In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Planning

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Sept 26/91
ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING CLAIMS-MAKING ACTIVITIES ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS: THE CASE OF HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA.

Liberal Democracy proposes to combine the best of all worlds; individual freedom, economic growth, equal opportunity to achieve wealth, health and happiness. In Canada, we have experienced this liberal democracy for many decades and have witnessed the growth of the modern welfare state. Increases in prosperity and growth have been tremendous, yet we are still faced with the stark reality of poverty and the huge discrepancy between rich and poor. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the housing sector. Homelessness, the ultimate housing inequality, has not been eradicated. Instead, it continues to be a pervasive and growing phenomenon. This leads to the conclusion that Canada's welfare state has not contributed successfully to eliminating and preventing homelessness.

This research examines the way society deals with social problems and their emergence. The focus is on the emergence of homelessness as a social problem. It illustrates that conventional approaches to the analysis of social problems limit actions and solutions society undertakes to resolve them. A new framework for analysis is proposed; a process oriented analysis of claims-making activities as a way of understanding social problems.

This thesis documents the process of recognition of homelessness as a public policy issue in Canada. It examines the role of 'process' in the development of public policy issues because the way a society views, defines and re-defines a social problem often determines the policy response. One of the key components of understanding the public policy response to
homelessness lies within the process of public recognition of homelessness as a social problem. This research contends that the way in which a problem is identified and comes to be defined and the actors involved affects the types of solutions implemented. Indeed, it is this concept of process which is crucial in the emergence, life or death of a social problem as a public issue.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................. ii

Table of Contents ......................................................... iv

List of Figures .......................................................... vi

Acknowledgement ......................................................... vii

Chapter One ............................................................... 1

Introduction ............................................................... 1
  1.1 The "Problem" ..................................................... 2
  1.2 Conflict and Change ............................................... 3
    1.2.1 Social Activities .......................................... 3
  1.3 Policy Allocates Values ........................................ 5
  1.5 Role of the Mass Media ......................................... 8
  1.6 Data Collection .................................................. 10
  1.7 Six Insights ...................................................... 11
    1.7.1 The Natural History Model ................................. 12
    1.7.2 Role of the Media ......................................... 12
    1.7.3 Claims on the State ....................................... 12
    1.7.4 Collective Definition .................................... 13
    1.7.5 The Importance of Understanding Process .............. 14
    1.7.6 Legitimation ................................................. 14
  1.8 Organization of Thesis .......................................... 15

Chapter Two ............................................................. 16

Review of Social Problems Literature ............................. 16
  2.1 The Rationalist Paradigm ....................................... 16
    2.1.1 Historical Perspective .................................... 17
    2.1.1.1 Challenging the Notion of Value-Free Social Science 18
    2.1.1.2 Social Deviance ....................................... 18
    2.1.1.3 Political Value Judgements ............................ 19
  2.2 Social Problems are Constructions ........................... 20
    2.2.1 Labelling Perspective .................................... 20
  2.3 Important Contributions ......................................... 21
  2.4 Recent Writings .................................................. 22
    2.4.1 Social Problems are a Product of a Process ........... 23
    2.4.1.1 Claims-Making Activities: The Unfolding of the Claim 24
  2.5 Natural History Model ........................................... 25
  2.6 Spector and Kitsuse's Natural History Model ............... 28
  2.7 Summary .......................................................... 34
# Table of Contents

Chapter Three .............................. 35

Documenting Homelessness as a Social Problem ........................................... 35
  3.1 Income Problem ................................................. 36
    3.1.1 Spate of Demolitions .................................. 37
  3.2 The 'Homeless' as a Category: 1986 ........................................ 41
  3.3 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: 1987 ..................... 43
    3.3.1 The "New Homeless" ...................................... 46
    3.3.2 Values, Choices and Politics ............................... 47
  3.4 Beyond the International Year ...................................... 54
    3.4.1 Lobbying and Coalitions .................................... 56
  3.5 Summary and Conclusions ........................................... 60

Chapter Four ........................................ 62

Where is the Social Problem of Homelessness on the Political Agenda? ........ 62
  4.1 Overview of News Sources ........................................ 62
  4.2 The Public Agenda versus the Political Agenda ............................. 68
  4.3 Natural History Model Revisited .................................... 69
  4.4 Summary ......................................................... 72

Chapter Five ................................. 74

Use of Natural History Model of Social Problems ........................................ 74
  5.1 Summary of Findings ............................................. 75

Bibliography ....................................... 80
LIST OF FIGURES

Diagram 1 ......................................................... 73
Diagram 2 ......................................................... 74
Diagram 3 ......................................................... 75
Diagram 4 ......................................................... 77
Diagram 5 ......................................................... 82
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I'd like to take time to acknowledge, with special thanks, Dr. s Hulchanski and Hightower for assisting me in developing my thoughts and ideas leading to this thesis. Their guidance, support and suggestions were deeply appreciated.

I'd like to extend thanks as well to all those, both colleagues and friends - you know who you are - who offered their support and encouragement, and were willing to meet at a moments notice. In particular, thanks to the Monday Group for their spirit and alternative perspectives, to my colleagues at the City Planning Department with whom I often commiserated, and to Terra Housing Consultants for the use of their spare computer without which, I'm sure, I would not have gotten this far.

Finally and most importantly, I dedicate this thesis to my family, particularly my mother, who inspired in me the value of learning.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Until recently few Canadians have been aware of the plight of many in our own country who suffer from inadequate or non-existent shelter. Yet, in the dozen years since Canada hosted the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat, 1976) in Vancouver, housing conditions in Canada reveal the pervasive phenomenon of homelessness in many parts of the country, particularly in the urban areas.... it is now becoming acknowledged that homelessness is not confined to those who may choose a life on the streets. And the well-entrenched myth that the homeless are the architects of their own misfortune is slowly being eroded as the homeless, and those at risk in society, are beginning to speak out.... (Proceedings p.3-5).

The Conference to Observe the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1989 brought together nearly 1,500 participants from around the world as part of Canada's recognition of the United Nation's International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. More than 100 participants from Third World Countries attended, including 70 who took part in a Canada Study Program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The intention was to publicize homelessness and initiate accompanying activities that would lead to a world preoccupation with housing and the homeless. The development of an agenda for action to the turn of the century was one essential focus of their activities.

The above quote is taken from the proceedings of a conference entitled, The Canadian Conference to Observe the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The conference took place at the Ottawa Congress Centre, September 13 to 16, 1987. This thesis
explores whether or not the statement is correct: The homeless are the architects of their
own misfortune is a myth that is being eroded.

1.1 THE "PROBLEM".

This thesis demonstrates that homelessness is a social problem of increasing
magnitude which, despite public pronouncements, has not been resolved. Why? The inability
to resolve homelessness lies in the way social problems are traditionally defined. The
problem of homelessness is defined as a flaw in the individual's character, a character
deficiency. It is the individual who is at fault for being homeless. This assumption has
certain ramifications for the response to the problem, and it is this approach which has
dominated social policy so far, assuming that if more was known about the causes of the
problem, and if the necessary resources were allocated, then the problem would be solved.

However, as George notes in his book *Society, the State, Social Problems and Social Policy*:

To see the eradication of social problems as depending on a range of piecemeal
welfare programs is to cherish a comfortable illusion. It is to pursue what Parenti
refers to as 'the Vista' approach to economic maladies; a haphazard variety of public
programs are initiated, focussing on the poor and ignoring the system of power,
privilege and profit which makes them poor. It is a little like blaming the corpse for
the murder (George, 1984:17).

This thesis suggests an alternative, dynamic method of conceptualizing social
problems. Problems are viewed as evolving, emerging, or as a process of becoming. It also
suggests that it is impossible to understand a social problem in isolation, outside the political
and economic context of our society. This kind of analysis would have very different implications for our attempts to resolve the problem of homelessness.

1.2 CONFLICT AND CHANGE

In a plural society, the recognition of a social problem involves a process of conflicting value systems and conflicting or competing definitions of social problems. A more open and realistic approach is needed to deal with problems involving conflicts of value systems. According to George, "Social policy is thus primarily the result of the constant attempts of various groups in society to improve or redefine their situation vis-a-vis that of other groups" (George, 1984:18). Admittedly, conflict and change are on-going natural processes in society.

1.2.1 Social Activities

An integral part of this process of emergence of social problems is the political process, referred to as "claims-making", or the making of claims upon the state to resolve social problems. The activity of making claims, complaints, or demands for change is the core of social problems activities. Claims-making is a form of interaction: a demand made by one party to another that something be done about a putative condition. Spector and Kitsuse describe claims-making activities as:

demanding services, filling out forms, lodging complaints, filing lawsuits, calling press conferences, writing letters of protest, passing resolutions, publishing exposes, placing ads in newspapers, supporting or opposing some governmental practice or policy, setting up picket lines or boycotts; these are integral features of social and political life (Spector and Kitsuse, 1977:78).
All those involved in these, or similar, activities participate in the process of defining social problems. The conflict or debate that emerges is a part of a broader struggle for social and economic rights.


1) the civil rights and liberties, i.e. freedom of speech and publication; freedom of association; freedom of religion; freedom of movement within, and out of, and back to, one's country; freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; and freedom from arbitrary invasion by governments and other citizens, of personal property;

2) the political right to a voice, directly, or indirectly through the choice of representatives in the government of the country;

3) a newer range of what are called economic and social rights, such as the right to work; the right to equal pay for work of equal value; the right to social security against the consequences of illness, old age, death of the breadwinner, and involuntary unemployment; the right to an income consistent with a life of human dignity; the right to rest and leisure (even including the right to holidays with pay); and the right to education.

All of these are asserted as rights of individual persons, rights that ought to be enjoyed by all individuals equally, with no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, political affiliation, age, or sex. (MacPherson, 1987:22)

The right to a decent place to live, the right to housing, is part of the latter category of economic and social rights. MacPherson elaborates on these ranges of rights, categorizing them both historically and logically:

The first two, the civil and political rights, go back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: they were the main objectives of the English and French and American revolutions of those centuries. The third category, the economic and social rights is much more recent: They began to be talked about by some nineteenth-century socialists, but only become respectable during and after the Second World War. Logically, too, the three categories are different. The civil rights are chiefly rights against the state, that is, claims for individual freedoms which the state cannot invade. The political rights are rights to a voice in the control of the state. The economic and social rights are claims for benefits to be
guaranteed by the state, both by legislation and by positive provision of services and income supplements (emphasis added) (MacPherson, 1987:23).

The traditional human rights, the political and the civil, are mainly rights of the individual against the state whereas the newer economic and social rights are claimed as material benefits (income, social security, leisure, housing) that **ought** to be provided to all individuals by the state if they cannot otherwise be attained by the day-to-day operation of the social and economic system.

It is within this category of rights where the conflict in society is now taking place, and these are illustrative of primary conflicts in social values of society. The emergence of a particular social problem and the claims-making activities which occur, merely signify an attempt to further extend the range of human rights which society must guarantee. Homelessness is a case in point; there are competing and conflicting definitions of what constitutes homelessness, and whether the individual has a right to housing, or a right to financial assistance, which ultimately affect the actions and strategies society undertakes in response to the problem.

### 1.3 POLICY ALLOCATES VALUES

Public policy has not resolved the problem of homelessness. Why? Part of the answer lies in the relationship between the social problem and the policy. The way we define the problem has implications for the solution and/or policy.

All social problems are the product of a process of definition. Social policies are the products of legislation. An understanding of who does the defining of what is defined as a social problem and how it is defined as well as who shapes legislation and in what ways, is clearly crucial to the student of the welfare state (George, 1984:2).
Chapter One

But, first, what is policy? What constitutes a policy study or policy analysis? The term 'policy' is understood to be a collection of programs and projects or strategies, directed by underlying assumptions and goals. Wildavsky outlines the main features of policy analysis, paying particular attention to policy analysis as a problem centred activity, "That is, analysis takes as its subject matter problems facing policy makers and aims to ameliorate those problems through a process of creativity, imagination and craftsmanship". In Wildavsky's view, "Problems are not so much solved as superseded" (Ham, 1984:4). Given the intractability of social problems, the role of analysis is to locate problems where solutions might be tried. Often, problems are re-defined in a way which makes some improvement possible.

Policy involves a course of action or a web of decisions rather than one decision. According to David Easton quoted in Ham and Hill, "a policy...consists of a web of decisions and actions that allocate...values" (Ham and Hill, 1984:11). It is clear that there is no one absolute definition of policy but it can be said that policy describes a range of activities, and that policy allocates social values.

In their discussion of the nature of 'policy analysis', Ham and Hill distinguish between analysis of policy and analysis for policy. This distinction is important in drawing attention to policy analysis as an academic activity concerned primarily with advancing understanding, and policy as an applied activity concerned primarily with contributing to the solution of social problems.

In a typology proposed by Hogwood and Gunn, there are seven types of policy studies. They are as follows:
This thesis research constitutes a study of **policy process**, in which:

> attention is focussed on the stages through which issues pass and attempts are made to assess the influence of different factors on the development of the issue... (studies of the policy process) invariably show some concern with policy content, but in the main, they are interested in uncovering the various influences on policy formulation (Ham, 1984:8).

This thesis is concerned with studying social problems activities and the process of policy formulation. As such, it is analysis of policy, not analysis for policy. It will illustrate the relationship between social problems and policy. The framework for analysis will be a political pressure model used to identify the actors and organizations involved in the making of claims to the government. Social problems activities will be referred to as claims-making activities. The goal of the research is not to find a solution to homelessness, but to improve our understanding of the problem and our understanding of the policy process.

The main purpose of this thesis is to identify and describe the process by which an issue develops and evolves into a social problem. The development of claims-making...
activities and the definition of a social problem is documented as it is defined, redefined, and passed from one set of participants to another. It provides an historical thread of continuity for the casestudy topic. It provides a systematic presentation of the data and analysis which may play a role in the future of the study of social problem activity.

1.5 ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA

Attention is drawn to the study of the role of the mass media in shaping perceptions of social problems. How and what is reported often determines which issues need to be addressed by, and which issues can be ignored from, the policy and/or political agenda (Stevens, 1990: Lecture). The role of the mass media is important in illustrating the public's perception of the problem, as it in some ways is an indicator of social values. Also, the mass media are a vital aspect of both the definition and development of social problems through their influence of public opinion. As Manning states:

mass media have become the central mechanism for the collective consumption of "social facts" and the collective expression of judgements about social problems...these media, the press, radio and television, are principally involved through the presentation of news, documentaries, entertainment and advertising (Manning, 1985:13).

A thorough exploration of communications theory is outside the scope of this thesis, but a brief examination of the role of the media is seen as appropriate and necessary.

There are generally three models of mass media held by professional journalists and the commercial media. In the first model, the field of journalism is organized with its own set of values to present the facts and allow the public to make their own decisions with regard to issues of the day. From this point of view, the media are educating the public about public issues.
The second model suggests that the media is organized based on market forces which determine the content of commercial press, radio and television. The public have the power to alter that content through their buying power, by consuming those they like and ignoring those they do not.

Rather than the media educating the public, (as in model one), the public educate the media...In this model then, the public is the dominant partner in a relationship which reflects rather than educates public opinion about important issues (Manning, 1985:14).

An obvious trend in the last ten years is that the media are in the business of carrying advertisements rather than in the business of carrying news (Stevens, 1990: Lecture).

The third model stems from a critical analysis of the first two. The media in this model are seen to be under the control of an economic or political elite who use them to manipulate public opinion. Ownership patterns of the major newspapers across the country are cited as an indication of this. As well, a great deal of daily news is packaged by wholesalers such as Canadian Press, Associated Press or Reuters and sold as a commodity to the press and other mass media "retailers". This third model implies that public opinion is not in the hands of the public or journalists playing an educative role, but in the hands of an elite which tries to exclude opinions contrary to its own interests, or to minimize the significance of adverse social conditions. Manning suggests there is a bias in reporting social problems: they are trivialized to a human interest level where victims suffer from natural disasters. The media rarely tackle structural questions about the shaping of social conditions; stories about individual tragedies make good news items, but the nature, extent, causes and new manifestations of poverty do not (Manning, 1985:15).
The third model is the most convincing. However, there are enough professional journalists who attempt to inform and educate the public to issues, and the buying power of the public often has a very real impact. Elements of all three of these models are useful in thinking about the role of the media in social problems discussions.

1.6 DATA COLLECTION

The *Globe and Mail* is Canada's national newspaper and for this reason was chosen as the primary source of data. According to Geoff Heinricks,

> The *Globe* has been, and remains, the prime mover of information in Canada. It has some impact on governments, but it is the single greatest influence on other media, and this is how it influences the agenda in the country. Staff on and employees of other newspapers, magazines, television and radio all look to the *Globe and Mail* before they set out to work. All too often the media flow in Canada starts with a ripple from the *Globe and Mail* (Heinricks, 1990:21).

Due to the number of articles and the vast amount of reading required, it was felt that other Canadian news sources would carry similar stories on homelessness. To avoid repetition and to define a manageable empirical task for this thesis, articles found in the *Globe and Mail* are reviewed.

Limitations. It is widely recognized in Canada that the *Globe and Mail* is the newspaper of the establishment. Again, Heinricks states:

> The *Globe* is not a mass circulation newspaper. It is aimed at middle and upper income managerial and professional Canadians...What sets us apart from any other Canadian Newspaper is our elite readership. As the future unfolds, we will be taking further steps to better serve the interests of the elite audience (Heinricks, 1990:16).
Chapter One

The empirical part of this research involves an analysis of articles on homelessness published in the *Globe and Mail* from 1979 to 1989 and describes how the problem is presented to the public. The key actors involved in a variety of claims-making activities relating to homelessness will be identified. To assist the analysis, four research questions are tackled in this thesis:

1) What are social problems and how are they defined?
2) Who are the actors involved in the claims-making process, and, what and to whom are they claiming?
3) Where is the problem of homelessness in the process of social problem evolution?
4) What is the prevalent definition?

Exploring these questions will lead to a better understanding of the policy process. The primary purpose is not to suggest solutions to the problem of homelessness, but to examine homelessness in the process of becoming a social problem, to identify the actors and their activities involved in this process, and to identify the public's perception of homelessness with the intention of improving understanding of the policy process.

1.7 *SIX INSIGHTS*

The following six insights, generated from this research, are offered to assist planners in understanding the complexity of social problems and the terms of the debate surrounding problem definition and policy response.
1.7.1 The Natural History Model

This thesis uses the problem of homelessness to draw some conclusions about emerging social problems. Every social issue, from gender equality, sustainable environments, pollution, native land claims, child abuse, can be analyzed using this same Natural History model. All issues are 'emerging' in environment of conflicting values. Society can learn through the use of this model, that a 'natural history' of the evolution of social problems takes place. Claims-making activities and coalitions occur in all dimensions of society and are of critical importance in moving the social problem through the various stages. This model is a useful tool for understanding complex social issues and the terms of their debate. Planners often offer advice, contribute to setting the agenda, and influencing the plan of action.

1.7.2 Role of the Media

The media is critical in the documenting component of the social problem. It educates, reflects and manipulates public opinion. These three functions are integral in moving a social issue through the various stages in its development. Planners should recognize the importance of the media, and use the media more effectively. Public perception of issues and politics ultimately determines who is elected to government office.

1.7.3 Claims on the State

In a pluralist society, conflict is taking place daily. This conflict is all about social, economic and political rights. Debate over homelessness, or any other social problem, signifies an extension of rights and is in essence, a social, economic and political rights issue.
Chapter One

The claims-making model illustrates how a problem moves through the various stages of development. A sophisticated understanding of the problem is necessary but not always sufficient to gain rights that are being claimed. C.B. MacPherson offers an explanation as to why there is still resistance to granting these rights. The conflict taking place today is in the arena of the newer economic and social rights, where groups are claiming that material benefits (income, social security, leisure, housing) ought to be provided to all individuals by the state. Conflict is occurring over the assertion of these rights and the reluctance of the state to recognize and accept responsibility for providing these rights. As the case of homelessness shows, housing is not yet considered to be a right that ought to be provided by the state.

1.7.4 Collective Definition

Any time advocates of a particular social issue question the accepted view of an issue, this throws the issue into the arena of debate. This debate is the beginning of a process of collective definition. This thesis illustrated that the social problem of homelessness is a product of collective definition, based on value choices of society at any one time. Social problems are products of conflicting values and definitions, and conflicting solutions are often the result. Recognizing that social problems are the product of collective definition, planners must also recognize and advocate collective responsibility and action.
1.7.5 The Importance of Understanding Process

This research has also illustrated that homelessness, and social problems in general, can be described as evolving social processes, the products of social debate. In examining homelessness through the popular media, it is shown that the public perception of homelessness is no longer a temporary problem, or the homeless are no longer seen as a homogeneous population. The media coverage suggests that the homeless person becomes homeless, or evolves into a state of being homeless. It is also recognized that homelessness is a result of a synergy of factors; poverty, urban redevelopment and gentrification, de-institutionalization, unemployment, welfare restructuring, demolition and lack of affordable housing. Social problems are products of complex social, political and economic processes at work in society, and for this reason, planners must avoid simplicity in defining problems and in formulating solutions.

1.7.6 Legitimation

The current conflict, or debate, surrounding homelessness centres on achieving this collective agreed upon definition of homelessness. Every social problem occurring in society must pass this stage. Consensus and legitimation at every level is critical before a plan of action (or policy) can be implemented. Unfortunately, although public awareness about the problem of homelessness has improved, policy has not been modified to reflect this. Action, in the form of policy and the implementation of a plan does not take place until the definition is agreed upon by all the actors involved, especially the policy-makers themselves. Planners are often policy-makers and bureaucrats and should recognize that they can play a crucial role in the legitimation stage. In terms of increasing equity in society, they can
advocate for those claims-making groups, often most directly affected by the problem and often most powerless.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two provides a review of the literature on the theories of social problems. This review provides a framework for Chapter Three’s analysis of newspaper articles from the Globe and Mail over a ten year period. Chapter Four provides a brief overview of the Canadian News Index during the same ten year period, supplemented by an analysis of a draft comprehensive bibliographic search on homelessness carried out in 1990 by the Centre for Human Settlements. The purpose is to locate the social problem of homelessness on the public agenda. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings, and concludes the thesis.

The thesis contends that if the problem is continually reduced to a problem with an individual’s character, without recognizing that social problems have more complex causes, then society will not take collective responsibility for their resolution. In the absence of a more sophisticated understanding of social problems, solutions will continue to be one dimensional and simplistic.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of social problems literature. The objective is to develop a framework with which to analyze homelessness as a social problem. Both functional and normative approaches are outlined. Themes discussed include the persistence of the more traditional functional approaches reflecting ingrained social attitudes; the role of the media as a measure and manipulator of public opinion; and the concept of the process of development of a social problem.

2.1 THE RATIONALIST PARADIGM

With the Enlightenment came the rational approach to studying the world. In the nineteenth century, industrial change was the impetus for the application of reason to human affairs. Empirical evidence became the ultimate way of knowing. This has characterized all research in the Western world.

Research into social problems can be reviewed through an historical perspective, or through an examination of the contemporary literature. This chapter does both; first by outlining the historical perspective and then by delving into contemporary work, it builds and expands on earlier approaches. This illustrates that these early developments of the twentieth century continue to influence today’s analysis of social problems. Indeed, the standard approaches can clearly be traced a long way back. The uncovering of the facts (the reductionist perspective) has been a central focus of social science research, encouraging an 'objective' view of social problems.
2.1.1 Historical Perspective

The turn of the century was characterized by the social pathology approach. This approach grew from a loose movement of social reformers, academics, and politicians who shared a sense that society could be changed for the better. Individualism, engendered by capitalism, was seen to be endangered by the pathology of individuals. The social problem was due to some personal defect of the character of the individual or group. These pathological individuals were cited as powerful big business, political leaders, and immigrants lacking education. The movement relied primarily on education as the remedy to the perceived pathologies.

In the 1920's, the literature began to reflect the realization that social problems were the result of strains and tensions caused by industrialization. For example, as a result of the disorganizing consequences of industrial capitalism on the traditional cultural and familial institutions, European immigrants experienced disorganization or breakdown of their social and cultural patterns. The approached became known as 'social disorganization' as it was the social institutions which experienced disorganization. This approach advocated the idea that a 'good society' existed and marginal groups were singled out as forming the bounds of such a society. The marginalized provided an incentive to the rest of society to maintain their productive and reproductive roles. This attitude acted as a measure of social control.

Both the social pathology and social disorganization approaches agreed that there was an implicit 'good' society. As America and Canada became more heterogeneous societies, the question arose: Whose good society was it?
2.1.1.1 Challenging the Notion of Value-Free Social Science

The approach emerging in the 1930's stemmed from this questioning of the place of values. Society, it was felt, would be better understood as riddled with conflicts between major groups, for example, between the white collar workers and the middle class. Social problems, it was soon realized, varied according to which group defined them. Here we sense the beginnings of a shift towards a more subjective view of social problems. Challenging the notion of 'value-free' social science, sociologists could no longer merely identify troublesome social conditions without also identifying the subjective element. Whose values were being threatened?

Several sociologists became dissatisfied with the prevailing conception of social problems and contended that the most important element in distinguishing a social problem was the 'value-judgement'. This had been systematically excluded from the previous approaches. These sociologists became critics of the functional theory of social problems, insisting social conditions could not be differentiated from any other as a social problem without value-judgements. Thus the beginnings of a normative theory of social problems emerged.

2.1.1.2 Social Deviance

Each of the above perspectives, however, does not altogether disappear to be replaced with something else. Paradigms first suffer criticism before they are replaced by another way of understanding. In the 1950's, social pathology and social disorganization reappeared in the literature as social deviance, or deviant behavior. This approach can be described as studying the behavior of individuals which transgressed social norms and threatened the
supposed unity of a social system. These transgressions included the social codes of family, work, and property ownership. The deviant behavioral approach stressed that the problem was composed of a set of objective conditions which could be broken down into composite parts, then analyzed and remedied. Still today the strength of this attitude is apparent. Many bureaucrats and policy makers tend to think that human needs are neatly segregated in this manner.

2.1.1.3 Political Value Judgements

In the 1960's there emerged a new brand of value-conflict writings which were more overtly subjective and more political in nature. "Value-conflict" theorists sought to distinguish between an 'objective condition' and the 'definition of conditions' as a problem. This admission indicated the view that social problems are subjective states and require analysis of the 'collective mind of the group'. Waller elaborates:

> Various attempts to treat social problems in a scientific manner have proved useless because they have dealt only with the objective side of social problems and have failed to include the attitude which constituted them problems...(Spector,1977:41).

He goes on to say that the value-judgement is the formal cause of a social problem, just as the law is the formal cause of crime (Spector,1977:42).

As well, Fullers and Myers extend a rejection of the functional theories of social disorganization in support of a theory which includes social values and attitudes:

> If people aren't problem conscious, they will not behave as if there were any problem. Social problems are what people think they are - if conditions are not defined as social problems by the people involved in them, they are not
problems to those people, although they may be problems to outsiders or scientists (Spector, 1977:42).

2.2 SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE CONSTRUCTIONS

Social problems, then, are constructed by members of a society and these constructions are expressions of value-judgements. The definitions of social problems are the accomplishments of members of a society. This is a radically different perspective from the dominant functionalist formulations. As a result, sociologists felt they should turn their efforts to identifying the causes and antecedents of the definitions of society, not the imputed conditions.

It was clear to many that the past methods had studied only one phase of the whole problem. The objective conditions were seen as necessary, but not sufficient cause for the occurrence of a social problem. Study must be directed not only to the objective condition phase of a social problem but also to the value-judgements of the people involved. Functional theories were not wrong, they were simply not complete.

2.2.1 Labelling Perspective

An offshoot of the value-conflict perspective, called labelling theory, gained ground in the 1960's. In essence, deviant behavior was not seen as the objective transgression by individuals of shared social norms, but rather it was a process by which one group of people had the power to label another group as deviant. "Social problems are not just what people think they are, but what powerful and influential people think they are" (Manning, 1985:5). There are no objective conditions which constitute deviant behavior, only a differential power
to label. Property theft, a largely blue collar crime, has a greater negative connotation than does embezzlement, a white collar crime. A professional profiting from tax loopholes is quite different than someone profiting from their welfare benefits. In fact, 'we' cannot allow 'them' to fill out their own welfare forms; a social worker must do it on their behalf.

Like value-conflict, labelling theory was shaped by explicit criticism and rejection of previous formulations. It rejected the notion that acts could be identified as deviant independent of how members of society recognized and treated such behaviors. Labelling theorists argued that deviance could not be conceptualized as characteristics of individuals. It must be sought in the interactive process between those who create and apply the rules and those they single out as deviant. Labelling theorists rejected the etiological approach that sought to differentiate those who commit deviant acts and those who do not. They abandoned the notion that any individual characteristic could account for the differentiation of deviants from non-deviants.

Although they made progress, they did not shed completely the burden of the etiological approach. Although social problem literature now included values, politics, and power, and the beginnings of process of societal reaction to these individuals, sociologists still labelled 'them' as different. The perceived social reaction was still to these 'deviants'.

2.3 IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS

Both the value-conflict and labelling perspectives suggest that we cannot presume to know in advance what constitutes 'normal' society. Different groups adhere to different values, and there is no one notion of the 'good society'.
The hypothesis of a smooth functioning social order is not only artificial, but dangerous. We must abandon the notion that social problems represent human behavior which is a departure from an unquestioned and smooth running cultural status quo. When did economic institutions ever function in perfect efficiency? When was religious dogma ever allowed to go unchallenged? Was there ever a time without confused and confounded individuals? And when did the nations of the world live in harmony? In other words, when and where do we as sociologists find this nice equilibrium of forces (social organization) from which we are supposed to be slipping into a morass of confusion (social disorganization)? (emphasis added) (Spector, 1977:42).

Thus far, two general types of conventional analysis have been reviewed. The first, functional, includes social pathology, disorganization, and deviance. All these approaches assume features of a normal society. The second, termed normative, recognize that different values mean different views of normal. Social problems are merely social conditions which some people dislike but which may not concern others. There is no objective measure of social problems and the question now becomes what constitutes a social problem by 'whose' values, and 'whose' normative standards.

2.4 RECENT WRITINGS

Recent theoretical work on social problems, can be categorized as "interpretive" (Marshall, 1987:48) and stems primarily from a reaction to the functionalist perspective. Within the interpretive approach, there appears to be a wide variety of sub-theories, based on different philosophical opinions, such as political economy, critical theory, symbolic anthropology, etc.. Their common point of departure, however, remains the criticism of the
functional approach. There is a definite admission that social problems are subjective states and require analysis of the collective mind of the group.

One such off-shoot is the public opinion school which focuses directly on the process of perception by others of social conditions which they decide to label as a social problem. The role of the media, then, is critical to the understanding of social problems. Does the media serve to merely reflect public opinion, or is its function a manipulative one, manipulating and creating public opinion?

Further research is needed to determine ownership patterns of media sources, illustrating particularly the differences between public and private ownership on news coverage. This is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it can be said that there is clearly a trend towards increasing concentration of media ownership.

George argues that the definition of social problems are dictated by the interests of the powerful. Dominant ideas in a society at any given time tend to be those of the ruling class: "There may of course, be other definitions of the same problem but for social policy measures it is the ruling class definitions that counts" (George, 1984:14).

2.4.1 Social Problems are a Product of a Process

Just as critical to the understanding of social problems is the notion that problems are a product of an ongoing process of construction and creation. The collective developmental approach incorporates a dynamic view of the way social problems develop. Much of the conventional literature is concerned with identifying social problems rather than with the way social groups try to change the conditions they dislike.
Spector and Kitsuse are critical of many of the popular approaches as they see compromises being made which draw attention away from the definitional process. How is it that some threatening conditions are recognized as social problems as others are not? Is homelessness a threatening condition? If so, to whom? It is this process of definition that is crucial in coming to terms with this question.

Spector and Kitsuse, therefore, attempt to integrate aspects of the value-conflict approach and the social definitional approach. Instead of studying why people are deviant, and what are the causes, the study is directed to: How do people come to define such acts as deviant?

Spector and Kitsuse suggest a new route for the development of social problems literature. The focus is on the definitional claims-making activities, to examine how groups and individuals become engaged in collective activities that recognize putative conditions as problems, and attempt to establish institutional arrangements. The emphasis is on the way in which problems are tackled, rather than on whether they exist or not. Sociologists and planners should be involved in illuminating the manner in which social problems emerge.

2.4.1.1 Claims-Making Activities: The Unfolding of the Claim

The nature of activities that constitute and give rise to social problems are the focus of this perspective. The newly formulated question is as follows: Where do social problems activities, claims-making activities and responding activities come from? According to Henley,
Chapter Two

To accept the claims-asserting definition of social problems is to believe that social problems are a matter of ideology and, essentially, manifestations of political conflict. We do not absent ourselves from usefulness when we attempt to understand these processes (Seidman, 1986:77).

This approach is a rejection of attempting to explain social problems by identifying their causes. Rather, it attempts to describe the context and background of social problems, and their social bases. It integrates politics, values, media, and power into a framework of 'process'; it seeks to identify the beginning point of a group's interest and participation in the preliminary stages of claims-making activities. Not all preparations, it is realized, will lead to social problems. Some may be abandoned, and some groups themselves may disband before they ever get to the stage of making a claim.

By studying the process of social problem definition, problems are conceived as always being in a dynamic stage of becoming. Social problems are seen as developing and evolving into a state of being, and this provides a useful conceptual tool. The symbolic interactionists who have made the greatest use of this conception of society insist that social phenomenon must be analyzed as an emergent sequence of events.

2.5 NATURAL HISTORY MODEL

Fullers and Myers from the Value-Conflict school initially outlined a very rudimentary three staged process model: awareness of a social problem, policy determination, and reform. Their contribution to the study of social problems was their belief that social problems exhibit a temporal course of development in which different phases or stages may be distinguished. The problem is seen as always in a dynamic stage of
becoming, passing through a natural history of development. The term 'natural history' is a
simply a conceptual tool for examining social problems data.

They did not, however, follow it further. Spector and Kitsuse outline James Bossard's
more elaborate model:

(1) recognition of the problem
(2) discussion of its seriousness
(3) attempts at reform, usually
    intuitively arrived at, often ill-
    advised, promoted by the 'well
    let's do something folks'
(4) suggestions that more careful study
    is needed - what we need is a
    survey
(5) here follows some change in
    personnel of people interested
(6) emphasis on broad basic factors
(7) dealing with individual cases
(8) another change in personnel
(9) program inductively arrived at
(10) refinements of techniques of study
    and treatment
(11) refinements of concepts
(12) another change in personnel
    (Spector,1977:138)

Bossard's stages were based on organizational behavior working on the problem, moving
back and forth between Fuller and Myers's three stages, with some attention to changes
within and among those who are addressing the problem.

Herbert Blumer, a well known sociologist, also presented a natural history model of
social problems. He used an analogy to the field of collective behavior to conceptualize the
process of definition through which social problems are defined. His five stages are labelled:
Chapter Two

(1) the emergence of a social problem
(2) the legitimation of the problem
(3) the mobilization of action
(4) the formation of an official plan
(5) the implementation of the plan

(Blumer, 1971:298)

He argues, from a value-conflict perspective, that objective conditions do not and cannot constitute a social problem. The process of collective definition determines the career and fate of social problems:

This process determines whether social problems will arise, whether they become legitimated, how they are shaped in discussion, how they come to be addressed in official policy and how they are reconstituted in putting planning action into effect (Blumer, 1971:298).

Social problems are fundamentally products of a process of collective definition instead of existing independently as a set of objective social arrangements with an intrinsic make-up. He elaborates further that the traditional view of social problems is an extremely deficient approach:

The traditional approach assumed the reduction of a social problem into objective elements catches the problem in its actual character and constitutes its scientific analysis (Blumer, 1971:301).

Sociologists discern social problems only after they are recognized as social problems by and in the society. Designation of social problems by society is derived from public designation.
Blumer also introduces the concept of contingencies, that is, certain events may or may not occur that propel the social problem to a subsequent stage. The problem may not move to the next stage and the life cycle may not be played out.

To summarize Blumer's model, analysis is not possible without the contextual elements. The societal definitional perspective shows how the social problem forms its nature, lays out how it is to be approached, and shapes what is done about it. It is the interplay of various interests and objectives (political, social and economic) that constitutes the way in which society deals with any of its social problems.

Blumer's model is fairly comprehensive and convincing. This perspective could have enormous impact on the way problems are dealt with and the types of solutions employed. Instead of 'managing' the poor with more patronizing social workers, the recognition of the process of poverty and homelessness would result in more comprehensive and multi-level reforms. For example, the policy focus would not concentrate on dealing with one dimension of the problem, but would instead also integrate policies regarding mental health, gentrification, demolition of affordable housing or rooming houses, and the re-institution of the Office of the Rentalsman (in British Columbia).

2.6 SPECTOR AND KITSUSE'S NATURAL HISTORY MODEL

Spector and Kitsuse incorporate some key elements of Blumer's formulation, though they go beyond it to examine what happens after the legislation is passed. Their four stage model presents a way of thinking about what happens to a social problem once policy has been determined and implemented. Stage 2 corresponds to the end of the Blumer and the
Fuller and Myer models, which seem to posit that once legislation is passed and the plan of action implemented, the problem is solved. This may not be the case.

At each stage, they stress, the social problem could fall off the agenda. They see the role of government officials or agencies as particularly prominent in terms of defining the problem and in suggesting the response. The response may not do what the claims-makers are calling for, causing a re-evaluation of the problem and new claims.

The following is an outline of their model. Titles of the stages are given to coincide with Blumer's model more clearly, and then the model is expanded to include two additional stages.

Stage One: Emergence of a Social Problem. During this initial stage, some issue or condition in society begins to be recognized as a problem. Without this recognition, a social problem does not exist. The initial stage often attempts to transform private troubles into public issues. The most critical aspect of this formative stage are the ways that complaints are raised and the strategies used to press claims, gain publicity and arouse controversy. The success of the emergence phase, depends on the power of the claims-making group; their size, resources, money and/or skill. Success also depends on the nature of the claim, and the mechanisms available for pressing the claim.

Another critical factor is the extent of documentation, or media coverage. The fate of the claim depends heavily on the channel through which it is pressed, the strategies used to
achieve visibility of the condition, and the personnel who are involved. The role of the media is crucial to the life history of any social issue.

Social problems arise from the statements by groups that certain conditions are intolerable and must be changed. Such actions may provoke reactions from other groups that prefer existing arrangements or who would stand to lose something if they were altered. Such groups may challenge the claims of the protesting group, mount their own campaign and lobby against proposed changes. This may result in conflicts between groups that do not use the same values or who have opposite interests in the condition in question. Such conflicts may increase the visibility of debate and facilitate the creation of public awareness of the imputed condition. The visibility and documentation component signifies the culmination of stage one. A given social problem may remain at this stage indefinitely, it may quickly be transformed into the next stage, or it may falter and die.

It should be noted here that societal norms and standards differ over time. As well, recognition of social problems by a society is a highly selective process and issues or conditions which are ignored at one time may become of great concern at another despite the fact that the issue or condition itself remains largely unchanged. (For example, child abuse and wife abuse have only recently been recognized as a social problem even though the condition has existed since time began.) As a result, relatively few collectively defined social problems emerge, and the number and type change over time. Many problems never reach stage two.

Stage Two: Legitimation, Mobilization, Plan of Action. By now, the social problem must have already achieved recognition by everyone concerned; policy-makers, community groups,
bureaucrats, and politicians. It is now in the public eye and is discussed by those involved. There is no agreement on the definition of the problem, however. Long debate occurs over the definition of the problem and eventually, someone must take control, or responsibility of the issue.

Usually, when claims are put to governmental agencies or institutions, social problems activity undergoes considerable transformation. The transformation begins when the agencies start to recognize a group and respond to its complaints. The bases of this recognition may be diverse. The group may have brought considerable pressure to bear on the agency through confrontation tactics, mass media campaigns, demonstrations, or threats. It may have applied economic pressure, such as the threat of a boycott, or used political influence, or the agency may have recognized that it had something to gain by taking over and controlling the issue.

Formal recognition of the group may range from passive acknowledgement of the claim to active attempts to control, regulate or eliminate the condition at issue in the claim. Any of these responses is likely to give the protest group a degree of recognition or standing that it did not have before. The group is no longer considered as merely a radical or fringe group, but is considered a credible and official voice for the particular problem. The response of an official agency to a protest group may be the result of a long struggle to gain standing. While official response and recognition may give the protest group its finest hour, it may also represent the beginning of the end of its control over the claims it raises. The response to its complaints may take the edge off its protest that "nothing is being done". The establishment of a committee to study the problem may cool the controversy and make the
issue less visible in the mass media. In this way, Committees and Task Forces play a crucial role in the definitional process.

While the original group may comment on the report of the committee, it is that report that will define the issues, summarize the facts and put various groups into perspective and into their places. Thus as official and powerful agencies or institutions begin to take part in the social problems activity, they may lend prestige to the original protest group, but at the same time may begin to overshadow and thus reduce the significance of its activities. Finally, the responding agencies may take over the issue, make it their own, and neutralize or eliminate the original protest group (Spector, 1977:149).

Often, the problem is re-defined, or the solution is offered first, then the problem is defined according to the solution available. Commissions may be the burial ground of a great many social problems. In order for a social problem to continue to exists beyond this formidable hurdle, Spector and Kitsuse maintain that an institution must be created. Once an institution is mandated, a social problem cannot disappear so easily. They are also aware of organizational behavior and take a pragmatic view. They recognize that agencies, once created, assume a life of their own. The staff develop a vested interest in the operation of the agency, and can at any time divert their attention to satisfying complaints rather than searching for solution to the problem.

Stage Three: New Conditions, New Claims. Debate continues and assertions are made about the inadequacies or injustices of the response which may engender new conditions around which new social problems activities are organized. Again, problems can undergo re-
definition of terms and words, through new committees and task forces, which could connote different meanings.

Stage Four: Innovation, Alternatives. Claims-making groups may decide it is no longer possible to work within the system. The focus of their activities shift from complaints or claims-making to developing alternative solutions, or alternative institutions.

This, then, is the model for analysis:

Stage 1 - Emergence of a Social Problem
Stage 2 - Legitimation, Mobilization, Plan of Action
Stage 3 - New Conditions, New Claims
Stage 4 - Innovation, Alternative Institutions

The purpose of this thesis is to document this process, the background, the development and evolution of a social problem: homelessness. This approach provides documentation of the condition, identifies the committees or organizations involved, and the individuals involved. The process of construction of social problems as well as the various stages of their development thus becomes crucial to the examination of social problems in society, why and how they emerge, and the methods employed to resolve them, including who ultimately takes control of the problem.
2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that society continually modifies its approach to social problem resolution as we learn about the phenomenon. Attempting solutions which address one aspect of the problem in isolation should not be considered satisfactory. There has been a gradual recognition that the subjective view is at least as important as the objective one. Reducing the 'problem' and responding with short-term reactionary solutions, characterized by incremental band-aid tinkering, does little to change the nature of the social problem. Efforts directed to softening the consequences of the market and managing the problem of homelessness do little to resolve and eliminate it.

Analyses must include the process of collective societal definition. Social problems are the products of this process; they do not exist independently as a set of objective social arrangements with an intrinsic make-up. Designation of social problems by society is derived from public designation, and analysis of social problems is not possible without the contextual elements; the economic, political and social elements, which have in the past, been omitted. Most importantly, society must recognize and accept collective responsibility for those problems it collectively defines.
CHAPTER THREE

DOCUMENTING HOMELESSNESS AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

"You cannot disregard them if you accept the civilization that produced them".
George Orwell

This chapter forms the empirical work of the research. The media is a critical element in reflecting, educating and manipulating public opinion. This third chapter is devoted to documenting the growing awareness of the plight of the homeless through newspaper coverage. This is accomplished through a literature search of articles in the Globe and Mail over a ten year period, 1979 to 1989. Based on significant articles representing a shift in information or opinion, there will be four time periods, labelled as Parts 3.1 through to 3.4. These time periods reflect public perceptions of, and activities around, homelessness.

This chapter identifies the actors and the debate as revealed through the Globe and Mail articles. It documents the development of claims and issues as they are defined, re-defined and passed from one set of participants to another. A summary of the major articles is presented and the actors are identified, along with the organizations they represent: politicians, city officials (bureaucrats), community workers, church groups, policy observers/makers.
Chapter Three

This chapter documents an increasing public awareness and recognition of the problem as well as an increasing number of actors and organizations involved in putting forth their particular claim to the state. However, the problem continues to be marginalized and the types of solutions implemented remain rooted within the traditional functional approach. We objectify reality and 'treat' our social problems as independent, isolated events.

3.1 INCOME PROBLEM

Articles in the period 1979 to 1985 are found within the 'housing' category of the Canadian News Index. The search was originally intended to review only articles with homeless, homelessness, or shelter in the title. However, many articles concerning homeless people were in fact found under titles such as "Problem is Income Not Housing" (March 29, 1979), and "Many Desperate for Homes" (November 14, 1979). These articles reflect the attitude that poor people live in poor housing,

not because of some failure in the operation of the housing market, but because they do not have enough money to buy anything better. If they had the resources, the market would supply adequate housing (March 29, 1979).

The problem is defined as an income problem and a financial problem. The solution advocated is a system of shelter allowance coupons.

Other articles in 1979 and several in 1980, cite the rental market as extremely tight. Vacancy rates hover around zero. The focus of the housing debate concerns rent controls. Walter Block of the Fraser Institute contends that rent controls "are an unmitigated
disaster, to be abandoned as fast as possible. They are the cause of the sustained housing shortage..." (June 25, 1980).

Increasing the housing supply is identified as the solution to people living in tents and hotels. The B.C. Social Credit Government social attitudes are "characterized by a welfare work shovel" (June 25, 1980), meaning give the homeless a marginal job such as digging ditches in exchange for welfare assistance. Again, the problem of being homeless is portrayed as personal problem, as a result of inadequate personal income and poor personal character.

In a November 14, 1980 article, Felicia Klingberg writes about a family living in a hotel, placed there under an emergency shelter program of the B.C. Ministry of Human Resources. Demolition of affordable units to make way for luxury apartments is cited as the cause. Another article dated September 5, 1981, this time from Ontario. Reporter Mark Bourrie describes another homeless family living in a tent in a camping ground. A combination of high interest rates and a chronically low vacancy rate has contributed to this family's problem. They could not meet their mortgage payments. The problem of being homeless is still regarded as a personal problem. These events are seen as isolated incidents, and are the result of poor money management, or a bad turn of luck.

3.1.1 Spate of Demolitions

From July 1981, the articles concentrate on the de-institutionalization of psychiatric patients from mental institutions. These discharged patients experienced severe difficulty in
locating suitable accommodation. At the same time, rooming houses were being renovated and gentrified, resulting in a loss of badly needed affordable rental stock. Seven out of seven articles mention the discharge of psychiatric patients, demolition/gentrification of rooming house stock, low vacancy rates and a high unemployment rate, as factors leading to the increasing numbers of homeless people. As well, the press identifies an emerging trend towards condominium conversion, or building new condominiums as they are more profitable than building any form of rental housing.

This indicates the growth of an awareness that a combination of factors gives rise to the increasing numbers of homeless people, though no coherent analysis is undertaken. The problem is portrayed as primarily a housing problem, specifically a lack of rental housing.

In June 1981, conversion of rooming houses to single-family dwellings is seen as undermining efforts by the City of Toronto to house people on low incomes. The article interviews the City Planning Department, councillors and members of the public to get their views. From the figures given by the Planning Department, it is clear that the city's housing stock grew by only 1000 despite the construction of 7000 new dwelling units between 1976 and 1979. Demolition is cited as the primary cause. Supervisor of the Planning report, Simon Chamberlain states: "We could see the virtual elimination of a particular segment of the housing stock from the market, (that is) low rental accommodation" (June 20, 1981). One of the councillors is quoted as saying city owned housing corporation is the primary route to providing affordable housing units which can't be achieved any other way.
The Mayor does express his concern, but prefers to approach the problem through lobbying senior levels of government for more funds. "More incentives for rental accommodation are needed from other levels of government" (June 20, 1981).

Irma Pattison, president of the Runnymede-Jane Homeowners Association, described rooming houses and bachelorettes as social and physical problems. She believes these people displaced by the deconversion are careless and indifferent to the community. "These type of units are not conducive to a family neighbourhood. The city should stay out of the housing business. It is just a burden to the taxpayer" (June 20, 1981).

Robert Riggs from the Ontario Ministry of Housing is not convinced there is a problem:

It has not been proven that a deconversion problem exists. It could be a passing trend (June 20, 1981).

In 1982, the demolition and deconversion problem is so intense, the Toronto City Council votes 16 -5 to ask the Provincial Government for demolition control legislation, giving them the power to refuse demolition permits where existing housing is structurally sound.

Another article appearing in March 1983, is indicative of a raging debate over rent controls. The author (George Banz) expounds that rent controls are not the answer. The solution to the 'housing mess' is to return to a freer market. Appropriate tax measures might encourage low risk investment in land at correspondingly low rates of interest, and allowing developers to bypass overly restrictive local zoning regulations would permit the development of more housing (March 11, 1983).
Chapter Three

Until 1983, the word 'homeless' has appeared only three times in titles of articles in the Globe and Mail. The third time is December 22, 1983, and the article describes homeless people as men, women and children, not just the typical male alcoholic stereotype. This is a significant article in terms of educating and breaking down the stereo-typical image normally held. As a feature article written by Regina Hickl-Szabo, the picture is painted. Across Canada there are more destitute families and single people wandering the streets without work and without a home than any time since the Great Depression.

The ranks of the homeless no longer consist only of perennial vagrants and street alcoholics. There are parents with children in tow, young men and women - many of them college grads - and former psychiatric patients showing up in droves on the doorsteps of emergency hostels across the country (December 22, 1983).

She goes on to say that the approach to deal with the increasing numbers is for the most part, to provide stop-gap help for the homeless, or to send them away to other jurisdictions. In Vancouver, Globe Bureau Chief Ian Mulgrew discovered that the Socred Government spent more than $129,000 in 1981-82 to send 'down and outers' back to the provinces from which they came. The prevailing attitude towards transient indigents by the provincial politicians, Hickl-Szabo says, is identical to the popular bumpersticker, "Welcome to B.C. - Now go home" (December 22, 1983).

Hickl-Szabo also notes that the clientele in the food bank and soup kitchen line-up is changing. There are younger men and women, and families in need. Hostels, meant for temporary shelter, are becoming more permanent housing for some. More than half of those using hostels are under 24. The debate now includes an admission that although more
shelters are needed, more permanent housing also needs to be created. "Social policy
observers agree the problem is one of a shortage of affordable housing" (December 22, 1983).

Discussion: This one article represents four points of view, signifying the broadening of the
debate from the occasional claim from the community worker to the local government, to the
perspective of the policy observer, municipal official and politician:

1) the administrator indicates the problem is being studied;
2) the policy observer states the problem is a shortage of affordable housing
3) the community worker offers a project specific solution and asks for more funds from the
   municipal level for more meaningful programs to teach some of these people life skills;
4) the municipal politicians, while realizing there is a problem, refuse to take responsibility;
housing is not a municipal responsibility, rather they insist it is a national matter.

These attitudes characterize the public perception about the homeless and shed light on
conflicting values, definitions and solutions, and illustrate a lack of will to accept
responsibility for the problem.

3.2 THE 'HOMELESS' AS A CATEGORY: 1986

This is the first year that 'homeless people' exists as a separate category in the
Canadian News Index. There are 29 articles on the homeless, appearing predominantly in
the Toronto Star and the Montreal Gazette. The Globe and Mail carries three; two dealing
with the homeless in the United States, and one on Canada.
The article based on the Canadian situation is entitled, "Winter Deaths Feared Despite More Hostels" (Nov 17, 1986). Again there is admission that "adding more beds to the hostel system will not solve the problem. What is needed, city officials and community workers agree, is long-term housing" (Nov 17, 1986). For the first time, this article overtly mentions that the problem is much deeper than simply a shortage of affordable housing:

To make matters worse, the plight of the homeless is compounded by a myriad of other social and emotional problems - de-institutionalized psychiatric patients, unemployed youths, battered wives (Nov 17, 1986).

City politicians begin to change their traditional views. Some community workers have noticed a great deal of change in the willingness of various levels of government to come to grips with complex housing issues. However, they say that although awareness has improved significantly since 1983, not much has changed 'on the front lines'. Funding sources and innovative programs are not viewed as a priority.

A social problem in order to be addressed by public policy, must be seen as dangerous in some way to the economically dominant groups (George, 1984:6). An article by Christopher Reed entitled, "US Ignores Street People" (November 21, 1986) tries to illuminate the danger of allowing the numbers of homeless to swell. It is a front page article, well written, and poignant as he draws an analogy to the Third World right inside the United States:

A vast and unknown nation of the dispossessed is forming in the richest country in the world. They are the street people, the homeless, jobless, and unemployable, alcoholics, drug addicts, runaway teenagers and mothers with young children, the mentally disturbed and the insane - and they all live at least some of the time on the streets... the uncounted thousands of this Third World inside the States... and the US street population is not only poor, it is dangerous. TB rate is worse than in South
East Asia... space in slum hotels costs more per square foot that in the gleaming office towers of Century City (November 21, 1986).

Further, Reed alludes that many of the these new homeless are a direct result of cuts to welfare services by the Reagan administration, a direct result of public policy. This only serves to add another factor to the ever growing list of a synergy of events that serve to increase the numbers of homeless daily. At this point, the list of contributing factors has grown from low income, poverty, and affordability problems, to housing shortages spurred by demolition of affordable housing and inner city redevelopment (gentrification), to de-institutionalization, and finally, policies concerning welfare restructuring.

The Reed article cites a study undertaken in California which indicated that one third of homeless were on the streets because they could not afford rent. This illustrates that the debate continues to be pre-occupied with identifying the reasons people are homeless. The debate has not yet included a definition of homeless people or of homelessness in general.

3.3 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS: 1987

This is the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, and as would be expected, the number of articles in preparation for the event is overwhelming. There exists a great wealth of writing on the subject of homelessness in this year. The media is bringing to the front pages the debate over the reasons why people are homeless. This in itself is a great step ahead. As well, homelessness is a credible word, and an agreed upon term. It is used by city officials, politicians, community workers, and academics alike.
In 1987, there are 98 articles written under the category of homeless people in the Canadian News Index. For the first time, another category is created, "See also Abandoned Children, Runaway Children". In this year, June Callwood does a special series of feature stories on homelessness across Canada. Even within her own series, she becomes more aware and more political. Her stories move from being personal anecdotes to the raising of root questions: Why do we have homelessness? Why do we have people sleeping in cardboard boxes? In her articles, she questions the choices we are making as a society. She states, "...we must admit that the liberal democratic system in conjunction with industrialization and patriarchy, creates a system of inequality. We are responsible for allowing and creating the homeless".

In "Reagan's cutbacks blamed as US homeless toll grows", Bill Girdner insists that these people are members of the army of the homeless. A group of related government policies and economic trends combined to put a large number of people on the street suddenly. The overriding factor cited in this article is health care. Half of the homeless people are people who became sick and had no health care insurance. The article captures the sense that all the factors that throw people out on the street are accelerating, not retreating. Tuberculosis and other ailments plague the homeless in Toronto (March 30, 1987).

The word 'homelessness' first appears in May of 1987. John Jagt, Manager of the Metro Toronto Hostel Operations is quoted as saying, "The problem is no one agrees what homelessness is". By using the word homelessness, there is an admission that homeless
people are now recognized as in a process of becoming. This is apparent if we examine for a moment, the words homeless and homelessness. 'Homeless' is an adjective, giving a particular quality to an individual. 'Homelessness' is a verb, meaning it is an action of some kind, or a process of some kind. It follows that if homelessness is a process, then the people that are homeless evolved there. It is a combination of events that lead the individual to being homelessness, and their situation is complicated by a myriad of additional problems.

In response to John Jagt, interviews with church groups and pastors indicate that hostels are not the preferred solution. Usually, the staff have no time or capacity to deal with the multitude of problems that the homeless experience. The need is for more permanent accommodation where the length of stay is extended and is not tied to participation in a program.

An article about Leslie, a baglady living in Janet's backyard, is found in May: "A baglady puts down roots, Leslie not welcome in Janet's yard" (May 9 1987). The subtitle of the article points to the potential threat to the middle class way of life: "Homeless invading privacy of affluent". Homeless individuals are presented as becoming a danger to the affluent.

**Discussion:** The following points of view are present:

1) the administrator - the problem is no one agrees what homelessness is, (Jagt) therefore no one is taking responsibility for doing something.

2) the community worker - everyone has to share in the blame for the plight of the homeless.
3) the middle class - the homeless are portrayed as deviant and therefore are threatening to the middle class way of life.

3.3.1 The "New Homeless"

"Shantytowns a Sign of Rental Shortage. Campsites Sheltering Working Homeless" (Sept 15, 1987), Sean Fine pulls to the forefront the idea that the homeless are a new group of people, the homeless working class. To Fine, this new-style bedroom community set up in various campsites around Toronto presents a vivid picture of the gap between rich and poor. It also illustrates the extreme shortage of rental accommodation in the greater Metropolitan area. The vacancy rate across Toronto means 426 units are available at any given time.

"Garden Sheds a Solution for the Homeless?" John Sewell, March 30, 1987 presents a facetious article about giving the homeless a garden shed to live in. To Sewell, the garden shed is better than what they have at present: nothing.

The major debate focuses on determining why people are homeless. There are two camps: one saying homelessness is a result of the rental housing shortage, while another camp is saying that homelessness is the result of a multitude of reasons. To this second camp, the response to homelessness needs to be addressed on a multitude of levels. The problem is not exclusively a housing problem. To the first camp, however, the solution is to build more housing.
3.3.2 Values, Choices and Politics

One of Callwood's articles appearing Sept 23, 1987 is entitled, "Homeless Women in Toronto/Vancouver dire lack of affordable housing". She covers a conference on homeless women as part of the Canadian Conference to observe the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, called 'Let this Woman Speak'. The views represented in the article and during the conference extend from homeless individuals to community workers and administrators. The homeless perspective is represented at last. One homeless woman at the Conference states, "Homelessness is a symptom. It's growing all over the world and it has alot to do with politics, with who has the money and who hasn't." Community worker Pam Cooley follows with, "As we look at homelessness we have to include the people the problem is about and be directed by them. Because life can be changed that way".

It is clear from June Callwood's article that the Canadian Conference was large; over 1400 delegates attended from all over the world, yet it attracted almost no media attention. It is also clear that early articles in Part One, never outlined the number of "actors" that have been identified in Part Three and Four. This increasing debate signifies a move toward the public agenda.

The next major article is written by Sean Fine; "No Vacancy, Canada's Homeless in a Helpless Search for Shelter" (October 3, 1987). It is a focus article meant to shock the developed world. In the midst of plenty, there are those without even basic shelter. He describes the plight of one family as only a part of an immense regional crisis that has at its centre a national conundrum: Metro Toronto and area has the country's most potent, job rich economy. But its growth has helped cause perhaps the worst housing crisis Canada has
ever encountered. Figures indicate that between 50,000 and 65,000 are homeless in the
Toronto area alone.

Peter Smith, the Housing Commissioner of Peel and president of the International
Conference on Homelessness held in Ottawa offers a definition: those individuals who lack
adequate shelter of their own.

There’s the one’s on the verge as well,... I don’t know how you ever estimate them,
They suffer severe affectability problems. Any kind of financial disruption puts them
back on the streets.

The article quotes a provincial bureaucrat, John Sweeney, Ontario Ministry of Community of
Social Services, as warning potential immigrants they have a very limited chance of finding
affordable shelter in the major urban centres. This echoes a similar warning made in 1947
by Toronto Mayor Robert Saunders, who went so far as to advertise this view in the
newspapers in the hopes of preventing people from coming to Toronto. The article also
mentions counting the homeless, and the difficulty in establishing an accurate picture of the
actual number:

There is no authoritative estimate of the national homeless population. Numbers
vary according to definition, survey methods and political interest.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (an advocacy group) surveyed the use
of Canada’s emergency shelters on one day, from which they deduced that the homeless
population ranged between 130,000 - 250,000. From the academic perspective, however,
Peter Oberlander from the Centre for Human Settlements, states he does not know how
many homeless there are, and is skeptical of anyone who does. Definitions vary, making
counting and consistency almost impossible. Debate is now beginning over how to define the problem and identifying the objective condition, the actual number of homeless people.

The article brings up several other points: a telephone survey of eight campgrounds in and around Toronto showed 75 homeless families living in seven of them. No family hostels exist, meaning that families would have to be separated in order to go to a shelter; ex-psychiatric patients make up between 20% and 40% of the nation's homeless. And civic bureaucrats enter the debate. Mental Health officials say not enough money has been spent on community support in the two decades since the province began discharging mental patients; this last trend is linked to widespread demolition of rooming houses and a reduction in welfare rates.

Metro Toronto planner Lynn Morrow says "the longer a problem goes on, the higher up it cuts. We're now getting into what would traditionally have been thought of as middle class" (October 3, 1987). She goes on to say that in the last provincial election, housing issues were suspiciously absent. She then identifies several reasons why homelessness is on the increase: few rental projects have been built, due to rent controls, government cutbacks, and more money to be made in the condominium market, as well as a strong economy strong demand for housing, changes in family size, increasing divorce rates, young people moving out sooner, senior population growing. There is a recognition that homelessness is reaching its way into the middle class, through the inequity of the system. Society is responsible:

This mentality of single family home ownership belongs to the post war era of traditional families in individual houses. If Torontonians want that to continue, they will pay for it with the sight of families living in tents at their borders (October 3, 1987).
What is the solution? From the same focus article, "More Emergency Beds Planned", Sean Fine reports that despite the growing awareness of the public and the civic politicians, Metro Toronto wants to add 503 emergency beds to its system of 2,328 hostel beds and 200 motels and hotels. However, one civic politician, Jack Layton suggests building more permanent housing for the homeless.

In November, June Callwood begins her series of articles on homelessness. This time, the stories make the front page headlines: 8,500 Poor Huddle together in a City Within a City, Vancouver. The sub-title reads, "The United Nations has declared this year to be the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless". June Callwood has travelled coast to coast to see first hand the plight of some of Canadians "Resident Strangers". Today's articles are the first of a series.

Beginning in Vancouver, Callwood describes the Downtown Eastside as the city within a city. Vancouver's homeless live in a city of their own. She applies the United Nation's definition of homelessness:

the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which people have personal control 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 (November 14, 1987).

Many of these people in the Downtown Eastside are considered homeless because they lack security of tenure. The Four Sisters Co-operative, developed by the Downtown Eastside Resident's Association, is held up as a model for the future, described as a haven of sanity
and repose. The residents of the co-op have secure tenure and responsibility of looking after their own housing. They have broken the cycle of homelessness.

In a second article, again on the front page, Callwood looks at Edmonton’s situation in, "Edmonton Fights Frigid Streets. Native People without Shelter Tend to Elude Official Count" (November 16, 1987). As a gesture to the United Nations, Edmonton a year ago called a meeting of people such as Ann Harvey, Co-ordinator of Edmonton Inner City Housing Society which operates rooming houses for the Poor, Michael Farris and Gail Williams of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society which houses teenagers, and other advocacy groups. Thirty agencies in total formed the Edmonton Coalition on Homelessness (ECOH), and tackled the problem with a massive survey and some unwelcome recommendations for government initiatives. They deduced that there are 5,000 absolutely homeless in Edmonton and thousands more whose housing is deplorable. Leanne Rivlin, one of the members, describes the homeless people as resident strangers, as people who have lost their roles within society as well as their homes. "They are spare parts, useful in a war or when the economy is booming, but otherwise, superfluous". Ann Harvey, the organizer of the coalition, states:

Housing is a crucial factor in stabilizing people's lives. What we need is more decent, safe, affordable housing and the right to live in it without being labelled" (November 16, 1987).

Community groups attempt innovative solutions to housing the homeless. They realize they need to reduce the social isolation many of these people experience. They lack a social network, a community.
The story is similar in Halifax. "Unaffordable Rents Keep Poor Moving, Welfare Income Leaves Little for Housing" (November 19, 1987). The current housing situation forces isolation and poverty on women and children who most need support of society. There is not much subsidized housing in Nova Scotia. There is a recognition of the need for it, but no political will to build it.

Through Callwood's series of articles, she identifies the lack of political will as the main obstacle for overcoming the problem. No one is willing to accept responsibility, and no political level is willing to do anything about it. Callwood becomes political. She asks the root questions: Why are so many people hungry and homeless? What should be changed? She interviews a community legal worker who identifies the need to examine bad laws and a bad welfare system, but again, there is no political will to do this.

In Montreal, Callwood cites inner city redevelopment as a contributing factor to increasing numbers of homeless people. Montreal's tax revenues are higher but there is little evidence that politicians are interested in providing affordable housing for the poor being displaced. She also points out that we should be able to learn from the mistakes made by other provinces. Both Ontario and Quebec discharged psychiatric patients without first putting in place a network of housing and social support services. Community groups are attempting innovative housing projects to do this, but are finding government financing formulas anachronistic. Several of the frustrated groups call the effort "casse-cou", (breakneck):

After listening to reports that poor people like everyone else need the privacy of self-contained units and that emergency shelters are revolving doors that can't stabilize
broken lives, the City of Montreal recently announced its new approach to homelessness: **MORE SHELTERS** (emphasis added) (November 20, 1987).

Callwood's writing is becoming much more political, from human interest stories, to attempting to address some of the key questions: WHY? What are the underlying causes of homelessness? Her articles illustrate the views of community workers, agencies, religious organizations, and she realizes that these questions are controversial and rather dangerous. She quotes Richard Woolrich of St. Michael's Soup Kitchen who states,

> The trouble with all soup kitchens is that while they support people in need, they also support a system which creates people in need...Services like soup kitchens were created to provide temporary support for people who had seasonal incomes, like loggers. The people who come to soup kitchens now aren't in temporary need, their needs are chronic. We're using an old model for new problems (November 20, 1987).

And Bishop Remi de Roo:

> When I give bread to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist (November 20, 1987).

In her last article, Callwood summarizes her findings from travelling across Canada, in "No Regional Boundaries for the Poor, Affordable Housing the Key Across the Whole Country" (November 21, 1987). Everywhere, the poor are growing younger; young children, unskilled youths, young mothers and children. Poverty exacerbates the message of worthlessness. Homelessness is one more aspect that has altered the face of poverty in our country. Why does the affluent country need soup lines? How can it be that people live in cars and cardboard boxes? A news release from the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Coalition states that homelessness is a much broader and deeper phenomenon that
most Canadian's believe. Housing is seen everywhere as the key issue in the nation of the poor. Poverty will only be relieved when housing is stable and affordable. Community workers think the country is beginning to understand that.

Discussion: These latter articles focus on political will. The reason we have not resolved homelessness is primarily a question of political choice. There is no shortage of resources in Canada to build more long term housing and provide adequate services. It is the way in which we are utilizing these resources. The response continues to focus on building more shelters without taking into account other policy measures at the same time.

3.4 BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR

The year begins with an article in January "As Temperatures Plunge Lower, Defiance of Some Homeless Intact". D'Arcy MC Govern interviews two homeless individuals who have chosen to live outdoors on principle (January 11,1988). He also interviews a winter survival expert from the Canadian Forces Base in Trenton, Ontario to make the point that almost anyone can live outdoors year round. It is as though the article was written for the homeless person:

Its not so much the cold, its getting out of the wind...Find an enclosed space. A candle or even body heat will bring the temperature up to a comfortable level. It won't be above freezing, but its livable (January 11,1988).

In February, Sean Fine writes an article about homeless families still living in campgrounds. He describes the trauma associated with moving all around northern Ontario

54
looking for work and housing. In the same month, Fine writes another article about homeless youths and programs to get them into the work force. Covenant House, an agency of the Roman Catholic Church sheltered over 1700 youths last year (1987). Toronto retailer stores, in need of employees, have agreed to take some of the youths from Covenant House. The attitude of the employers can be summed up in the following quote:

(the program) appealed to me because it is that difficult to find people...it is a pretty good group and generally pretty eager. We treat them pretty much like any other group of recruits...though some managers are notified of the new employees' backgrounds (February 9, 1988).

Again in February, an article by Ann Rauhala describes homelessness from a woman's perspective. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has been told that homeless men in Ottawa are better served than women in the same circumstances. Those who work with the homeless say there is increasing demand for shelter for women. The Ottawa group 'Women for Justice' has urged the commission to initiate a complaint against the ministries of housing, social services, and health and the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. While three shelters for men and two for families were financed, there were none for homeless women (February 20, 1988).

In March, political action in the form of a rally takes place. The Ontario Housing Minister Chaviva Hosek has agreed to talk next week to a group of homeless people to hear their view on the severity of the province's housing shortage. Michael Shapcott, organizer of the rally, leads the march with one hundred people shouting, "Give us homes in 88". The article interviews two homeless individuals and Shapcott. Shapcott's conclusion is that there is no commitment on Hosek's part to meet the people or see what is happening. Mary
Chapter Three

Goederham writes an article on the meeting that took place between Hosek, the housing groups and homeless people, describing it as a failure.

3.4.1 Lobbying and Coalitions

In civic politics, a new by-law is passed which causes great concern to groups working with the homeless and those developing rooming houses in Toronto. In March, a six month freeze is placed on new rooming houses in the west end of the city. Councillor Betty Disero supports the by-law as she expresses the desire to stop neighbourhoods from becoming ghettos. To Jack Layton, another councillor, this freeze seems absurd as the numbers of homeless are swelling every year while the number of rooming houses in Toronto is shrinking. Rooming houses all over the city are being converted to single-family dwellings as medium income people move back into the city's core. A six month freeze for a chronic street person is a critical situation. The existence of a housing coalition is apparent as one of the member organizations speaks out against the by-law.

Lila Sarick writes an article which appears June 9, 1988 entitled, "Squeezed Out by the Summit". In preparation for the International Economic Summit held in Toronto, city workers embarked on a massive pre-summit clean-up campaign before the arrival of thousands of foreign journalists and television staff from around the world as well as the leaders of the seven major industrialized nations. Civic Councillor Roger Hollander says the atmosphere surrounding the summit makes homeless people vulnerable to arbitrary arrest. It seems the efforts of community groups, housing coalitions, and advocacy groups have made an impact on educating the civic politicians.
Chapter Three

An article appears August 25, 1988 documenting the appeal made to all three political parties. Graham Fraser, in "Parties Urged to Help Homeless", interviews a coalition of housing groups. Activists urged parties to endorse three positions to try to deal with 500,000 Canadian households without affordable, adequate housing:

1) recognize that all Canadian have a right to housing
2) that governments agree to use any surplus federal land for housing
3) that the number of low cost housing units being financed annually be doubled to 40,000 units.

This is the first time that a group of housing groups have stated their claim cohesively to the federal level, and as such, is a significant stage. Also significant is the concept of a coalition of housing groups presenting their claim at a political level. The Housing Network Project, National Anti-Poverty Organization and the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation joined and met with Public Works Minister Stewart McInnes and officials from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Liberal Caucus, and New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent.

Another advocacy group member, Leslie Robinson from the housing committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, points to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees the right to security of the person. She aptly states: "How can a person have security without having housing?" (August 25, 1988).

Two other articles discuss the basic rights of the homeless person, that of legal advice (in the United States) and health care (in Canada). Community organizations formed in
both cases to provide these basic rights that the average person takes foregranted. Dilin Baker, a co-founder of Street Health and one of the seven nurses states:

Health care provided by volunteers seems an anomaly in Canada, a country where medical are if 'free' and considered a basic human right. But for the homeless and the destitute, those who live outside the mainstream, there are many barriers to the formal health care system... the whole reason we exist is the lack of affordable, secure housing... what we are doing is real Third World front-line medicine (November 21, 1988).

Street Health receives funding from the Ministry of Housing and the City of Toronto, not from the Ministry of Health.

More social activism takes place in March (at Easter) as Toronto marchers lay crosses to illustrate the plight of the homeless. Brother Darryl Gauthier recognizes that hostels are necessary but are no solution to a shortage of affordable housing. Brian Eng, a spokesperson for the Toronto Disarmament Network makes it clear the values and priorities we have chosen as a society thus far:

The federal government has enough money to spend $8 billion on nuclear powered submarines and $2.1 billion in grants to arms manufacturers. However,... it is nearly impossible to obtain a grant to develop affordable housing or open a day care shelter (March 25, 1989).


Homelessness is a structural problem, not a fault of those individuals who end up on the street, even though the homeless often blame their fate on themselves (April 15, 1989).
Chapter Three

The two remaining articles in 1989 uncover significant facts about the homeless population. "Most Derelict Want Jobs, Montreal Study Shows", by Andre Picard illustrates an interesting picture of 15,000 men on the street. They have, on average, 15 years job experience, with only 15% leaving their jobs voluntarily, and 4% choosing this way of life voluntarily. More than half of the men interviewed became street people in the last three years (June 26, 1989).

The final article is entitled "Homeless Get Welfare Under Quebec Scheme", again by Andre Picard. For the first time in Canada, homeless people will be eligible to receive welfare payments while they are living on the streets under provisions of an agreement between the City of Montreal, the Province of Quebec, and two community groups.

The agreement is an important breakthrough, it will help end the cycle of poverty to which the homeless are victims: having no address, no money, gives the homeless person no means of obtaining a place of residence.

Havi Echenberg of the National Anti-Poverty Organization, states this should serve as a precedent to encourage other provinces and municipalities to consider similar arrangements. "Project Genesis" founder James Torczynes says:

(I)t is nothing short of a miracle. The message is that when people lose their homes, they do not lose their rights. That is an important principle that has been ignored too long (November 9, 1989).

There is a great deal of hope expressed with this breakthrough. The Quebec branch of the Canadian Council on Social Development Jean Panet-Raymond feels the agreement will have an important impact coast to coast:
Chapter Three

We are going to profit from this precedent to create a certain momentum across the country. If we are successful, there could be a revolution in our perception and treatment of the homeless in Canada (November 9, 1989).

Discussion. The political emphasis grows in the late eighties to encompass the rights of the homeless person: their rights to housing, health care, legal advice, and welfare assistance. Political activism expands from advocacy to lobbying and educating politicians, and to building coalitions. And claims are directed not only to the municipal level, but to the provincial level, and most importantly, the federal level.

3.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The year 1979 recorded many of the traditionally held beliefs: the homeless person was there of their own volition. The problem was described as an income problem, and later, a lack of affordable housing. It came to light over the early eighties that the homeless person was in this situation through the result of a combination of events, and that there were a myriad of other problems associated with the lack of housing. De-institutionalization, gentrification, demolition and restructuring of welfare policies were cited as contributing to the increasing numbers of homeless people. It also came to light that the homeless were not simply the vagrants or derelicts of society, that youths, women and entire families were experiencing difficulties in securing accommodation. This, and the concept of a synergy of events, of homelessness as a process is revealed through these articles.

The mid-eighties revealed claims-making occurring at more regular intervals to the civic level of government, to the bureaucrats, then to the provincial, and eventually to the
federal level. This culminated with the Province of Quebec instituting some reforms to the welfare assistance legislation to permit those on the street access to a monthly welfare allowance.

The final two articles in 1989 have a note of optimism in them. The recognition of the right of the homeless person to welfare assistance is seen as a great victory in Montreal, and as an inspiration to other provinces across Canada. The claims-making activities of the advocacy groups and coalitions were fruitful in Quebec. The groups were motivated by the principle of rights of the homeless person, something they felt had been ignored for too long.

The notion of deeper structural causes of homelessness is developed through the articles. No longer can homelessness be seen as a personal character deficiency, but is a part of a broader political and economic system. Also developed is the notion of the importance of enforcing the principle of the rights of the homeless person, and the notion of collective social responsibility for the social problem of homelessness. Two advertisements paid for by the United Way appeared in the Report on Business in June 1989 (see Appendix A), illustrate the notion of a partnership approach to solving social problems, in particular, homelessness. Finally, the importance of forming coalitions around social issues and undertaking lobbying and social action strategies cannot be emphasized enough. It is a way of combining resources, talents, skills and expertise as well as signifying credibility of those making the claim.
Chapter Three recorded the claims-making activities of the social problem of homelessness documented in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper articles. Chapter Four, which is divided into two parts, attempts to locate the problem of homelessness on the public agenda. The first part, 4.1, provides an overview of the *Globe and Mail* articles in the Canadian News Index between the years 1979 to 1989. In addition, a draft comprehensive bibliography produced by the Centre For Human Settlements is reviewed for the years 1987, 1988 and 1989 to supplement the findings. The second part, 4.2, examines the public versus the political agenda. Part three, 4.3, refers back to the framework of the natural history of a social problem, and provides a discussion of where the social problem of homelessness is on the political agenda.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF NEWS SOURCES

This portion of the chapter provides an overview of the articles reviewed in the *Globe and Mail*. Before 1986, there was no separate category for homeless people in the index and few of the articles before 1982 contained the word 'homeless'. Therefore, the search includes articles which contain the words 'shelter', 'hostel' and 'housing shortage'. In addition, early articles require subjective analysis as not all titles represent the contents of the article. For example, "Many Desperate for Homes" does not contain the words homeless, shelter, hostel or housing shortage but clearly implies a lack of accommodation. Other articles which imply loss of housing and also are included in the search.
The following diagram illustrates the number of articles in the *Globe and Mail* each year:

**Diagram 1**

![Graph showing the number of articles from 1979 to 1990.](image)

1986 is the first year where the phrase 'homeless people' comprise a separate category. Overall, the majority of the total articles appear in the years 1986, 1987 and 1988. These three years alone yield forty-one articles, comprising over 54% of the total number of articles (73). When compared to the other papers listed in the CNI (*Winnipeg Free Press, Calgary Herald, Toronto Star, Montreal Gazette, and Vancouver Sun*), three articles out of a total of 27 appear in the *Globe* in 1986; in 1987, 21 appear in the *Globe* out of 98, and in
Chapter Four


The following diagram compares the total number of articles in all of the newspapers in the Canadian News Index to the number of articles in the *Globe* from 1986 to 1989, and includes the first half of 1990.

**Diagram 2**
The pie chart below illustrates the proportion of articles under six categories where the article appeared in the paper; the front page, the first section, a regular column, a feature story, the business section, or some other section, in each year from 1986 to 1989.

Diagram 3

[Diagram showing pie charts for 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989, with categories labeled as Front Page, First Section, Regular Column, Feature Story, Business Section, and Other Sections.]
June Callwood's series on homelessness appears in 1987, during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. In her regular column, she writes seven articles on homelessness across Canada. Six of the seven are feature articles, two of these appear on the front page (headline), one on the front page of the (D) section, and three in the front section on various pages.

After reaching a high point in 1986, 1987 and 1988, the number of articles has decreased significantly. By 1989, there is a grand total of four articles in the Globe and Mail, and in the first half of 1990, there are three.

To supplement these figures, the draft comprehensive bibliography on homelessness in Canada is reviewed. The Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia is in the process of compiling this bibliography. For the purposes of comparison, the years 1987 to 1989 are used. Here too, the number of articles has gradually, and significantly, decreased.

The broadest range of literature is included in this publication, from scholarly studies to magazine articles. The findings are similar to the findings of the review of the Globe and Mail articles. The literature in the early eighties rarely uses the term homelessness, and the focus of the literature is on the low end of the rental market in the larger cities and the housing problems of low income urban males. As the 1980's proceeded,
homelessness became an increasingly common feature in the literature on the Canadian housing scene.

The bibliography is broken down into six categories of literature: books, academic research, agency reports, magazine and journal articles, conference and workshop proceedings, and bibliographies. The following pie chart illustrates the proportion of entries under each category.

Diagram 4

- Books
- Academic Papers
- Reports
- Magazines
- Conferences
- Bibliographies

1987

1988
1989
In 1987, there were four books, four research studies, forty-five agency reports, ninety-two magazine and journal articles, fourteen conference and workshop proceedings and three bibliographies. By 1989, there are nine books and four research studies, but only five agency reports and fourteen magazine and journal articles.

Given the severe drop in media coverage and in the number of publications and range of literature identified by the CHS publication, are we to assume that homelessness is no longer an issue? Are we to assume that homelessness has been resolved? Or is it simply that the media has lost interest and moved on to other more topical things? What does this illustrate about homelessness? Where is homelessness on the public agenda? Or, has homelessness fallen off the public agenda? These questions will be discussed further in 4.2 below.

4.2 THE PUBLIC AGENDA VERSUS THE POLITICAL AGENDA

Has homelessness fallen off the political agenda? Perhaps a more pertinent question would be, was homelessness ever on the political agenda? As Heclo reminds us, "A policy may usefully be considered as a course of action or inaction rather than specific decisions or actions" (Heclo, 1972:85). The Canadian Government's policy response to homelessness is clearly a case of inaction:

Canadian Housing Policy has historically given emphasis to subsidy programs and market place regulations which have assisted home ownership for middle class Canadians. The needs of the homeless and the inadequately housed urban poor have never received enough attention so as to make the type of progress achieved in the ownership sector. The provision of housing for the homeless and the lower income tenant is and always has been unprofitable for the private sector. Yet public policy has also failed to meet this need (Hulchanski, Eberle, Olds and Stewart, 1991:14).
The absence of a national policy on homelessness provides a clear indication of the lack of political will. Although homelessness may be on the public agenda, it is certainly not on the political agenda. Political will is the critical, yet the most fragile, ingredient since it is at the political change takes place:

"Change" only comes about when there is the political will to devise and initiate a course of action focused on an agreed upon problem. In a democracy, a consensus must emerge before an issue becomes a 'legitimate' social problem for public policy to address (Hulchanski, 1987:17).

With numerous studies and reports indicating the need for a more multi-faceted response to a multi-faceted problem, it is surprising that homelessness has not been resolved. Advice is plentiful, and community and advocacy groups have several projects underway. Yet, homelessness has not been accepted, or legitimated, as a part of a broader political agenda.

(homelessness) remains within the domain of special interest groups and political agitators. As such, it is still an emerging issue which, in fact, may never emerge as a recognized problem within the domain of the mainstream of society. Academic studies and government reports will not, by themselves, achieve very much (Hulchanski, 1987:18).

4.3 NATURAL HISTORY MODEL REVISITED

Stage 1 - Emergence of a Social Problem

Stage 2 - Legitimation, Mobilization, Plan of Action

Stage 3 - New Conditions, New Claims
Chapter Four

Stage 4 - Innovations, Alternative Institutions

Briefly, the model of the Natural History of the evolution of social problems is reviewed above. Currently, the debate concerning the social problem of homelessness centres around the lack of an agreed upon definition of homelessness. Each actor has an agenda with a distinct definition of homelessness. A very narrow definition, based on deviant behavior implies a very narrow policy response. Within this traditional narrow definition, the individual is held responsible for their own fate, homelessness is seen primarily as an income problem and the result of a shortage of affordable rental housing. Numerous other actors present other points of view and identify different perceptions of the reasons why people are homeless. In general, a narrow definition means a narrow response. The broader the definition, the broader the required response.

Chapter Three illustrated the enormous variety of views concerning homelessness. There is, in effect, a spectrum of understanding of the reasons why a person is homeless. Each actor possesses a certain perspective and, based on the role they are playing, offers a particular solution. Advocacy groups for the homeless for the most part advocate that homelessness is a broad structural problem, and the solution is the creation of more permanent and supportive housing coupled with policy decisions in other dimensions, along with recognition of the rights of the individual. Policy makers, with their more narrow perspective, define the problem as a shortage of housing and advocate increasing rental housing construction. This responds to only a small part of a very complex problem.
Chapter Four

The way a problem becomes defined ultimately determines the solutions undertaken. By using the natural history model advocated by Spector and Kitsuse, Chapter Three illustrated that there are many community based groups forming coalitions, devising projects, and setting up alternative institutions, fitting into Stage 4. Most of Canada's policy makers, as the research in this and other studies has found, are still at Stage 2: there is widespread agreement that homelessness is a problem, yet no plan of action or specific policy exists. Broad based consensus has not been achieved in defining the problem, and hence, no specific plan of action has been developed directed to homeless individuals, or to resolving homelessness. Much of the debate is now occurring at Stage 2, the legitimation stage, despite some limited mobilization of resources for building more temporary or second stage shelters, or for recognizing the individual's health and welfare rights. A broad consensus between the key actors is required before resource mobilization and a plan of action can be undertaken.

It can be said that more claims-making activity is needed to keep the issue on (at the very least) the public agenda, to push the issue to the national political agenda, and to move the definition of homelessness away from the deviant behavior model. Once broad based agreement is reached on an acceptable definition and the legitimation stage is complete, policy direction could be articulated and a plan of action could be implemented.

This is not to say that the social problem of homelessness will reach the end of its life cycle or that homelessness will be resolved. Another variation of the problem may emerge and the process of problem definition begins again. In fact, some key groups may not like the definition that is ultimately adopted, and may attempt to begin a series of new claims-making activities.
The following Feiffer cartoon epitomizes the policy maker's perception of the homeless, and represents a rather facetious public commentary:

Diagram 5

---

4.4 SUMMARY

The findings in Chapter Four suggest an increasing awareness and increasingly sophisticated understanding of the reasons why people are homeless in Canada. However, despite this, the few existing programs are still based on a very narrow definition of
homelessness; that the homeless individual is disorganized or deviant. The accepted 'plan of 
action' remains supportive to the real estate market, i.e., finds no structural problem with 
the operation of the market. Incentives are offered to develop and increase rental housing 
supply, very much based on the liberal democratic notion that the market is supreme, and 
that the state should not interfere in the private appropriation of profits and the commodity 
form of housing. Advocates for the homeless, and many others, do not agree with this 
definition, and continue to propose their own alternative and innovative solutions.

Chapter Four also outlined the drop in the number of articles carried in the *Globe 
and Mail*, and the in the number of academic reports and conferences on this topic. It 
appears the social problem of homelessness could easily fall off the public agenda before even 
reaching the political one.
CHAPTER FIVE
USE OF NATURAL HISTORY
MODEL OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

This thesis proposes a new approach for looking at social problems. Social problems are not independent, objective conditions. Rather, they are a product of processes in society; social processes (changing values, social debate), economic processes (gentrification, development, unemployment, economic restructuring) and political processes (claims-making activities, value choices). Planners constantly deal with change and conflict stemming from social, economic and political processes at work in society. Consequently, it is critical for planners to understand that social problems have a life cycle, an identifiable sequence of events.

The timing of any planning action is critical. In examining complex social issues, models, such as the ones put forward by sociologists Blumer, Spector and Kitsuse, and Manning, can be used as a method for improving our understanding of emerging social problems. These life cycle, or natural history, models illustrate the importance of gathering all the facts; identifying the context and background of social problems, and recognizing the social, political and economic realities affecting the definition of the problem. Focussing on a particular definition of a problem in the middle of its cycle may be misleading. Solutions are more likely to be on target if there is an awareness of the evolving context and background of the issues and an awareness of the various stages that a social problem moves through. In addition, planners conscious of this process can determine how to best further the development of a particular issue, or how to best engage a response from the responsible level of government. Knowledge of this process can add to the "pre-political 'processing' of
political information" (Roweis, 1981) planners use in day to day agenda setting. Planning is not only a problem-solving activity, it is also a problem formulating activity (Forester, 1989:16, Forester and Krumholz, 1990:216).

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

"The homeless are the architects of their own misfortune is a myth that is finally being eroded". This statement is from the opening quote in Chapter One, and while the thesis has illustrated that public perception and awareness of the plight of the homeless has increased, the reality at the political level, the public policy level, has changed very little. One might say that homelessness has reached the public agenda, but has not yet reached the political agenda.

The inability to resolve homelessness lies in the way social problems are traditionally defined. The problem of homelessness cannot be solved because the problem is defined simplistically: as a flaw in the individual’s character, a character deficiency. The individual is at fault for being homeless. The Feiffer cartoon represents a facetious comment on the traditionally accepted perception.

The objective of the research undertaken here has not been to find a solution to homelessness, but rather to improve the understanding of the process of defining social problems and the understanding of the policy process as it relates to new, emerging social problems. The main purpose has been to document the process of the development of a particular social issue, homelessness. This approach documented claims-making activities
associated with homelessness, and provided a historical thread of continuity of the proposed condition. The strength in this approach is that it provides a presentation of the data over a period of time, and this can play a valuable role in the future of the study of social problem activity.

There are four research questions dealt with in this thesis:

1) What are social problems and how are they defined?
2) Who are the actors involved in the claims-making process, and, what and to whom are they claiming?
3) Where is the problem of homelessness in the process of social problem evolution?
4) What is the prevalent definition?

The individual chapters addressed each of these research questions. Chapter Two reviewed the literature on social problems in response to the first question, what are social problems and how are they defined? The result of the review determined that any analyses of social problems must include the process of collective societal definition. Social problems are the products of this process; they do not exist independently as a set of objective social arrangements with an intrinsic make-up. Designation of social problems by society is derived from public designation, and analysis of social problems is not possible without the contextual elements; the economic, political and social elements, which have in the past, been omitted. Most importantly, society must recognize and accept collective responsibility for those problems it collectively defines.

The thesis maintains that if the problem is continually defined as a problem with an individual's character, and it is continually denied that social problems have more complex
causes, then society will continue to refuse to take collective responsibility for their resolution. In the absence of a more sophisticated understanding of social problems, solutions will continue to be one dimensional and simplistic.

Chapter Three responded to the second question, Who are the actors involved in claims-making activities, and what and to whom are they claiming? The actors were initially predominantly community based advocacy groups attempting to draw attention to the plight of the homeless person. The claims were directed to civic politicians and administrators of hostel operations as to the inadequacy of both the capacity and quality of accommodation.

The year 1979 recorded many of the traditionally held beliefs: the homeless person was homeless of their own volition. The problem was described as an income problem, and later, as a lack of affordable housing. Gradually, it came to light during the early to mid-eighties that the homeless person was in this situation as a result of a combination of events, and that there were a myriad of other problems associated with the lack of housing.

De-institutionalization, gentrification, demolition and restructuring of welfare policies were cited as contributing to the increasing numbers of homeless people. It also came to light that the homeless were not simply the vagrants or derelicts of society; youths, women and entire families were experiencing difficulties in securing accommodation. This new image of the homeless and the concept of homelessness as a synergistic process, is revealed through these articles.

The mid-eighties revealed claims-making occurring at more regular intervals to the civic level administrators, then to the provincial, and eventually to the federal level. These actions culminated with the Province of Quebec instituting some reforms to the welfare
assistance legislation to permit those living on the street access to a monthly welfare allowance. The homeless person had their right to welfare assistance (re-)instated.

The recognition of the right of the homeless person to welfare assistance is seen as a great victory in Montreal, and as an inspiration to other provinces across Canada. The claims-making activities of the advocacy groups and coalitions were fruitful in Quebec. The groups were motivated by the principle of rights of the homeless person, something they felt had been ignored for too long. The notion of deeper structural causes of homelessness is developed through the articles. No longer can homelessness be seen as a personal character deficiency, but is a part of a broader political and economic system. Also developed is the notion of the importance of enforcing the principle of the rights of the homeless person, and the notion of collective social responsibility for the social problem of homelessness. Finally, the importance of forming coalitions around social issues and undertaking lobbying and social action strategies cannot be emphasized enough. It is a way of combining resources, talents, skills and expertise as well as signifying credibility of those making the claim.

Chapter Four addressed the third and fourth questions; Where is the problem of homelessness in the process of social problem evolution, and what is the prevalent definition? Using the model developed in Chapter Two, homelessness is located at the legitimation stage, Stage Two, in the emergence of a social problem. Chapter Four noted a decrease in the number of articles and activities centering around homelessness. Despite the increase in the public's awareness, in the politician's awareness and in the increase in activities from community based groups, despite the increasingly sophisticated understanding of the problem, policy has not changed. There is still an obvious absence of an agreed upon definition of homelessness and a lack of policy directed towards resolving homelessness as a social problem.
What is the prevalent definition? In general, public awareness may be increasing, but government as a collective representative of society is not doing much. Solutions are still based on a very simplistic definition of homelessness: that the homeless individual is deviant. The accepted 'plan of action' also remains simplistic. Incentives are offered to develop and increase rental housing supply, very much based on the liberal democratic notion that the market is supreme, and the state should not interfere in the private appropriation of profits and the commodity form of housing. Community groups and others do not agree with this simplistic definition, realizing that the problem is much more complex, and are setting up their own alternative and innovation solutions. This research has shown that the public's understanding of the reasons why people are homeless has become increasingly sophisticated. Analysts, too, understand more about homelessness as an emerging social problem, but this understanding does not always translate into a plan of action.

To conclude, at any time a problem can move from one stage to the next, or even fall off the agenda altogether. The social problem of homelessness is perched precariously on the edge, always in danger of falling off the public agenda, often long before it reaches the political one. Constant effort is required to keep the problem moving through each of the stages. Claims-making activities are instrumental in keeping up the momentum in the development of rights in society. We must recognize that we define social problems collectively, and by doing so, we must also accept collective responsibility for their resolution. As a society, we are ultimately responsible for the choosing the values and the community in which we live.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


80


Townsend, Peter. "A Theory of Poverty and the Role of Social Policy", in Martin Loney,

Watson, Sophie and Helen Austerbury. Housing and Homelessness, A Feminist Perspective.
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

The problem is income not housing; OEC Report Winsor, (C) March 29, 1979, p7.

Tough problems for Metro Council start with a housing alarm. Dec 11, 1979, p19.


Homeless family will be ousted - Penetang Sept 5, 1981, p12.


Toronto Planning Department says poor are losers when rooming houses are converted. June 20, 1981, p18.


Government policy has been inept - Can housing mess be solved? Feb 28, 1983, p7.


It's harder for women to find cheap homes, Council's report says. March 26, 1984, pM3.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Vacant apartments hard to find. May 19, 1984, p11.

Winter deaths feared despite more hostels. Nov 17, 1986, pA13.


Leslie not welcome in Janet's yard; a bag lady puts down roots. (F) May 9, 1987, pA1, A10.


Homeless women in Toronto, Vancouver share dismal lives - Callwood (C) Sept 23 1987, pA2.

No vacancy: Canada's homeless in a helpless search for shelter. (F) Oct 3 1987, pD1, D8.


8,500 poor huddle together in city-within-a-city - Callwood * (C) (F) Nov 14, 1987, pA1, A7.

Edmonton fights frigid streets; native people without shelter tend to elude official count - Callwood. (C) (F) Nov 16, 1987, pA1, A10.

Operation Friendship; Edmonton's "unhousable" cases are offered a refuge Nov 17, 1987, pA1, A10.

Hope Cottage welcomes hungry in Halifax - Callwood. (C) (F) Nov 18, 1987, pA10.

Unaffordable rents keep poor moving - Callwood. (C) (F) Nov 19, 1987, pA5.
No regional boundaries for poor; affordable housing key across whole country - Callwood. (C) (F) Nov 21, 1987, pA6.

Life on the road is no easy ride. (F) Nov 28, 1987, pD5.

Neighbours fear project would be ghetto. Dec 10, 1987, pA26


As temperatures plunge lower, defiance of some homeless intact. Jan 11, 1988, pA13.


Today's homeless youth could be in workforce of tomorrow. Feb 9, 1988, pA16


Rally of homeless persuades Hosek to hear their concerns. March 11, 1988, pA13.


Squeezed out by the summit; City clean-up may mean crack-down on street people. June 9, 1988, pA1, A18.

Psychologist (Spowart) goes back to streets on 'Mr.Drop Out' rescue mission. July 11, 1988, pA13.


Clinics providing 'frontline medicine' MD's often reluctant to treat homeless. Nov 21, 1988, pA14.


Toronto marchers lay crosses to illustrate the plight of the homeless. March 25, 1989, pA10.
