, and for how long, is not determined by the housing market or by the labour market... (It is related to) factors having to do with general changes in the processes of labour and the shape of the cities in which those processes take place. Its expression may be in political decisions; its origins are in work-related economic changes. These are the same changes... as the causes of gentrification. (51)

THE CHANGING INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE CITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOMELESS

The events which have combined to change the internal structure of cities are well illustrated in Toronto, the city which is estimated to contain the largest concentration of Canada's homeless, and where unquestionably, the lack of affordable housing is one of the most important factors contributing to homelessness, but is in no sense the only factor:

The rapidly increasing gap between supply and demand, and thus between low incomes and market rents, impacts most significantly upon the non-senior low-income single person who cannot afford the increased rents being charged for conventional apartments and for whom no permanent form of housing is provided by government assistance. Leasing practices requiring the first and last week's/month's rent compound their affordability
problems. In addition, the tight rental market enables landlords to be more selective in their choice of tenants. As a result, these individuals, forced to rely exclusively on the private market, are increasingly turning to emergency shelters for long-term accommodation.(52)

Affordability, Displacement and The Decline of the Rooming House Stock in Toronto

In 1947, the Mayor of Toronto, Robert H. Saunders, along with the City Clerk, placed the following advertisement in the local newspaper:

WARNING: ACUTE HOUSING SHORTAGE IN TORONTO, ONTARIO. Notification is hereby given to non-residents of this city that there is no available housing accommodation here. This corporation will assume no responsibility or provide any assistance in locating living quarters for any person contemplating moving to Toronto. DO NOT COME TO TORONTO, ONTARIO FOR HOUSING ACCOMMODATION.

This notice was shown as part of a 1987 Toronto Star article which carried the headline NO VACANCY: CANADA'S HOMELESS IN A SEARCH FOR SHELTER.

Traditionally, low-income single people rented rooms in family dwellings or rooming houses. There was a substantial increase in this type of housing in the immediate post-war period and up to the 1970's. Since that time, however, the private market rooming house stock has declined sharply. With the return of the middle-class to the inner city, rooming houses have been converted into apartments priced to suit the income of single or childless professionals or "deconverted" from rooms into expensive single family houses. The number of private market rooming houses in Toronto has decreased markedly over the past ten years, while the demand for this service and rents have increased. The Single Displaced Persons Project suggest that the number of rooming houses in Toronto dropped from 267 in 1970 to 126 in 1981.

Other reports indicate that 9,000 additional rental units were lost between 1981 and 1985. Rents have gone up from an average of $30 per month
in the late 1960's to about $200 to $300 by the mid-1980's. The following table illustrates the rapid decline in the rooming house stock in Toronto during the late 1970's:

![Average Room Rental Costs Table]

When the development value of a property is sufficiently greater than its current value, it is sold, renovated, or demolished for re-development. As those who can afford to move do so, many vital relationships in the community are broken in quick succession. (53) There is higher mobility in and out of the neighbourhood, the social fabric is broken, and the community becomes more anonymous. Affordable housing is lost in this process, and middle-income families, faced with high interest rates and more susceptible to unemployment, are resorting to the rental housing market:

At the same time, however, the high costs of land acquisition, capital accumulation, construction materials and labour have made it unprofitable for developers to build even moderately-priced rental housing. It no longer pays to create small units or rental accommodation for low-income people. As a result, the traditional inner city residents on fixed or static incomes are being forced to seek less expensive living arrangements. Some move to rooming houses or the single room hotels, which put them in competition with those of lower income for a diminishing stock. Those displaced from this type of accommodation are relying more frequently, and for longer periods of time on the hostels and emergency shelters. As a result, people who require this type of service (particularly women, and families with children) experience greater...

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difficulty in securing even this most basic form of shelter. While the direct correlation is difficult to quantify, many observers suggest that the increase in the number of people who are literally homeless can be traced in part to this downward pressure on the low-cost end of the housing spectrum. (54)

Gentrification has played an important role in the decrease of the lower cost rental housing stock, particularly in the areas known as "Cabbagetown" (prevalent in the 1970's), "The Track" and Riverdale (in the 1980's). The result is that while development pressures diminish the stock of low-cost rental accommodation in the traditional skid row areas, the demand has remained strong, resulting in lower vacancy rates and an increasing concentration of people in a smaller area.

The social and economic effects associated with being displaced are illustrated in the following profile of residents of 90 Shuter Street which was recently constructed to house those who previously lived in the rooming houses in Toronto's downtown core:

These are men and women who have been displaced from the cheap accommodation in rooming houses and residential hotels taken over by urban redevelopment and the gentrification of formerly working class downtown neighbourhoods. While those neighbourhoods offered affordable housing, many of these people used hostels infrequently: during periods of unemployment or because of lack of funds. However, as the stock of rooms to which they normally returned were taken off the market in significant numbers, the hostels more and more became their "permanent housing". Hostels have limits on the length of stay, so people had to move from hostel to hostel. But they were "permanently housed" in hostels. At the same time, these people gradually became more and more dependent on social services to meet their needs as economic shifts removed their traditional jobs. Inflation further eroded their already limited purchasing power as costs of food, shelter and clothing escalated at a greater rate than did incomes from low and minimum wage jobs and social assistance. (55)

The preceding quotation clearly reinforces the point that the decline in the locally available housing stock was made worse by more general conditions which contribute to problems of affordability. One example will serve to illustrate how these issues are related.
In 1987, it cost on average between $75,000 and $95,000 to build a one-bedroom apartment unit in Toronto. This included land costs which varied from $25,000 to $60,000 depending on where the property was located and what zoning restrictions apply (the cost of design, labour and building materials are included in this amount). A company securing a 12% mortgage - one percent per month - would have to charge $750 a month rent on an apartment that costs $75,000 to build, just to cover the mortgage. In addition, utilities, taxes and maintenance cost between $225 and $250 per month. This translates to a rent of $975 just to break even!(56)

The current lack of affordable housing has contributed to a number of related conditions:

* growing numbers of people are relying on foodbanks to survive because most of their income goes to pay rents;

* an increasing number of families and single mothers have been forced to put their children in the care of government agencies because they cannot afford to look after them;

* about 17,000 individuals and families are on waiting lists for subsidised housing in Metro Toronto;

* Metro's 2,500 hostel beds are filled to capacity most nights and increasing numbers of homeless are opting to sleep on the streets or in overcrowded conditions with friends and relatives;

* thousands of people are paying more than 60% of their income on shelter and some are paying as much as 70%;

* only 1 in every 1,000 apartments in Metro is for rent - the lowest vacancy rate in 20 years;

* the average rent for those scarce vacant apartments is more than $860
according to recent federal statistics.

* Thousands of unemployed and disadvantaged people are flocking to Metro
to take advantage of the municipalities network of social services and job
opportunities.

Similar conditions can be shown to exist in the nation's capital.

**Effects of Gentrification on Low-income Singles in Ottawa**

The City of Ottawa Housing Department undertook to review the housing
problems facing low-income single people in the Ottawa-Carleton Region during
the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. They report that
traditionally, low-income singles were able to acquire affordable housing in
rooming and boarding houses, multiple unit dwellings, older apartment
buildings and hotels. In the past few years however, there has been a
significant loss of the affordable housing stock:

There is little doubt as to the direct relationship between the process of
gentrification and the steady deterioration of the housing situation of
low-income single people. A study undertaken by Metro Toronto Department
of Planning indicated that 52% of those living in hostels had been
displaced from private rooms or apartments due to eviction or rent
increases.

Since 1977, the availability of rooming house space has decreased by more
than 67%. The old "urban renewal" and "slum clearance" redevelopment plans
of the 1950's and 1960's have been replaced by gentrification in the 1970's
and 1980's - resulting in the disappearance of affordable housing. Between
1974 and 1978 alone, there was a loss of 1900 affordable housing units in
Ottawa, and recent evidence suggests that the trend is continuing. In
1974, there were 1800 rooming houses in Ottawa. By 1986, there were less
than 200. Ottawa is not alone in this respect.
Advocates of the homeless identify roomers and boarders as the worst victims of the critical housing shortage in urban cities across Canada.

In 1986, the City of Ottawa undertook an analysis of the housing problems faced by low-income single people. The analysis concluded that in addition to gentrification, labour-market shifts and deinstitutionalisation have had a significant impact on those who have a greater propensity to poverty and unemployment. The difficulty faced by low-income singles can be seen by examining a number of related socio-economic conditions which constrain their housing choices:

1. Employment

   * Between 1981 to 1985 the labour force in Ottawa-Carleton increased by 13% but the unemployed sector grew by 68%. While there were 28,400 more jobs in 1981 than 1976, there were 47,345 more people in the labour force.

   * Almost half the total experienced labour force in 1986 held sales, service and clerical jobs. The largest employment gain from 1976 to 1981 came in the service sector: community, business and personal services. 77% of this increase came in the form of part-time employment.

2. Unemployment

   * In January 1986, unemployment was officially estimated to be 9.8%. These figures however, mask the size of the problem because they fail to include those who were underemployed and those who had given up looking for work;

   * Unemployment among young people (15-24) was almost twice the rate of the general population;

   * The national unemployment rate in 1986 was 2.5% higher than the local unemployment rate, but while the national trend has been decreasing, the local rate has been increasing;

   * Unemployment Insurance beneficiaries increased by 6% between 1985 -'86 and welfare cases increased by 10%;

3. General Welfare Assistance Recipients

   * In March 1980, just over 4,000 singles in the Ottawa-Carleton area were receiving assistance. By 1986, this figure had risen to 7,400 (80% live in Ottawa). In 1986, employable singles received $394.00 a month ($401.00 for unemployable).
The following table shows the increase in the number of employable welfare cases in Ottawa between 1979-1986 in comparison to unemployable cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL CASES</th>
<th>EMPLOYABLES</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>UNEMPLOYABLES</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>3,060</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,324</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>3,356</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2,068</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>4,323</td>
<td>1,936</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6,191</td>
<td>3,174</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3,017</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>6,678</td>
<td>3,229</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3,449</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>7,206</td>
<td>3,534</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>8,416</td>
<td>5,151</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>8,914</td>
<td>5,722</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3,192</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>9,632</td>
<td>6,351</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3,278</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>10,891</td>
<td>7,613</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3,278</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: COMSOC, Quarterly Statistical Bulletin; RMOC Social Services Department, 1986.

A survey of welfare recipients found that only 14% live in some form of subsidised housing. The remaining 86% seek housing in the private market, and among this group, 90% paid in excess of 25% of their General Welfare Assistance income towards shelter. However, at the time of the survey, the vacancy rate was 1.5% in Ottawa; average rents were: $265 for a room; $347 for a bachelor suite; and $429 1-bedroom. This represents at least 67%-88% of their monthly income spent on either a room or a bachelor suite (1-bedroom is beyond their means).
HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

The housing problems of the homeless in Canada have historically been linked to the inability of the poor and those with low incomes to afford secure and safe accommodation in the location of their choice. In the first half of the century, affordability problems were compounded by the substandard quality of the low cost rental stock in many cities across the country. The overcrowding and slum conditions in Montreal and Toronto for example, are well documented. People living in cellars and places normally considered unfit for human habitation were only one manifestation of this problem. While the conditions in the cities improved gradually, the succession of economic recessions and depressions reinforced and exacerbated the housing problems of Canada's poor, and altered the composition of the homeless and transient population.

By the time the country had awakened to the need for a comprehensive social welfare system in the 1940's and 1950's, the substandard condition of the aging housing stock had virtually reached its peak. The urban and social reform movements of the post-war decades were successful in drawing attention to the need for concerted action to address poverty and the negative effects of rapid urban growth. With the period of economic prosperity throughout the 1960's, the nature of housing-related homeless problems were transformed.
Incomes generally improved, as did living conditions and the standard of living. Poverty persisted, but at least there was a strong commitment to ensure that health and social security were available to those in need. While in no way exorbitant, income assistance to the poor was at least sufficient to allow people to provide food, clothing and shelter for themselves and their families.

The urban and social reforms of the 1960's brought with them some unforeseen consequences which significantly altered the composition of the homeless. New groups of socially marginalised people were now evident on the streets: de-institutionalised mentally ill, greater numbers of substance abusers, particularly among the young. Demographically, the population was maturing, and family composition was altering as a result of the baby boom, and the changing values of the "new generation."

As the seventies dawned, economic fortunes reversed. Recession produced inflation, inflation produced stagnation, and stagflation resulted in high unemployment, increased and transformed poverty, and frightening roller coaster gyrations in interest rates and land prices. The squeeze was of course felt most acutely by those at the bottom end of the economic pecking order. But the effects of homelessness were not just felt by the "bottom tenth". The normal distribution curve 'skewed', and many who had once been cushioned by the social safety net found themselves 'skewered' when they discovered the effects of economic restraint on the "necessary" reductions to social services. "I never thought that it could happen to me" should have been the leitmotif for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless!
It has to be suggested that when people are spending, albeit unwillingly, up to 60% or 70% of their income for rent, and cannot find a suitable place, there is something out of whack. While Toronto may be an extreme case of the absurdity which unfettered "free market enterprise" can produce, the other cities across the country are by no means Shangri-la for the economically disenfranchised and socially marginalised in this society.

The latter part of the case example discussed the current problems of those who are inadequately housed, by illustrating how locally specific conditions are related to broader economic and social processes. The characteristics of local housing markets, and changes in public policies which affect the housing needs of the poor, have produced a combination of circumstances which were not evident during earlier periods of pronounced homelessness. The housing problems of low income people in Canada have shifted from one of shelter adequacy to one of affordability. In addition, the poor are paying more for their shelter as a percentage of their income than at any time since World War Two. The stock of low-cost housing is decreasing as a result of gentrification and inner city revitalisation, and there is no incentive for private developers to build low-cost rental accommodation. Government-subsidised social housing has suffered a set-back with the decision by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to let social housing provision revert to the provinces. Fewer social housing units are being built and although government-assisted projects are now geared to those in core income need, the number of available units does not meet the demand.
The traditional issue of housing need outstripping effective market demand is being exacerbated by a series of related social, economic and policy trends, including: changes in the composition of the poor (particularly among women, employable but unemployed singles, and youth); the unmet promise of deinstitutionalisation; the fulfilled objectives of inner city revitalisation and fundamental changes in the way governments are providing low-cost housing.
NOTES


2. Langley Keyes in the United States characterises these issues in a book to be published by Murray and Fallis of York University, as "business as usual" and "singular crisis". However, the York publication has not been published after eighteen months in draft form, and the individual chapters are not for citation. I acknowledge Keyes' insights into this issue, but point out that his analysis focuses on the United States' housing market which is considerably different from the situation in Canada.


4. Hulchanski "The 1935 Dominion Housing Act".


7. Ibid. Ontario Housing Committee Report, 1919. cited in this article.

8. Ibid.

9. Thomas Adams., Address to the Civic Improvement League of Canada, Western Conference at Victoria, B.C., July 9-11, 1918.

10. Ibid.

11. John C. Bacher and J. David Hulchanski, "Keeping Warm and Dry".

12. Ibid. According to the authors, acceptance of subsidised housing in principle did not come until amendments to the National Housing Act in 1949, and even then, production remained at a token level until the passage of amendments in 1964.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid. The resulting outcry from tenants in rental properties throughout the country convinced the federal government to re-consider its position.

15. Ibid.
16. Vancouver News-Herald, August 25, 1944 "Veterans' Picket Line Planned For Evictions".

17. Bacher and Hulchanski, "Keeping Warm and Dry".

18. Ibid.

19. Leonard Marsh's contribution to the Advisory Committee on Post-War Reconstruction, his Report on Social Security, concluded that both family allowances and shelter subsidies were necessary to lift low income canadians from lives of poverty. Canada, Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, Final report of the Subcommittee, March 24, 1944, Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946.

20. Ibid.

21. "Keeping Warm and Dry".

22. Ibid.


24. Ibid. The authors counteracted this argument by suggesting that housing and poverty were both contributing factors affecting low-income canadians in the late 1960's and into the 1970's. Their argument can be summarised around the following points:

i. In 1967, over 400,000 low-income households spent in excess of 40% of their incomes on shelter alone, 800,000, spent in excess of 25%, and 1.2 Million spent in excess of 20%;

ii. Close to one million buildings required rehabilitation to bring them up to the standard of safe, decent and sanitary accommodation;

iii. The million low-income renters were "plagued by high shelter-to-income ratios and poor physical conditions", and in addition, lacked any form of security of tenure; and

iv. The majority of low-income households were located in city centres or in rural areas where community services and facilities were lacking.

Housing poverty is partly a function of low incomes. It is also a result (as are the low incomes themselves) of having the status of a poor person.


26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development's national survey of emergency shelters, beds were provided to about 100,000 homeless and destitute people during 1986, and over 1 million meals were served by about 300 of Canada's shelters and soup kitchens.

30. "Hostel" - a form of accommodation established to provide shelter to those who are in transition or in crisis and have limited or no means to pay. Hostels have been established to carry out two primary functions. One is to provide emergency shelter for those who would otherwise have no option but to sleep on the streets. The other is to provide a point of transition to more stable and appropriate accommodation. Most men's hostels are established as overnight emergency shelter merely offering nightly dormitory accommodation. The women's hostels have functioned more as a place of intentional transition to a more stable living situation.


33. Ibid.


38. Maclean's, February 16, 1987; CTV-W5, January 25, 1987; Single Displaced Persons Project. "Hostels and Homelessness". It is now commonly suggested that Toronto's homeless population number between 10,000 and 25,000, depending upon the definition used.

39. City of Toronto. Living Room II: A City Housing Policy Review, Toronto:
40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. C. Doyle and J. McLain. Women and Housing: Changing Needs and the Failure of Policy, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1984. They make two additional points which are significant in this context:

i. The principal recipients of government assistance through transfer payments are women - unattached singles, widows, principal wage earners supporting families, and heads of households.

ii. Single mothers and elderly women often face extreme financial hardship. Historically, single-parent mothers have had to allocate a substantial proportion of their income (35% and more) to housing.

43. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Consultation Paper on Housing, Ottawa, Ontario: CMHC/CHIC, 1987. The reader is referred to the following bibliographic sources:
Background Document on Social Housing. 1981.
Bibliography on Non-profit Housing. 1984.
Bibliography on Homelessness. 1987

44. The housing problems of these groups 'at risk' are usually addressed using one or a combination of three indicators:

i. Affordability - the relations between house prices, rents and incomes;

ii. Adequacy - analysed from various perspectives, including the supply and availability of the stock, the physical condition of the dwelling unit, space requirements of the occupants etc.;

iii. Appropriateness - usually relating to social aspects of housing, and often measured as a reaction to certain housing forms, the process of urban development (e.g. density, segregation, speculation etc.), +/- Consumer choice (conflict +/- control).

While much has been written on the issue of housing affordability, it is only recently that researchers are addressing the complex issue of the suitability or appropriateness of various forms of shelter and housing for the homeless in Canada. Ward, for example, argues that the shortage of appropriate housing specifically for low-income singles can be traced to four socio-economic forces:

i. Labour market shifts
ii. Gentrification
iii. 'Warehousing' the skid row poor in hostels
iv. The community mental health movement (deinstitutionalisation) which has resulted in a large number of mentally ill people joining the skid row
population.


In contrasting the American and Canadian experiences, Ley argues that there has been a lack of sustained attention given to middle class settlement in the inner city in Canada. He cites four main reasons:

i. The middle class never left Canadian inner cities to the extent of their rapid withdrawal in the U.S.

ii. With rare exceptions, the disinvestment which has plagued the American inner city is scarcely known in Canada;

iii. The displacement question in Canada has not become as politicised as in the U.S.

iv. While an important policy question in Canada since the early 1970's has been the non-availability of affordable housing (especially rental units) in the major cities, there has been a failure in the public consciousness to link the crisis of affordable housing with middle class settlement in the inner city. Yet the two processes are closely linked.

He also suggests that gentrification has had other neighbourhood impacts, including: the restructuring of the local retail markets and changing demand patterns for public and private services.

46. As Ley suggests: "since the phenomenon of inner city revitalisation, and more particularly, gentrification, was first noted on a significant scale in North American cities in the mid to late 1970's, there has been no shortage of explanations attempting to account for it (Urban Affairs Quarterly, 1980; Laska and Spain, 1984; Holcomb and Beauregard, 1981; Hamnett, 1984). These include: urban sprawl, escalating energy costs, and the problems of commuting, drawing households closer to downtown work places; the spiralling costs of suburban housing, encouraging new households (in particular) to re-examine cheaper inner city locations; the demand bulge of the baby boom entering the housing market, directing demand toward underutilised inner city stock; a pro-urban ethos of changing preferences rejecting the "inauthentic" homogeneity and cultural sterility of suburban landscapes in favour of inner city "character neighbourhoods", with their social and cultural diversity and proximity to downtown amenity and leisure opportunities; changing household structures, with fewer children, and a higher proportion of two wage-earners, making undesirable large suburban lots and dwellings with their maintenance costs; associated with this an adult oriented lifestyle (in contrast to suburban familism), including the gay subculture and non-traditional living arrangements; the role of public and private institutions in promoting inner city resettlement on underutilised land (and in the U.S., sometimes abandoned sites) for both public and private objectives; and finally, the economic restructuring of North American cities, where the growth of white collar service activities downtown and the decentralisation of manufacturing has redefined the inner city housing market."

From this review, Ley suggests that middle class resettlement in the inner city and the urban crisis of affordable rental housing are, to a considerable extent, two sides of the same coin. *Gentrification In Canadian Inner Cities.*
46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.


50. Ley. Gentrification in Canadian Inner Cities.


52. Metro Toronto Community Services and Housing Committee. Working Committee on Emergency and Short Term Accommodation: Final Report, Toronto, 1983. In the same report, it is shown that single people under 60 years of age are generally excluded from assisted housing programs. The situation for these individuals is critical: not only can the single hostel resident not afford most private market accommodation, but there is a shortage of housing stock available for single person households. In 1985, CMHC calculated the need for affordable housing for singles in Metro Toronto to be as great as that for families and considerably larger than the need for seniors housing, estimating that 42,180 single person households were in need of affordable housing.


54. Ibid. In their 1987 paper "From Homelessness to Home", the SDP group states: The homeless population in Toronto has grown over the last few years for complex socio-economic reasons. People who are on social assistance, who are unemployed, or underemployed, have increased in number, and have lost their purchasing power relative to even the lowest rates of rent. Housing stock that was traditionally available to low-income single people has disappeared due to the gentrification of the downtown core - the renovation and de-conversion of rooming houses. Furthermore, the policy of deinstitutionalisation resulted in large numbers of people being released from psychiatric and other hospitals into the community at a time when affordable housing was disappearing.

It appears that the forces which have increased the number of people on the streets will continue for the foreseeable future. The Toronto economy has revived, but that is contributing to dramatic increases in the price of land and housing. Even before this last cycle of increase in land and housing prices, it was not sufficiently profitable for the private sector to build affordable housing for low-income people without massive subsidies. It is increasingly likely that rooming house operators will sell their property for a profit; social assistance rates are unlikely to rise to the point that low-income single people can compete in the market for adequate housing.

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In order for residents of affordable housing projects to be part of a "supportive community", the housing has to be close to services (which are clustered in the downtown core), on a scale small enough, and built with additional design features, to encourage mutual support among the residents. These constraints make it unlikely that costs can be significantly reduced through economy of scale, or by seeking less expensive suburban locations.

55. Evaluation of 90 Shuter Street, Toronto. 1987. The report also suggested "As a result of having and losing housing over a period of months or years, the homeless become "transient". They lose personal property that is hard to move with them and begin to limit their belongings to those that they can carry. Their social and familial relationships become strained or broken. They have no effective legal protection of tenure. They are more vulnerable to rape and other forms of violence, to harassment by police, shopkeepers, and the general public. They become prone to the abrogation of due legal process. They experience blockages when they attempt to vote, set up a bank account, get credit, get a job, get general welfare assistance, get health insurance coverage, take care of health problems, keep clean, mate, and build friendships."

56. Toronto Star, INSIGHT, November 29, 1987. Ironically, it is Metro's booming economy that is making it impossible to build low-cost housing. In the city of Toronto for example, land costs are anywhere between $35,000 and $60,000 for each apartment or housing unit, according to the city's housing director. As a result of the gap between what the government is willing to subsidise and the actual cost of low-income housing, the two largest non-profit housing developers have had to slash the number of units they had hoped to build. Cityhome and Metro's Municipal Housing Company were offered enough government money to build 963 apartments and townhouses in 1987. They were only able to build 445. In fiscal '86/'87, the situation was so tight that the provincial housing ministry was left with $5.8 million that non-profit groups could not use because of bureaucratic restrictions. Land costs are so high that the cheapest one-bedroom apartment that private developers could build in 1987 would cost more than $900 per month to rent. A family or individual paying 25% of their income to housing would have to be earning more than $43,000 a year to afford this unit!

57. Single-person households make up 29% of all households in the city of Ottawa. They constitute the largest of the renting sub-groups in the city-28,000 households. Low income singles are overwhelmingly concentrated in the inner core of the city. Centretown, Dalhousie, Lowertown, Sandy Hill and Ottawa West have the greatest actual number of low income households. Almost one in three single households are of low-income. City of Ottawa, Department of Housing. Housing for Low-income Singles: an Overview of the Existing Situation. April 1987.


59. The report cites the following study: Instability and Tenant Displacement within the Inner City Rental Market, City of Ottawa: Community Development

60. A particular instance of displacement occurred in Vancouver as a result of Expo 86. The following profiles appeared in the local press:

They are poor now but before their bodies grew old and began to break, they were working to help build this country.

They are blasters, loggers, union workers, old soldiers, fathers, mothers and grandparents. They have come from widely different backgrounds, but over the years became neighbours in small, cheap hotel rooms. The rooms they rented, with their welfare or old age pension cheques, had the security of home until last week when they were evicted to make room for Expo tourists.

John S., carpenter, has left his mark on buildings across western Canada and the high Arctic.

Luetta H., worked as a store clerk until she was 65 and talks with pride of how her mother came to Vancouver in a covered wagon.

Barry T., came to Canada as an Australian trooper on manoeuvres, fought in Vietnam, and ran an Abbotsford restaurant before his life fell apart and he woke up under the Georgia Street viaduct.

John M., had been a bricklayer for 40 years when he got laid off. Now, at 59, he's too old for work, too young for pension.

David W., was one of the "original residents of Gastown" - a group of men who fought to save affordable housing in the area when it was upgraded into a tourist attraction. "We even got a proclamation from city hall" he says, angry that his fight of 13 years does nothing to help those evicted for Expo. The Vancouver Sun. Sat. March 8, 1986.


There is evidence from Toronto that the number of hostel users has increased since 1980. Most current estimates range from 3,440 (Metro Toronto Assisted Housing Study, 1983) to 10,000 (Toronto Star, April, 1986). Reflecting the increase in the number of homeless people is the increase in hostel use over the past few years. This has been well documented in the media (The Globe and Mail, Dec 22, '83. "Homeless in Record Numbers Seeking Shelter"; The Globe and Mail, Jan. 5, 1985. "Toronto's Hidden Poor"; Toronto Star, Feb 4, '86. "People Need Homes Not More Hostels"; Toronto Star, April 21, '86. "For Many Hostels Are Their Home"; Toronto Sun, April 29, '85 "Skid Row: The Problem Grows Worse"; Toronto Sun, Nov 24, '85 "Our Downtown Hostels are Overflowing"; Now, Jan 30 - Feb 5, '86 "Home on the Street".

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Regional booms and busts have greatly affected hostel use. The large warehouses for people in the 1930's were closed down during WWII as their residents went off to fight. There was substantial migration to Toronto in the 1960's, to Calgary and Edmonton in the late 1970's, to Halifax for the anticipated "oil boom", and most recently again to Toronto as the economic boom has attracted unemployed workers from both the Western and Atlantic provinces. When changing labour market conditions have resulted in increased unemployment or migration of workers, there has been increased hostel use. However, recent evidence suggests that those migrating to find unskilled work now represent only a small portion of hostel users in Toronto. The majority of present users have been residents of Ontario or Toronto for the past 20 years. A similar pattern exists in Vancouver. Their migration has been primarily between hostels, rooming houses, and various "treatment programmes".

As well as an increase in hostel use, there is evidence to suggest that those on skid row are utilising hostel services for increased lengths of time. At Fred Victor Mission, the number of men served annually is decreasing: 1800 men in 1978; 843 in 1981; 764 in 1984. Vacancy rates are decreasing, reflecting less of a turnover because residents are staying longer - the emergency shelters are circumventing the traditional revolving door sequence whereby residents are permitted to stay for limited (often two week) periods, and move from hostel to hostel in the same neighbourhood to conform to residency rules. The average length of stay was 11.7 Nights per month in 1978, 16.5 in 1981, and 17.2 in 1984.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS
A number of conclusions have emerged which contribute to an understanding of the homeless in Canada and the problems which they face. They are presented below under three headings:

* Homelessness and the Homeless
* Homelessness in Canada
* Geographic Considerations

HOMELESSNESS AND THE HOMELESS

Definitions of homelessness and homeless people have been presented which bring clarity to the lack of consensus over the causes and effects of homelessness (on people, as well as their shelter, housing and living conditions). This clarity has critical implications to the central thrust of this dissertation. One of the most significant, and hopefully enduring contributions of this study is the conceptual differentiation between sources of homelessness from their ultimate manifestation, homeless people. While these are obviously inter-related, there are important differences in the concepts, and consequently in the types of intervention strategies which are required to resolve the problems associated with them.

* The spatial distribution and diversity of the homeless in Canada are the result of physical shelter problems and a combination of individual, social and economic precipitants which synergistically produce homelessness at a variety of regional, community and household scales.

* The composition of the homeless in the 1980's has changed from earlier periods. The transients and drifters who traditionally occupied the skid row areas have now been joined by women, children, and entire families, predominantly concentrated in the major urban centres across Canada.
This puts considerable strain on the social welfare 'safety net', and severely constrains local efforts to ameliorate what is not exclusively a local problem.

* Three related categories of the homeless have been discerned: those inadequately housed; the economically disenfranchised, and the socially marginalised and service-dependent. The diversity among the homeless and the range of problems which they face are not being considered comprehensively by analysts, suggesting that homelessness is not going to diminish by itself in the foreseeable future, and that the problem in Canada cannot and will not be solved by governments alone.

HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

Homelessness refers to the absence of a continuing and permanent home over which people have personal control, and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic, health and cultural public services. It is ultimately a life in disarray which can become manifest in a wide range of personal, social, housing and economic problems, for individuals and families, for communities and for society in general. It is both a condition and in some cases a response to a variety of inter-related conditions and events.

* The major sources of homelessness include: housing affordability, displacement, deinstitutionalisation, the lack of adequate community support services, poverty, unemployment, insufficient social assistance benefits, family breakdown, individual responsibility and social attitudes. These sources usually occur in combination and their effects vary regionally.
Canada has historically experienced homelessness in a variety of forms. At times the problems have been pervasive, and despite concerted efforts by governments and various non-governmental sectors, the plight of homeless Canadians persists. Variations in the incidence and persistence of homelessness can be temporary, episodic or chronic in duration.

Given the definition, classification, and the recognition that homelessness is manifest at varying geographic scales, differential policies, programmes and housing alternatives are required to assist the homeless and reduce homelessness.

Single-factor explanations of homelessness are simplistic and cannot be translated into long term solutions. While the present study highlights the complex inter-relationships among the factors which contribute to homelessness, the emphasis in much of the available research remains on housing problems (affordability, adequacy, availability, and appropriateness), and proposed solutions tend to emphasize a continuum of shelter and housing responses. While these initiatives are undeniably important, they cannot solve homelessness by themselves. Shelter issues cannot be separated from the broader issues of poverty and economic progress. Consequently, any comprehensive shelter strategy must encompass related economic, political, socio-cultural and design goals. To date this conclusion has not been integrated with strategies to resolve homelessness in most industrialized countries.

Innovative approaches to assisting the homeless indicate that systematic and comprehensive approaches to reducing homelessness, based on public policy are both feasible and practical.
GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

There is an inherent spatial dimension to the problem of homelessness which is related to variations in the composition and concentration of the homeless. A major conclusion from this research is that scale considerations and particular geographic locations have an important bearing on how and where homelessness becomes manifest. Regional variations in the sources of homelessness and varying spatial concentrations of sub-groups of the homeless have been documented and discussed. It has been demonstrated in the case examples that:

* Place significantly influences the particular forms which homelessness takes in Canada. In various regions and communities across the country the problems historically have been chronic, whereas in others they are spatially and temporally episodic.

* The regional, community and household factors which contribute to the genesis and persistence of homelessness provide a specific example of how the dialectic relations between individual action, social processes and spatial forms are reproduced in practice.

* They also underscore the fact that homelessness is not fundamentally a problem OF cities, but rather a problem IN cities.

The present study broadens the research by geographers which has tended to focus on specific sub-populations among the homeless (e.g. the mentally ill or the homeless transients who occupy skid row neighbourhoods), or on a particular source of homelessness (e.g. the lack of affordable housing, displacement or gentrification). While research of this nature provides valuable insights into particular aspects of the homeless and some of the problems they face, it is often limited by a narrow focus of inquiry. The
analysis of deinstitutionalisation by Dear and Wolch provides a good illustration of this point. The authors clearly identify the operation of the space-society dialectic in the genesis of what they call the 'service dependent ghetto', but limit their focus to that specific dimension of homelessness.

The geographic perspective has important implications for public policy intervention, and emphasises the contributing role of academic analysis in effecting social change. This is illustrated below through a discussion of public policy considerations.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Homelessness in Canada is subject to public policy intervention, of which housing is a vital, but not exclusive part. Policy response by all three levels of government, and based on current successful cases, would effectively and efficiently meet the needs of the homeless while also addressing the causes of homelessness. It would also serve to strengthen community based initiatives.

Assisting the Homeless and Resolving Homelessness in Canada

Successful locally-produced innovative housing projects and community-based support programmes demonstrate that the viability of systematic, sustained and cost-effective strategies to assist the homeless and reduce homelessness in Canada rests with the willingness and commitment of the public and non-governmental sectors to co-ordinate their efforts and work in concert with the poor and disadvantaged. Any comprehensive strategy to reduce homelessness must recognise that shelter issues cannot be separated from the
related individual, social, economic, political, and spatial and design considerations. To date this conclusion has not been translated into the objectives of public policies at the federal or provincial levels in Canada.

A Basis for Public Policy Initiatives

Efforts to assist the homeless are currently initiated by local organizations, especially volunteer and non-governmental agencies. Since homelessness is manifest principally at the community level, these initiatives try to compensate for inadequate income, support services or housing. They are predominantly project and programme responses to immediate problems, and represent the first step toward providing long term solutions to chronic individual and structural problems. To be truly effective, these local initiatives need to be strengthened by enabling government policy, and programmes based on explicit regional and national support. This will ensure the effective mobilisation of resources to enable the homeless to help themselves, and will ensure that solutions appropriately reflect local, community and regional differences in homelessness. The result would produce an effective partnership which combines political will and public commitment to reduce the incidence and persistence of homelessness.

The basis for a public policy framework is outlined in three stages below, under the headings of: strategies, principles and organisational structure. The framework assumes that the goals of public policy in this area include developing initiatives to assist the homeless create a home, and ultimately identifying generic criteria which would allow for the replication of locally derived solutions on a regional basis.
Policies, Programmes and Projects

Housing projects and community-based support programmes come within provincial responsibility and jurisdiction in Canada. However, there are few long-term strategic policies, continuing programmes or even administrative structures in place which focus on alleviating the circumstances that create homelessness. If this situation is to be remedied, provincial governments across the country will require systematic strategies to address shelter deficiencies, together with integrated social and economic programmes. To be effective, these initiatives must entail a commitment from the private sector, the voluntary agencies, and the homeless.

A continuum of housing strategies, linked but not dependent upon broad support programmes, must be based on public policies, integrated at appropriate scales and involving the collective input of appropriate levels of government. Emergency shelters, while necessary, are not enough. The homeless require long-term options and a range of alternatives if they are to achieve choice and control over their housing and living arrangements.

Emergency shelter will be most effective if it is linked to the availability of transitional (medium-term) housing, to appropriate employment and to accessible community-based support systems. While temporary shelters continue to fulfill crisis needs, the policy objective cannot be warehousing the poor, or removing homeless people from the streets, or propping up the system whereby the homeless are trapped in a perpetual cycle of having and losing shelter, transience and poverty. Lasting solutions demand policies and programmes as well as housing projects to enable people and communities to develop the social, economic and physical basis necessary to alleviate the conditions which produce homelessness.
Principles: Progressive Adaptation, Facilitative Management and Community Supportive Living

The projects described in Appendix B provide concrete examples of many of the issues faced in programs of shelter for the poor and disadvantaged. Some of these issues include the provision of affordable housing, security of tenure, support services, the role of public agencies, the potential of the private sector, the importance of community participation, the role of self-help, innovative ways of reducing housing costs and the integration of the poor into the economic mainstream. While the regional contexts differ widely, there are some common lessons to be learned. Three concepts are advanced which together could form an integral part of effective policies to solve homelessness in Canada. The three concepts are:

1. Progressive Adaptation
2. Facilitative Management
3. Community Supportive Living

Progressive Adaptation

Progressive Adaptation implies a staged or incremental process of providing support and resources which is sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to the changing and variable needs of the individual as (s)he progresses or regresses. The process is based on the concept of aided self-help and can apply to either a residential setting (as in the case of the Veterans Memorial Manor in Vancouver where different parts of the building are more or less self-contained depending on the individual's capability), a particular type of housing arrangement (as in the case of Women In Second Stage Housing in Winnipeg, where transitional housing enables victims of domestic disputes to regain their self-sufficiency incrementally), or to
community-based services/opportunities to regain self-sufficiency (as in the case of the Association for Street Kids in Victoria).

There is a related dimension to Progressive Adaptation which is most applicable to situations in which housing projects are proposed. The concept of Stewardship assumes that there are those among the homeless who require assistance to enable them to regain choice and control over their living conditions. For some (e.g. youth), this entails relatively temporary forms of assistance such as shelter, training and/or counselling as a source of security and support during a period of personal transition. For others, the assistance may be of longer duration and involve more intensive services and support. The concept of stewardship involves developing supportive and enabling milieux (residential or community) without institutionalizing (in the pejorative sense). The aim is to promote dignity and self-confidence by creating the necessary stages and resources for rehabilitation without making this a prerequisite for participation.

Facilitative Management

Facilitative Management is a process which fosters the development of communities of people who choose to act together to improve their well-being. The primary goal is to create a residential or community environment which empowers people to make choices and decisions to improve their living conditions and personal relationships, but also includes an approach to housing management.

In the context of Shuter Street in Toronto, and Cumberland Street in Ottawa, Facilitative Management refers to a type of housing management that enables residents to participate as they choose in decisions that affect their living situation. It is based on a concept/philosophy developed by
participants in the Single Displaced Persons Project who have been developing and managing innovative housing options for low-income single people in Ontario for the past 15 years. It is also concerned with all aspects of the residential community which influence people's ability to manage their living space and personal relationships, including property management, and as such is complementary to the objectives of Progressive Adaptation.

The essential goals for the facilitative management process are:

** to foster a social and physical housing (home) environment in which people are ensured a power base from which they can make choices and decisions to improve the quality of their lives;

** to foster the development of communities of people with limited income who choose to act together to improve their well-being.

**Community Supportive Living**

The success of the previous two concepts depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of Community Supportive Living - which recognises that people require a supportive environment within which to regain their self-sufficiency and stability, and become re-integrated within the community of their choice. By designing community-based programmes productively with the consumer, and by ensuring that support services are flexible, portable and "de-linked" from housing requirements, a spectrum of comprehensive and co-ordinated options can be provided which tailor programmes to the individual, and strengthen their ties to the community.

The uniqueness of Community Supportive Living is that it seeks to formalize, through public policy, a commitment to the development of a comprehensive and co-ordinated housing and support service system, which of
necessity entails a high level of inter-agency co-operation.

**Organisational Structure: Six Partners**

Housing people adequately is best accomplished by enlisting the consumer in the planning, production and administration of these facilities. There is considerable experience in involving the people who need housing in the planning process. This research suggests a more integrative approach which includes self-help production, and incorporates the experience, skills and special concerns of the poor and disadvantaged in planning for the needs of the entire community. Field experience suggests that once the consumer is part of the production process, such facilities are better designed, better used, and better maintained. The principles of consumer involvement and mutual self-help imply a community effort in which people pool their resources and talents to build together better than they can build alone.

Local solutions have proven most effective, particularly when they are based on explicit regional and national support. When local initiatives are complemented by enabling government policy and programs, they ensure effective mobilization of resources, and the homeless are able to help themselves. The result is effective partnerships which combine political will and public commitment to reduce the incidence and persistence of homelessness. The role of government is to encourage this shift of responsibility, support it financially, provide training and skill transfers, and frame legislation and building codes commensurate with this community based development process.

Any lasting solution to homelessness will require an approach which combines the resources of all three levels of government with the ability of
private market investment and the continued enthusiasm of volunteer and charitable institutions, committed to improving local and regional living and housing conditions.

Specifically, resolving homelessness in Canada requires the commitment of six partners:

(a) The homeless themselves, to identify needs, expectations and aspirations;
(b) the volunteer and local charitable organizations with extensive pioneer experience in providing shelter and temporary health and food services for the poor;
(c) private industry providing investment, contracting and building services;
(d) the municipalities and local governments who influence location and availability of land and buildings for housing projects, while being responsible for establishing norms and regulations through local by-laws and ordinances;
(e) the provinces and their agencies who have the Canadian constitutional jurisdiction for housing and social services. The provinces represent a major source of policy initiatives and the critical opportunity for co-ordinating the delivery of health and social services to the homeless in relation to shelter provisions and appropriate accommodation;
(f) the federal government through its taxation power is able to raise and allocate appropriate resources to housing and social service programmes including social housing on a national basis.

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The homeless require long term programmes and a range of alternatives if they are to achieve choice and control over their housing and living arrangements. Consequently, emergency shelter must be linked to the availability of transitional (medium-term) and long-term housing, to appropriate employment and to accessible community-based support systems.

A continuum of housing strategies linked to broad support programs, must be based on public policies, integrated at appropriate scales and at appropriate levels of government; such a commitment will assist the homeless and at the same time address the causes of homelessness. Immediate and continuing assistance to the homeless ought to include counselling, guidance and advice, to achieve access to a broad range of services currently available within a provincial or municipal jurisdiction. This assistance can be helped substantively through the creation of a single inventory of services that are appropriate and available to the homeless, locally and regionally.

Under Canada's federal government system and constitutional structure, matters of shelter, housing and related personal services come within provincial jurisdiction and responsibility. The provinces not only have the constitutional responsibility, but they are and continue to be in the most strategic position to assist the homeless and remove homelessness. Most provinces during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless initiated and participated in a variety of local and regional schemes. However, few of them have long-term policies or even continuing programs or administrative structures that focus on alleviating homelessness or the circumstances that create the homeless. Each province within the context of its own urban settlement needs and system and ought to develop province-wide strategies to
address shelter deficiencies, together with relevant social and economic programs to reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness. These initiatives must engage or be responsive to initiatives from the private sector, the voluntary agencies, and above all the homeless themselves acting through community-based organizations. The goal must be restoring a sense of dignity and purpose to the lives of individuals and families and to encourage them to return to the mainstream of society. While temporary shelters in most major cities will continue to fulfil crisis needs, the policy objective cannot be warehousing the poor or removing the indigents from the pavement or even maintaining the homeless as transients. Homelessness is life in disarray, therefore lasting solutions demand policies, programs and projects which allow individuals and families to develop the social, economic and physical basis from which to manage their lives, exercise some control over their future, and thereby regain the ability to contribute constructively to their own life and the life of the community. The provinces must exercise their jurisdiction and link it to the availability of a broad range of existing services and programs. They must exercise leadership to reduce homelessness in a society of growing affluence and uphold a commitment to broader social and economic equity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER ACADEMIC INQUIRY

Many Canadians have become much more aware of the complex nature and causes of homelessness as a result of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). The high cost and diminishing availability of affordable housing in many parts of the country are once again on the public and political agenda.
Further investigation of the response to homelessness in Canada is required. Effective public policy intervention must be informed by more lessons learned from the successful efforts which are now being implemented to assist the homeless. Specifically:

* what works?
* why does it work? and
* what is required to replicate successful approaches beyond their localised contexts.

The research in this study is indicative, but not exhaustive of the obstacles which had to be overcome to successfully operationalise these initiatives, or the obstacles which would constrain their replicability in other regions or for different sub-populations of the homeless.

Reliable estimates of the number of homeless people and the extent of homelessness are currently lacking, but continuing governmental commitment to policies and programs in support of the homeless and the removal of homelessness demands a clearly articulated factual base. This requirement involves a process of reliable enumeration of the homeless, province by province, and across Canada. Such enumeration poses complex problems of conceptualization, structure and measurement.

* The classification developed here provides a coherent framework which could form the basis for further inquiry. The creation of a methodology of enumeration leading to practical methods of quantifying the homeless, the incidence of homelessness by various categories, and their relationship to precipitating causes would greatly expand the current state of knowledge.
In many cities throughout the country a range of local initiatives, most with the support of government, have successfully contributed to improvements in the shelter and living conditions of various categories of homeless people. Since geographic analysis of many of the sources of homelessness has been within specialised sub-fields, they illuminate specific but limited aspects of the problem. Therefore:

* Further case studies are required to illuminate specific dimensions of the problem which cannot be identified merely from aggregate data, and to establish a broader empirical data base for comparative analysis. In-depth investigations of successful case studies across Canada would further document:

i. the contexts within which solutions were generated;

ii. the successful aspects of housing projects and community support programs;

iii. the operational constraints encountered in the planning and implementation of the selected projects and programs, particularly the unanticipated and undesirable outcomes;

iv. the conditions required for the appropriate replication of these solutions beyond their local contexts.

A research institution would be an appropriate forum within which to identify, document, analyse and disseminate information about the successful efforts at assisting the homeless in Canada. An interdisciplinary research team would have the resources to systematically collect and disseminate this information. The lessons learned from these case examples could be organised into a format which would:
* facilitate comparable and comparative evaluations in different regions and among varying homeless groups;
* establish a comprehensive, standardised and easily updated resource manual for individuals and organizations working with the homeless, identifying solutions and constraints across a range of conditions and jurisdictions;
* provide a framework through which project and program solutions can inform public policy intervention to reduce the incidence of homelessness in Canada;
* produce reports and documentation which are of interest and practical value to a wide range of potential users; and
* contribute toward development of a general model for community-based approaches to solving homelessness in Canada.

Inaugurating the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the Secretary General of the United Nations stated:

Let us bear in mind that a society is judged not so much by the standards attained by its most affluent and privileged members as by the quality of life which it is able to assure for its weakest citizens.
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ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS IN CANADA.

In Canada, as in other countries, accurate statistics on homelessness are difficult to obtain. The absolute homeless have no permanent address and are therefore very difficult to count, unless they access specific social agencies. In addition, little work has been done in this country to quantify the incidence of relative homelessness. Although specific agencies and organizations have encountered households whose homes do not meet the basic U.N. standards, and data are gathered on a macro basis by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to determine the number of households experiencing affordability or housing quality problems, little comprehensive information is available at the local community level about the households who are experiencing homelessness.(1)

Establishing reliable estimates of the homeless is complex, difficult and the results are often confusing. Although much of the public discussion of homelessness is preoccupied with making numerical and normative claims, the precise number of homeless nationally or in any one of the major cities at any given time depends upon the definition chosen, and on the descriptive boundaries of selected social, economic and geographic factors. For instance, if only those who have no shelter are counted, a relatively low estimate results; if those who rely on emergency shelters are included in a definition, one gets a larger estimate. If on the other hand the definition is correlated with identifiable sources of homelessness (e.g. poverty or unemployment), far greater numbers are involved. However, since these criteria have not been applied consistently in local studies, and since there are no reliable national estimates, one is forced to conclude that:

There is currently no accurate estimate of the number of homeless people in Canada.

Until the Canadian Council on Social Development undertook a "snapshot" survey of homelessness on January 22, 1987, the only estimates which existed
were derived from one-time surveys of hostel use (or more often bed capacity), from indicators of the numbers of households experiencing severe affordability problems, and from guesses made by community-based agencies dealing on a daily basis with specific populations, such as discharged psychiatric patients.\(^{(2)}\)

In preparation for the 1987 survey, the project co-ordinator of the Canadian Council on Social Development (hereafter CCSD) authored a report in September, 1986, which stated that in Canada:

One estimate of the number of "street people" commonly used is 20,000 to 40,000 people. Another is between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent of the population.\(^{(3)}\) (Emphasis added)

It is important to note that conceptually the CCSD report equated homelessness with poverty, and restricted the definition of the homeless to those individuals who rely upon emergency shelters and soup kitchens.\(^{(4)}\)

It is my contention that the 20,000 to 40,000 figure first gained prominence through coverage in the popular press, and coincided with the highly publicised recommendations from an inquest into the death of a Toronto woman who was found frozen to death in an abandoned truck in December 1985. The fact that someone had died during the winter while sleeping outside in Toronto was not new, nor would it normally have received the kind of media attention that this case was to receive in the ensuing weeks and months. Rather, what was newsworthy were the opening remarks of the verdict submitted by the inquest jury:

Drina Joubert was an alcoholic and mentally ill person with chronic physical illnesses. She sought help from practically every available social agency and hospital service in the city of Toronto. She got worse. On Dec. 17, 1985, Drina froze to death in an abandoned truck. Clearly, the bureaucracy designed to help the most disadvantaged among us has become unresponsive to the need of the people it was created to serve. It is fragmented and inefficient. We, the taxpayers of Toronto, who pay a good deal for this system, deserve a healthy system that will be more
successful in achieving its objectives.(5)

Two issues made this inquest exceptional. Firstly, the jury determined that the cause of death, which was listed as exposure, occurred as a result of an accident caused by alcoholism, mental illness and homelessness and the failure of our support system to deal with these problems.(Emphasis added). Although it is generally conceded that a certain number of 'street people' die each year in Canada, it is extremely uncommon for homelessness to be cited as a contributing factor.(6)

The second issue of note was that the five member jury, made up of ordinary citizens with no expertise in this area, produced no fewer than twenty three recommendations which called the system into serious question and acted as a catalyst for local activists to publicise the plight of Toronto's homeless. The jury called for a thorough review of the emergency shelter system in Toronto and made very specific suggestions as to how the 'social safety net' could be improved. They directed the chief coroner to forward copies of the verdict to appropriate people within the hospitals, as well as the ministries of Health, and Community and Social Services, and that:

A response outlining what action has been taken on them be received by the chief coroner within one (1) year, and further that a copy of that response be forwarded to the foreman of this jury.(7)

This unprecedented response served to crystallise media and other attention toward this issue. In particular, in March 1986, Southam News ran a series of articles in which, for the first time, the scope and scale of the problems facing the homeless across Canada were linked to estimates of numbers. However, as can be seen from the following excerpt, the numbers were derived in a less than rigorous manner:

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There are somewhere between 20,000 and 40,000 homeless people living on the Mean Streets of Canadian cities. An estimated 5,000 to 10,000 of the homeless live in Toronto, where there are only 2,200 hostel beds. About the same number wander between soup kitchens and emergency shelters in Montreal. More than 3,000 are women - and there are only 77 hostel beds set aside for them. Vancouver's not far behind. There are 2,000 "regulars" on Winnipeg's main street, three quarters of them native people. In "recession proof" Ottawa, destitute men and women doze fitfully on plastic chairs in downtown shopping malls, within sight of Parliament Hill.(8)

The original CCSD estimate may or may not be traceable to the media, but as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless was approaching and attempts were made to raise peoples' consciousness to the plight of the homeless in Canada, the 20,000 - 40,000 figure was embraced by advocates and skeptics alike to argue either that Canada had a serious problem, or alternatively, that the percentages (0.1 - 0.2%) were small enough to indicate that this was a storm in a teacup. There was however one consistent theme in the reports which began to appear in rapid succession after the Joubert inquest. It was stated repeatedly that the homeless were not restricted to the stereotypical skid row transient; that Canada's homeless included children, families and individuals of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds -- a central tenet of the thesis of this dissertation.

While there are significant problems associated with the CCSD inquiry, it can serve as a focus for examining the complex task of classifying the homeless and identifying their spatial concentrations.

The CCSD National Inquiry on Homelessness

In an attempt to estimate the extent of Canada's homeless population, the CCSD surveyed support agencies who served the homeless, and followed this up with a series of conferences in each of the provinces and territories.

The Snapshot Survey

Approximately 1,000 agencies, including hostels, transition facilities,
and related services for the homeless and destitute were asked to complete a questionnaire on January 22, 1987. Provincial and municipal social service departments and police departments were also invited to comment on the situation from their perspective "since they are frequently called upon to deal with the most difficult cases of homelessness". It is important to keep in mind that for the purposes of the survey the homeless were defined as: "people who need temporary or emergency shelter on January 22, 1987".

Five hundred and fifty-eight agencies returned completed questionnaires, of which, 305 came from emergency shelters, and the rest from agencies which provide services such as food, clothing or referral. The survey sought information in three principal areas:

* the services provided by the agency or organization
* the people served
* the structure of the organization.

While the objectives and goals of the survey were relatively straightforward, as the following excerpts reveal, the results and interpretation were more confusing:

472 shelters were identified across Canada, and from information supplied to the CCSD, it was estimated that the total capacity of the emergency and temporary tier of Canada's shelter system comprised 13,797 spaces.

7,751 People stayed in 283 shelters that provided data to the CCSD. The combined nightly capacity of those shelters was 10,021 spaces, giving an overall occupancy rate of 77%.

One hundred and fifty-three of the 283 shelters provided statistics on the number of people to whom they had provided a place to sleep for one or more nights in 1986. Of these, 124 had sheltered a combined total of 102,819 different people. Twenty-nine others had provided 548,567 bed days.

From available records, it was calculated that on average, the number of people sheltered over the course of 1986 was equal to 18.8 times the nightly capacity of the shelters. By inference, 259,384 different individuals spent at least one night in a shelter in 1986 (13,797 spaces x 18.8). However, this estimate is confounded by the fact that an individual could have used more than one shelter over the course of the year. If we assume that every person
used two shelters, for example, then the number of people drops to 129,692 (still about 0.5% of the population of Canada). Since the options available to the homeless are few, and since many homeless people do not use shelters, an estimated range of 130,000 to 250,000 homeless people during the year remains conservative. (Emphases added)

The survey was heavily biased toward eliciting information about the capacity of an agency to provide for the homeless. The CCSD used a 1985 study of hostel users by the Ottawa-Carleton Social Planning Council as a model for their own study. The Ottawa-Carleton study contained the following conclusion:

The minimum number of "homeless" people in the region on a given day is approximately equal to the sum of the number who could be served by these facilities. (10)

This same rationale was uncritically applied to the CCSD snapshot survey, and as a result, the figures produced from the analysis of the 283 shelters which responded are more indicative of the capacity to provide emergency services in some areas of the country than they are of the actual number of homeless (even accepting the restricted definition used by the CCSD).

The reports produced by the CCSD prior to and during the IYSH contain important conceptual and methodological inconsistencies which seriously flaw their attempt to document the extent of homelessness in Canada. They fail to provide a consistent and accurate definition of the homeless in Canada. The analysis of the sources or causes of homelessness does not correspond to the estimates of the numbers of homeless reported, and no explanation is provided for the significant changes in the estimated numbers between 1986 (20,000-40,000), and the national inquiry results (130,000 - 250,000). Nevertheless, the national inquiry on homelessness continues to have considerable impact on perceptions of the scope and scale of homelessness in Canada, although to date, homelessness does not have a high priority on the political agenda.
federally or provincially.

Empirical social science has so far not been used to determine the extent of homelessness, and although one is inclined to take the position that whether the actual number is in the hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands, the real issue is that in a society as resource rich as Canada (natural and human), there need not be a single involuntary homeless person in the country; the whole question of establishing accurate quantitative measures raises important issues. Without reliable estimates of the scope and scale of the problem, there is little likelihood that governments will commit scarce resources (particularly financial) to these issues, and consequently, the chances of implementing systematic and effective strategies to reduce the problems of the homeless are lessened. In saying this however, it is recognised that several related definitional and methodological problems must be resolved before reliable estimates are possible. There is a definite need for the development and implementation of appropriate, sensitive and reliable measurement techniques which will lead to policy and program development and which will reflect the widely varying economic, social and geographic circumstances which prevail in Canada.

Secondly, there is at least some consensus that the homeless have become more visible in Canada in recent years. But is this attributable to a change in peoples' awareness of the homeless? Is it due to the fact that we now include many more groups in a definition than we did before? Has there been an increase in the relative proportion of the homeless (that is, have they increased as a percentage of the total population)? Or can the increased visibility be explained demographically by reference to the baby-boom 'bulge' (that is, a cohort effect - the homeless numerically have reached a 'critical
mass' because of the demographic bulge, but their numbers have not changed proportionately)? While these questions are significant to public policy considerations, answers to them are not readily available from the current quantitative data.

Finally, reliable numbers, accurate measurement and valid statistical analyses are important to developing a more objective assessment of homelessness in Canada, but their absence should not become an excuse for inaction, as currently seems to be the case at the provincial government level. The issue involves more than establishing some grand numerical total, a highly suspect enterprise given the synergistic nature of the issues involved. Rather, what is required is a more reliable measure of the extent and causes of homelessness which can be used to convince governments, at all levels, of the efficacy of harnessing political will to public commitment in a concerted attack on a problem which could be eliminated in this country.

Recent attempts to quantify the homeless in Canada are inconclusive for a number of methodological and pragmatic reasons:

1. The precise number of homeless people in Canada or in any one of the major cities at any given time depends upon the definition chosen, and on the descriptive boundaries of selected social, economic and environmental factors. Since these criteria have not been applied consistently in local or national surveys of the homeless in Canada, it is argued that the estimates which have been produced to date should be interpreted with caution.

2. Accurate measurement is difficult because the number of homeless changes rapidly in response to such factors as national and regional economic policies, unemployment (particularly temporary, seasonal and regional variations), the availability and use of community-based support services, availability of low-rent housing, incidence and persistence of poverty and hunger, season of the year, climate, day of the month and so on.

3. It is suggested from the review that the methods employed to enumerate the homeless have an important bearing on the results obtained, and perhaps more importantly, on the interpretation of these results.

4. Although there is evidence to support the claim that the homeless are becoming increasingly diverse socially and economically, there is as yet no
reliable estimate of their number, and no reliable methodology has been
developed to provide such figures. An important conclusion emerging from the
review of attempts to enumerate the homeless is that more stringent efforts
are required to provide reliable quantitative estimates, to develop more
sensitive measurement techniques which can be applied to policy and programme
development, and which reflect the widely varying economic, social and
geographic circumstances within the provincial jurisdictions.
NOTES

1. City of Edmonton, Non-profit Housing Corporation. No Place Like Home.


4. It is also important to note that in defining homelessness as being synonymous with poverty, the report reproduced figures from Statistics Canada which showed that over 4.5 million Canadians were living in poverty in 1984. However, the CCSD did not go so far as to state explicitly that there were consequently 4.5 million homeless people in the country. This inconsistency between the conceptual definition and the operationalising of a more restricted version are symptomatic of the problems which beset the CCSD National Inquiry on Homelessness conducted during 1987.

   One critical weakness of the study involves the assertion that there are "four major direct causes" of homelessness: unemployment, inadequate social benefits, displacement and deinstitutionalization.

   It is significant that housing is not among these "major causes". The justification for this was that the focus was on street people, not with housing issues. There is an obvious incongruity in a definition which states that if a person is living on the streets they are de facto homeless, but does not consider housing as a necessary criterion for defining someone as being homeless.


6. Verdict of Coroner's Jury. Having interviewed an official in the coroner's office in Toronto who dealt with the Joubert case and many similar inquests, I was informed that the more common verdict is that of death by natural causes.


8. The Vancouver Sun, Saturday, March 29, 1986.


Illustrating Successful Innovations

1. Progressive Adaptation

Veterans Memorial Manor, 310 Alexander Street, Vancouver

In Vancouver, many of the problems associated with homelessness are concentrated in the older downtown and eastside neighbourhoods, where older single men on welfare and the majority of World War II veterans who have chronic illnesses reside in Skid Row hotels and sleeping rooms when they are not sleeping 'under the stars'. Approximately 80% of the residents of the area receive some form of fixed income assistance or have incomes which are not keeping pace with the increases in the cost of living. Although it is considered by many to be a hard and unforgiving place, there is a strong sense of community in the area, and residents consider the local streets to be an extension of their living rooms. It is a milieu which is both home and a neighbourhood. A number of highly innovative initiatives have been designed for the long term residents of the downtown eastside, providing them with secure, affordable and quality accommodation enabling them to live with dignity in the area of their choice. The projects demonstrate many ingenious, user-sensitive architectural and urban design features, which imaginatively overcome or compensate for many of the difficulties which prevail. New and converted buildings have been designed in harmony with existing structures. The obvious efforts to have new projects enhance the sense of community reflect the long term commitments and personal ideals of those who work with the poor and disadvantaged in this area.

A new five storey building containing 134 units for World War II veterans has recently opened for the long-term, hard to house residents of the area to enable them to regain choice and control over their housing, their
environment, and ultimately their lives. At its core is a simple but vital concept: it is possible to humanize the life-space of marginalized people through a process of **progressive adaptation**, by combining physical shelter with aided social self-help and ready access to a range of essential support services. The five floors provide a reasonable upward progression of help and care from full dependence on staff (on the ground floor) to complete independence with private bathroom and kitchen for those who have learned to regain self management and health. Forty units on the first and part of the second floors are designed for residents who require some degree of physical or health assistance. These units (185 square feet net) contain a sink, a bed and basic furniture. The remaining units are designed with larger space and more facilities for those who are able to function with less supervision. These units range from those with a toilet and sink only, to a bath and kitchenette, and ultimately to fully self-contained facilities. Funding for the $4.5 million project comes from three sources. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides assistance under the Non-Profit Rental Housing Program (approximately $324,000 per annum which is applied to reduce rental charges). Veterans' Affairs Canada has committed $50,000 annually over the next five years to cover additional service staffing costs. The City of Vancouver provided a write-down on the land lease to 75% of market value, thereby retaining public ownership and protecting against land speculation.

A significant aspect of the building's management is the conviction of the staff that the residents require ready access to a variety of social and personal services all under one roof. The emphasis is on helping them to help themselves. Although there exists a built-in inspection system operated by the residents for the residents, the aim is not to enforce
'rehabilitation', but to facilitate, encourage and support whatever developments or improvements in lifestyle that can occur. The attempt is "to put the paths where the people walk" by providing a safe and supportive environment that engenders self-respect.

The project exemplifies the stewardship underlying the process whereby experienced public and private organizations can work with the homeless where they choose to congregate, and reflects the importance of having a committed partnership between, in this case, the Federal and Municipal governments co-ordinating efforts with the private sector and voluntary groups. The Veteran's Memorial Manor literally takes people off the street and provides them with the opportunity to put their lives back together in a supportive, sensitive environment. The building design includes "Club 44" a subsidized low cost public cafeteria for residents and the surrounding community, reflecting the desire to maintain and strengthen long established community ties. It is intended that when veterans no longer require the units provided, they will become available to non-veteran homeless, and that ultimately, the success of this project approach can be replicated for other homeless and in other regions of Canada.

Women In Second Stage Housing - Winnipeg(1)

Women In Second Stage Housing Inc. (WISH), is a private, non-profit organization providing residential programming and support for eight families in a 30 suite apartment complex. WISH serves women and their children who have experienced a crisis around an abusive relationship. They are now ready to enter the transition phase of rebuilding community and social networks toward independence. Each family participates in the program for a 1-year
period.

The project consists of three 3-bedroom and five 2-bedroom suites for the families (as well as a resource suite for programming), in a 30 unit Regional Housing Apartment Complex in downtown Winnipeg. The apartment complex opened in 1985 and is accessible to disabled people.

The main objectives are:

1) To provide a safe environment for up to 12 months for the abused family;

2) To provide appropriate referrals to and establish contact with community agencies and resources;

3) To assist in the development of a non-violent lifestyle;

4) To develop a mutual support system within the shelter;

5) To assist families in obtaining support services such as daycare for their children;

6) To develop a volunteer program including people from the shelter and the community at large to assist in the daily operations of the shelter;

7) To encourage the research and study of wife abuse.

Use of Social Housing to Provide a Second Stage Housing Service

Manitoba Housing has, over the last number of years, provided substantial residential support to women in crisis situations (battered women/wives and their children who require immediate, emergency shelter following "escape" from an abusive situation). It is felt, however that time spent at a crisis shelter (average 10 day stay) is not sufficient for a woman to make crucial decisions about redirecting or restructuring her life and future, nor acquire the emotional and financial security to do so.

The strategy to respond to this post-crisis need has been termed "second-stage housing" or a secure living environment available on a longer term
transitional period (usually up to 12 months) during which women can find employment, further an education, receive counselling and support to move on to new life options.

WISH's original proposal was to acquire and rehabilitate an existing small apartment block for exclusive use/tenancy by "second stage" households. Instead of the ownership/acquisition option however, the group was offered the use of 8 living units in a newly occupied family public housing project at 356 Young St, by the Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority who are working in close collaboration with WISH.

The use of Social Housing conforms with a Social Resources Committee/Cabinet approved policy enunciated in November 1985 that post-crisis or second stage housing opportunities be primarily found within an integrated, larger housing context, preferably as part of a social housing project. "Freestanding, segregated" facilities are considered only where social housing is unavailable or not feasible.

Part of the arrangement with Winnipeg Regional includes:

(i) installation of the FAST emergency call system to ensure that the women can activate an immediate response to potential violent or life-threatening situations (for example: assault by ex-spouse)

(ii) designation of one living unit in the building as a "Drop-in Centre" or staff space out of which is operated the support programing for the second-stage tenants or other women in the vicinity requiring similar service. This type of housing by concept/definition includes provision of on-site staff.

All programing costs are the responsibility of the Department of Community Services which provides funds for start-up (furniture, equipment, telephone), annual staffing, and related costs. Some staff requirements and administrative support are provided through a co-venture with the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse.

The first year of funding 1986-1987 for WISH came from:
The women tenants and their children participate in programing. The core programs include:

1) education/orientation phase
2) life skills and self-care phase
3) community re-entry

Upon discharge from the WISH program, a follow-up program has been instituted to ensure some contact with the project.

2. Facilitative Management

90 Shuter Street, Toronto

90 Shuter Street is a specially designed eleven storey apartment building in the downtown core based on the building form, management and social features of good rooming houses, to reverse the effects of inner city displacement. The clientele are the homeless who have been using emergency hostels as long-term housing and whose income is based on a variety of social assistance programmes which make it difficult for them to find and keep a home, and therefore stabilize their lives. In addition to quality, affordable housing, the residents have the support of community services provided both in the building and nearby. The design of the building provides maximum privacy, choice and the opportunity for groups and individuals to interact. Security of tenure, based on adequate resources is considered a necessary prerequisite for this type of permanent housing. The
sponsors, the Homes First Society, is a community based charitable and non-profit organization which grew out of the experience of organizations providing and managing "public housing", and in meeting the needs of single persons displaced by urban redevelopment. Each of the 17 apartment units has four or five single rooms. These are large enough to be furnished as bedsitters. A bed and dresser, built by residents of the complex, are provided. Each resident has private access to a bathroom which is shared with one other person. The rooms have individually controlled electric heat. The four or five rooms in each apartment share a kitchen and dining area, with an adjacent living room and sun room. The design is flexible and permits each group to tailor the spaces to their liking. The typical floors have been designed to accommodate people with certain types of handicaps (from fully featured handicapped facilities to minor adjustments). Each apartment has developed its own set of rules and expectations for behaviour, and the general building rules were developed with and by the residents. Shuter Street is close to public transportation, shopping, public recreation facilities and services which the residents are accustomed to using.

Funding for the project is diverse, and securing it has been problematic because of the question of jurisdictional responsibility concerning support housing in general and the nature of the client group in particular. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided the capital and operating funds under the National Housing Act (Section 56.1) special purpose housing allocation. The mortgage interest is being subsidised down to 2% interest with a 35 year amortization. The Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides funding under the Ontario Community Housing Assistance Programme which ensures affordable rents ($320 per month), and residents pay
no more than 25% of their income in rent. The Provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services in conjunction with the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto cost-shares funding of on-site support staff through the Municipal Purchase of Counselling Programme under the General Welfare Assistance Act.
Major Components of 90 Shuter Street Program

1. Building Location:
   * access to community services
   * in neighbourhood familiar to most residents
   * tenant population similar in composition to neighbourhood population

2. Building Design:
   * externally consistent with local housing types
   * internally emulates rooming house form familiar to tenants
   * graduated opportunities for socializing in manageable groups
   * provides individual privacy
   * maximizes physical security and personal safety
   * creates opportunities for a variety of social contacts

3. Affordability:
   * security of tenure at minimal cost to residents
   * assurance that housing costs will not increase beyond the level of affordability of low-income singles
   * guarantee of adequate standard of upkeep and maintenance

4. Management Structure and Functions:
   * property management
   * facilitative management
     - to facilitate the development of community relationships among residents
     - to link residents with support services according to needs
     - participation of residents in all aspects of property management of the building
     - apartment and building rules drawn up by residents

5. Provision of Support Services:
   * contracts with outside agencies
   * referrals to other social services as required

6. Resident Status:
   * licensees, not tenants, and not covered by Landlord Tenant Act
   * can be evicted for breach of rules after arbitration process.
In common with other North American cities, the problem of homelessness has grown significantly in Ottawa over the past decade. While no one knows the exact number of homeless people in the City, there are 260 emergency shelter beds for single men and women, and these are in use at least 80% of the time. Staff at the shelters report that average lengths of stay vary from one week to two years.

The reasons for homelessness are varied. The lack of affordable and appropriate accommodation for single people and families with very low incomes increases daily with the loss of rooming houses and low-rent apartments. As well, there is an increase in the number of deinstitutionalized people with continuing psychiatric problems who are unable to maintain apartments/rooms without support services in place. All evidence suggests that this is not a short-term phenomenon but a long-term trend, which will simply not go away of its own accord.

There is a serious need for new forms of shelter intended to house homeless people on a longer term basis than is currently the case in the emergency shelters. Emergency shelter providers in Ottawa are of the opinion that a new form of supportive and permanent housing is needed in order to reduce the numbers of people using shelters or institutions as their only accommodation.

In July 1986, the City of Ottawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation, City Living, together with several community groups, commenced discussions toward the establishment of a special housing project at 380 Cumberland Street, in recognition of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. This project is only one of a number of similar housing developments which City
Living has produced. It has benefitted particularly from the lessons learned from the Maison de Chambres (Bronson Avenue), and the 46-unit Somerset Street Rooming House which was completed in 1983. These projects are designed for low-income single persons, under 50 years of age, including transient men and women; psychiatrically disabled and marginally employed individuals, all of whom must be capable of living independently. These residents have histories of housing difficulties and require varying degrees of social and psychological support services to enable them to stabilize their lives over the long term.

Cumberland Street is designed to provide affordable, appropriate, permanent housing for long-term homeless, low-income, single people who have unique housing difficulties and who require social and psychological support services to ensure long-term stability in their lives. The project is intended to foster the development of a milieu which is supportive of the efforts of individual residents to enhance their own active participation in society.

The project is sponsored by City Living which will own the building and deal with major repairs, but management will operate in two parts: The Salvation Army will use one floor for its alcohol and drug rehabilitation unit, and Options Bytown, a new non-profit formed by 12 social service agencies will manage the remaining three floors. The location of the project in a commercial area adjacent to a 'gentrifying' residential neighbourhood has helped to deflect opposition from local residents, although there has been considerable negative response from the local business community who argue that such projects are turning the area into a ghetto.
3. Community Supportive Living

Association for Street Kids, Yates Street, Victoria

Thousands of young people across Canada are caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty, chronic unemployment, and societal alienation. The number of youth sleeping, living and 'working' on the streets is increasing steadily, caused in part by economic and social problems which can be traced to local, national and international sources. Unemployment among younger people for example is estimated to be double the national average, reaching a high of 22% in the early 1980s. Currently, in response to federal, provincial and municipal government initiatives, the figures are between 12%-14% and forecasters predict that it will remain in this range for the next 10 to 15 years.(4)

The unemployment problem has been compounded by the lack of affordable housing. The high cost of producing new units and the dramatic slow down in the supply of rental accommodation has resulted in low-income singles being excluded from policies which are geared more toward families and special needs groups.

In British Columbia, the economy is shifting rapidly from resource-based industries of forestry, fishing, mining and agriculture, into high technology and service-related activities. With a school dropout rate of 40% in BC, and an unemployment rate of 20% among young people (which does not account for those who no longer register for employment), there is growing evidence that homelessness among youth is manifest in a trend toward drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and even suicide. Life for these "runaways" and "throwaways" becomes less secure, with no home and no job, often resulting in a transient lifestyle or moving from one group home to the next. There is
considerable distrust and dislike for the 'system'.

Reports from a British Columbia Conference on Homelessness in May 1987 indicate that while many of the street youth have run away from home, there are many more who have been forced to leave. In Vancouver and Victoria, the average age of the street youth is approximately 15 years. Some estimates suggest that between 20% to 25% are schizophrenic. As many as half of the 400-500 youth on the streets of Vancouver (200 or more in Victoria) were described as 'weekenders' who return to their homes on Sunday night.

In response to the growing recognition that there is a need for proactive, community-based support systems to assist young people in learning basic skills, upgrading their education, and developing viable alternatives to the perceived attraction of street life, an association of organizations, community workers and volunteers has been established in Victoria BC, providing training support, counselling and referral. One measure of the success of ASK is that it manages to gain and sustain the trust of the young people who participate in the various programmes, and because of the emphasis on enabling youth to develop their potential and voice their views and perspectives, those who have benefitted from ASK are recruiting and working with their peers on the street. As with similar support groups across the country, ASK has become an enabling catalyst for youth empowerment - the cornerstone for taking charge of their own lives.

Le Reseau D'Aide, Montreal

Le Reseau d'Aide aux personnes seules et itinerantes de Montreal Inc., est un organisme sans but lucratif qui regroupe environ quatre-vingt membres individuels ou organismes preoccupes par la problematique de
l'itinérance.(7)

Par ses objectifs, Le Reseau d'Aide veut favoriser le regroupement des ressources et des intervenants(es) qui oeuvrent auprès des itinerants (es); promouvoir l'échange d'information et l'entraide entre les membres pour faire face aux difficultés qu'ils rencontrent; voir à la mise sur pied de nouveaux projets afin de répondre aux besoins véritables des personnes sans abri; se faire la voix d'appel des personnes seules et itinérantes auprès de différentes instances publiques.

Par son effort de conscientisation et de sensibilisation aux problèmes liés à l'itinérance, Le Reseau d'Aide a contribué depuis douze années à la mise sur pied de plusieurs ressources, mentionnons Chez Doris et La Maison Marguerite en 1977, Centre d'Accueil Prefontaine pour hommes et Les Maisons de l'Ancre en 1982, Centre d'Accueil Prefontaine pour femmes et Group Information Travail en 1986.

La Problematique de l'itinérance

Sans domicile fixe, seuls-es, pauvres en situation de crise: de plus en plus d'hommes et de femmes répondent à cette description; on les appelle les itinerants-es.

Quand vous parlez des jeunes sans-abri, quand vous pensez aux femmes de nulle part et aux hommes de la rue ou encore quand vous faites allusions aux clochards! Alors-la vous faites référence à des personnes dites itinérantes. Par personne itinérante, nous entendons toute personne en difficulté qui est sans adresse permanente et vit d'une instabilité sous diverses formes.

Les principales caractéristiques reliées à cette population sont: l'absence de logement stable, la solitude, l'utilisation des ressources de
dépannage, la dévalorisation de soi, la pauvreté, puisque la très grande majorité de ces personnes sont assistées sociales, la dépendance à l'alcool et aux drogues et parfois l'usage abusif de médicaments. Aussi, la plupart des personnes itinérantes entretiennent peu ou pas de contact avec leur famille parce qu'elle est souvent désorganisée ou encore inexistante. En outre, la population itinérante croît constamment ; en effet, on estime présentement à pres de 10,000 le nombre de personnes itinérantes à Montréal. Bien sûr, les centres reçoivent plus de demandes qu'ils ne peuvent en satisfaire. Fait à considérer, l'âge moyen des itinérants tend à baisser depuis quelques années.

Les "marginaux" de notre société le sont rarement par choix : la crise socio-économique et le chômage qui en résulte, la désinstitutionnalisation des malades mentaux, la pauvreté endémique, la violence faite aux femmes et la toxicomanie réduisent souvent des êtres humains à la solitude et à l'errance. Et leur nombre s'accroît de jour en jour, au même rythme que l'appauvrissement de la population urbaine québécoise.

Enfin, parmi ces individus nous identifions des personnes qui ne reçoivent pas l'assistance nécessaire (ex : suivi externe en psychiatrie) auquelle ils devraient normalement avoir recours, ce qui peut provoquer des comportements dangereux pour eux-même et pour la société. Ils utilisent régulièrement les services offerts par le Réseau d'Aide et celui-ci ne possède pas nécessairement les ressources adequates pour répondre à leurs besoins.

Particularités de l'itinérance

La problématique de l'itinérance comporte plusieurs particularités comme le démontrent les caractéristiques reliées à chacun des sousgroupe de l'ensemble de la population, énumérées ci-dessus.
Toutefois, trois principales particularités retiennent notre attention, il s'agit: de la pauvreté, du manque de logement social stable, et des problèmes de santé mentale. À notre avis, ces trois facteurs predominants chez les itinérants favorisent grandement l'augmentation en nombre de cette population.

**Les Femmes Itinerantes**

"Actuellement à Montréal, on dénombre environ 3,000 femmes itinérantes qui utilisent occasionnellement les services offerts à travers le Réseau d'Aide. Nous définissons femme seule itinérante comme:

- une femme sans adresse permanente, c'est-à-dire qui change souvent d'adresse à cause d'une certaine instabilité à plusieurs niveaux et qui utilise, à l'occasion, des centres de dépannage;
- une femme qui vit généralement seule mais qui peut avoir des enfants et/ou un partenaire, mais qui ne vivent pas présentement ou d'une façon continue avec elle;
- une femme qui n'a aucun lien affectif stable;
- une femme dépourvue de groupe d'appartenance stable.

En devenant une femme itinérante, la femme devient la plus pauvre des démunies, elle perd tout et tous ses liens sont brisés.

Les femmes itinérantes deviennent de plus en plus nombreuses et de plus en plus visibles.

Les femmes itinérantes sont rejetées et culpabilisées, car elles ne répondent en aucune façon aux modèles de femmes privilégiées par notre société: bonne mère de famille, épouse aimante et fidèle, travailleuse compétente et souriante et toujours au service de tous et chacun.

Cinq problèmes majeurs conditionnent la vie des femmes itinérantes:

1) les problèmes financiers (dettes, revenu insuffisant, problème de budget, etc);
2) les problèmes de travail (manque d'emploi, exploitation, salaires
inferieurs, harcèlement sexuel, insecurite, conditions de travail oppressives, emploi a la journée, travail non-reconnu, etc);

3) les problemes de sante mentale et physique (surmedicalisation des problemes sociaux, affectifs et economiques, manque de soutien communautaire, agression sexuelle, etc);

4) les problemes familiaux (inceste, violence, familiale, separations, etc);

5) les problemes de logement (discrimination, manque de logement adequats et a prix modique, instabilite, etc).

Selon les intervenants du milieu (centres de transition, maisons d'hebergement, centres de jour, centres de detention, etc) les femmes itinerantes constituent une clientele peu connue et fort difficile a cataloguer. Toutefois, ils s'accordent a dire que les principales caracteristiques de ces femmes sont:

- la dependance vis-a-vis les services offerts;
- la presence de problemes psychiatriques plus ou moins importants;
- la faible motivation ou labsence totale de motivation a changer leur style de vie;
- l'agressivite et la violence;
- l'intoxication davantage aux drogues dures et aux medicaments qu'a l'alcool;
- la tendance a refuser l'aide offerte;
- la malnutrition".(8)

Les Hommes Itinerants

Environ 7,000 hommes itinerants circulent en ce moment a Montreal; plus precisement, a l'interieur du reseau des maisons de chambres, du reseau des organismes d'hebergement et de depannage pour sans-abri et du reseau public (CLSC, CSS,familles d'accueil, hopitaux, centres de detention, centres d'accueil, etc).

Les hommes du milieu de l'itinerance sont generalement des chambreurs instables, des travailleurs occasionnels, des assistes sociaux aux prises avec des problemes d'alcoolisme et d'abus de medicaments. Meme s'ils sont aptes au travail, ils vivront dans une meme annee des periodes assez actives
entrecoupees d'épisode ou l'ethylisme dominera. Plusieurs ont des problèmes de santé physique, d'autres sont des expatients psychiatriques que la desinstitutionnalisation a mis sur le pave. Quelques uns sont de passage et voyagent de ville en ville à la recherche d'un emploi ou d'expériences nouvelles. Parfois, ils fuient la famille, la "gang", etc. Ce milieu de l'itinérance est marqué par le vieillissement prématuré de sa population et le besoin de prise en charge se manifeste souvent quand l'homme est rendu au bout de ses forces.

Il existe différents types de ressources à Montréal pour les sans-abri: Les Resources D'Hebergement; Les Centres de jour et les OSBL; es Maisons de Chambres.(9)

Au total, on comptabilise 100 lits pour femmes itinérantes à Montréal c'est-a-dire:

- 64 lits d'hébergement d'urgence/dépannage
- 28 lits d'hébergement avec support
- 8 lits de readaptation

Au total, on comptabilise 657 lits pour hommes itinérants c'est-a-dire:

- 344 lits d'hébergement d'urgence/dépannage
- 50 lits d'hébergement avec support
- 223 lits d'hébergement moyen-long terme
- 40 lits de readaptation

Au total, on comptabilise 83 lits pour jeunes itinérants-es c'est-a-dire:

- 8 lits d'hébergement d'urgence/dépannage pour jeunes hommes itinérants
- 28 lits d'hébergement avec support pour jeunes hommes itinérants
- 17 lits d'hébergement d'urgence/dépannage pour une clientèle jeune et
mixte

21 lits d'hébergement avec support pour une clientèle jeune et mixte

9 lits d'hébergement avec support pour jeunes femmes itinérantes

Pour conclure, le Réseau d'Aide a déjà cerne ses priorités pour l'année 1987, et il souhaite ardemment que des améliorations soient apportées aux dossiers suivants:

* Le logement social
* Le travail
* Les services sociaux et de santé
* Le revenu minimum garanti
* L'hébergement à court, moyen et long terme
* Le placement des itinérants dans les ressources du famille d'accueil, centre d'accueil, pavillon d'accueil
* La sauvegarde des maisons de chambres du centre-ville
* L'accès aux services psychiatriques
Summary

The programmes and projects outlined above illustrate some of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the concepts which could contribute to the formulation of a public policy framework to assist the homeless and reduce homelessness in Canada. However, in order to assess which initiatives are successful and which elements have proven ineffective, it is critical that a system of monitoring, auditing and evaluation be built in to any policy framework. Monitoring would ensure a continuing objective observation of the programmes and their various phases of action over time; auditing would involve the assessment of selected aspects of a particular initiative at a given moment; and evaluation would ultimately provide a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme which can be used to decide whether changes are required to the mandate, objectives, techniques or resources.

Such a system would also benefit considerably from establishing appropriate measurement techniques to reliably estimate the number of homeless and the extent of homelessness in order that governments can commit the necessary financial resources to solving the problems based upon a clearly articulated factual base. Appropriate measurement techniques would make it more likely that policy and programme developments would appropriately reflect the widely varying economic, social and geographic dimensions of homelessness.
NOTES

1. Information supplied by Dr. J Zamprelli, Manitoba Housing, and Cathy Auld, Winnipeg Core Area Initiative.


3. Information supplied by Margaret Singleton, City of Ottawa.

4. Information gathered at a provincial conference on street youth: Off The Street, organised by the Victoria Association of Street Kids and the B.C. Public Interest Research Group, September 1987, University of Victoria.


