EMERGENCY AND TRANSITORY HOUSING FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE:
NEEDS AND BEST PRACTICES
(EUROHOME)
Project No: SOE2-CT95-3002

FINAL REPORT
by Dr. Dragana Avramov, Project Director
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INTRODUCTION TO EUROHOME

The project brought together experts in the field of social protection, social exclusion, family and population sociology, housing and homelessness, to review the body of knowledge in the field, analyse recent trends and discuss prospects for the improvement of the system of public response to the housing exclusion in Europe. The project was organised around four major questions: What is known about homelessness? What are the key risk factors of social exclusion and homelessness? Are social services adequately dealing with the needs of homeless people? Can we identify models of good practice in integrated policies of social protection and complementary services for homeless people?

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The EUROHOME project was implemented from 1 February 1996 till 31 January 1988.

The consortium was composed of:
The European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) Brussels (co-ordination), Belgium;
The Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR) Vienna, Austria;
The Danish National Institute of Social Research (SFI), Copenhagen, Denmark; Polytechnic of Milan, Department of Territorial Sciences (DTS), Milan, Italy.
The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), Helsinki, Finland and the research institute “Kivotos”, Athens, Greece.

Dr. Dragana Avramov, Director of Population and Social Policy Consultants, Brussels, was the Project Director.

The research network also included the following institutions subcontracted for specific reports: The Association for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning (GISS), Bremen, Germany; the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), Spain; The Amsterdam Study Center for the Metropolitan Environment, University of Amsterdam (AME), the Netherlands; and Institut national d'études demographiques (INED) Paris, France.

WORKSHOPS

In accordance with the methodology and milestones given in the work programme the implementation of the project was carried out by means of workshops focused on the key research topics. The research issues were dealt with in four workshops over the period of two years.
Data Available on Homelessness

The workshop Data Available on Homelessness, Data Needed for the Analysis and Recommendations to Official Statistical Offices addressed the key research problems related to the evaluation of existing data sources on homelessness and assessed the needs for future methodologically well founded research. Papers were solicited from the prominent researchers with expertise in research methodology and data analysis. Four solicited and three contributed papers provided a platform for the debate at the workshop in which producers and users of data took part.

This first project workshop was held in Vienna from 11 to 13 July 1996. It was organised and hosted by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR).

Services available to homeless people

The workshop entitled Urgent and Transitory Accommodation - Needs and Provisions dealt with crisis intervention, temporary housing, support and assistance provided within the service sector. It addressed the controversy between immediate and long term needs of homeless people and ways their needs are met within the institutional framework of services. A preliminary evaluation was made regarding the ability of the existing system of urgent and temporary assistance to deal effectively with multiple problems of homeless people.

Four solicited papers and one contributed paper provided the framework for a debate. The workshop was held in Athens on 4 and 5 October 1996. It was organised jointly by FEANTSA and the research institute "Kivotos" and it was hosted by "Kivotos".

Groups Facing Risks of Homelessness

The workshop entitled Vulnerable Groups and Social Safety Nets against Homelessness was held in Milan on 23 and 24 May 1997. It was organised and hosted by the Polytechnic of Milan, Department of Territorial Sciences (DTS), Italy.

The workshop focused on the debate about the relationship and interdependence between poverty and social exclusion with the aim of understanding how various processes and factors of vulnerability are relevant for the production of homelessness. It provided a framework for understanding the role that policies play in the protection against vulnerability and homelessness.

Four solicited papers and six contributed paper provided the framework for a debate.
Models of Best Practice

The workshop Models of Best Practice: Integrated Approach vs Complementary Services was held in Copenhagen on 12 and 13 October 1997. It was organised and hosted by the Danish National Institute of Social Research. Four solicited papers and two contributed paper provided the scientific framework for the workshop.

The debate focused on the relationship between welfare policy, values and norms and the consequences for homelessness. The workshop addressed issues of solidarity and its limits, the meaning of work and integration, and, the importance of preventing and minimising effects of homelessness. The role of housing policy and of the voluntary sector was extensively examined.

Evaluation of workshops

In accordance with the work planning schedule for the period 1 February 1996 - 31 January 1998 all tasks specified in the work programme have been accomplished. The four workshops foreseen in the work programme were prepared and held in due time.

There has been no deviation to the work plan and no delay in the implementation of the work schedule.

On the basis of the evaluation of the quality of workshop papers undertaken by the EUROHOME Editorial Board it may be concluded that the workshop outputs give a comprehensive overview of the state-of-the-art research of homelessness.

The profile of participants according to the specific field of expertise confirms that the project has brought together highly qualified and motivated academics, providers and policy makers. The network has set foundation for the future targeted research, exchange of know-how in the domain of methodology and has opened new channels for research, exchange of data and development of scientific and policy recommendations.

The quality of workshop papers

Two types of papers were prepared and presented at the four workshops:

- academic papers written by leading experts;
- contributed papers drafted by the invited representatives of local authorities, and, public and voluntary service providers.

Academic papers were solicited from senior research fellows with an outstanding record in research of homelessness and related issues. All solicited papers have been reviewed by experts invited to serve as discussants at the workshops. The invited discussants made an evaluation and gave comments and suggestions to the authors of papers. All the solicited
papers have been sent for comments to the members of the EUROHOME research network and have been revised by authors in accordance with received comments and suggestions.

Contributed papers did not necessarily meet the academic criteria. Several people with experience in direct work with homeless people were invited to provide statements based on their personal work. Their papers contributed to the better understanding of difficulties encountered by those working with homeless people who often have multiple problems and handicaps and are not always willing to receive the type of help available within the traditional service sector. Not all contributed papers were written in a publishable form but were selected for presentation and distribution as internal documents.

Only selected papers which meet the necessary criteria for publication in a scientific monograph have been selected for publication.

**Workshop participants**

The project document foresaw that the number of participants in workshops would be limited to around 20 so that an active participation, interaction and dialogue could be achieved. Throughout the work a degree of flexibility regarding the workshop format was maintained so that continuous participation of the core research network as well as an input from individuals with specific expertise were ensured.

Workshop 1 was attended by 23 invited participants with the background in theory, research methodology, field research and data analysis. Among participants were also policy makers and representatives of EUROSTAT and the European Commission DG XII.

Workshop 2 was attended by 24 invited participants: researchers, service providers, policy makers and representatives of EUROSTAT, the European Commission DG XII and Council of Europe.

Workshop 3 gathered 28 invited participants: researchers, service providers, policy makers and representatives of the European Commission DG XII, the European Commission DG V, EUROSTAT and Council of Europe.

Workshop 4 had 25 invited participants with the background in research, service provision, and policy making and representatives of NGOs.

The core research team included eight academics who participated in all the workshops and some 50 researchers, policy makers, service providers and representatives of NGO's who participated in one or more workshops.
Workshop outputs

Each project activity undertaken between 1 February 1996 and 31 January 1998 has concrete outputs. The following deliveries constitute project results of each workshop:

- One executive report per research topic which includes the state-of-the-art in research and practice, problem areas to be tackled, preliminary recommendation how to overcome identified problems, conclusions and follow-up activities;
- Four solicited research papers per workshop and selected spontaneous contributions.

Deliveries of the first project activity - Data available on homelessness

1) Executive report

The report gives an overview of surveys on homelessness and housing conditions and examines the secondary data which can be used for the analysis of the extent and features of homelessness and housing exclusion. It highlights advantages, limitations and shortcomings of different methods in use. The report includes recommendations to the official statistical offices regarding the feasibility of surveys and methodological aspects of collecting data about homelessness and housing exclusion.

2) Solicited papers

Dr. Dragana Avramov, Data Sources on Homelessness and Data Necessary for a Needs-Based Research Project
Dr. Henk De Feijter, Existing and Proposed Data Gathering Systems in the Netherlands Concerning the Homeless
Maryse Marpsat and Jean-Marie Firdion, The Homeless in Paris: a Representative Sample Survey of Users of Services for the Homeless
Sirkka-Liisa Kärkkäinen, Annual Survey on Homelessness in Finland - Definitions and Methodological Aspects

3) Selected contributed papers

Dr. Martha R. Burt, U.S. Homeless Research During the 1980s and Early 1990s: Approaches, Lessons Learned, and Methodological Options
Malcolm Williams, Using 'Capture-Recapture' to Estimate the Size of the Homeless Population. Evidence from Plymouth, England
Angelika Kofler, The Methodological Background of the 1993 ICCR Study about Homelessness in Vienna
Deliveries of the second project activity - Services for homeless people

1) Executive report

The report gives an overview of most important forms of urgent and transitory accommodation. The supply side is examined in the light of specific needs of homeless people and new approaches in meeting these needs. Special attention is given to the continuum between crisis intervention and ordinary welfare services. Models for re-integration of homeless people are examined and the relationship between public and private providers and family support and state intervention is assessed.

2) Solicited papers

Inger Koch-Nielsen and Tobias Børner, The Heterogeneity of Homelessness and the Consequences for Service Provision
Anne de Gouy, Social Urgency in France
Volker Busch-Geertsema, Temporary Accommodation for Homeless People in Germany with Special Focus on the Provision for Immigrants and Asylum Seekers
Dr. Aristides Sapounakis, Urgent Accommodation Shelters for Homeless People in Greece - Who Provides Services and Who Uses Them

3) Selected contributed paper

Gerhard Eitel, Implementation Plan for the Gradual Reintegration of the Homeless in Vienna

Deliveries of the third project activity - Groups facing risks of homelessness

1) Executive report

The workshop report focuses on the debate on poverty and social exclusion with the aim of understanding how various processes and factors of vulnerability are relevant for the production of homelessness. It provides a framework for understanding the role that policies play in the protection against vulnerability and homelessness.

2) Solicited papers

Katherine Duffy, The Concept of Social Exclusion: The Approach of the Council of Europe Initiative on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion
Serge Paugam, Weakening and Breaking of Social Ties: Analysis of Explanatory Factors
Antonio Tosi, Homelessness and the Housing Factor: Learning from the Debate on Social Exclusion and Poverty
Dr. Jan Vranken, Different Policy Approaches to Homelessness
3) Selected contributed papers

Marc-Henry Soulet, Theoretical Uses and Misuses of the Notion of Exclusion
Henk de Feijter, Difficult Access for Newcomers
Helmut Hartman, Effective Local Strategies to Combat Homelessness
Yuri Kazepov, Urban Poverty and Local Policies against Social Exclusion in Italy: the North-South Divide
Mike Chapman, Pathways to Independent Living: Exclusion, Housing and Young People
Dr. Aris Sapounakis, Aspects of Social Exclusion and Marginalisation: The Case of Gypsies in Greece

Deliveries of the fourth project activity - Models of best practice

1) Executive report

The executive report focuses on the relationship between welfare policy, values and norms and the consequences for homelessness. It summarises the debate about solidarity and its limits, the meaning of work and integration, and, the importance of preventing and minimising effects of homelessness. The role of housing policy and of the voluntary sector is also examined. Models of best practice in preventive and responsive policy are identified.

2) Solicited papers

Juul Søren, Solidarity and Integration in Modern Society - the Danish Perspective
Hans Kristensen, Housing Policy and Homelessness - the Danish Case
Sirkka-Liisa Kärkkäinen, Housing policy and Homelessness in Finland: Services for Homeless People in the Policy Context from the 1960s to the 1990s
Tobias Børner Stax and Inger Koch-Nielsen, Understanding Homeless: A Representation of Approaches Used

3) Selected contributed papers

Dr. Daly Mary, Regimes of Social Policy in Europe and the Patterning of Homelessness
Preben Brandt, Reflections on Homelessness

Evaluation of Workshop Outputs

1) Executive reports

The project produced four executive reports in which the key issues addressed in the papers prepared for the workshop and main ideas developed during the debate are summarised in an analytic manner. Reports are written in a user-friendly format which makes them an easily understandable literature also for those who are not very knowledgeable about homelessness issues.
Executive reports are policy oriented documents which give a summary of research findings and conclusions and propose policy recommendations.

2) Solicited and contributed papers

The project produced 28 solicited and contributed papers which cover a broad range of expertise. They address the key clusters of problems pertaining to research about poverty, social exclusion and homelessness, risk factors and risk groups, housing and general welfare policies, services for homeless people and social and housing reintegration of excluded people.

Each project activity was followed by a dissemination of information campaign. Outputs of the each workshops have been distributed to the participants and up on request to some 70 scholars, service providers and policy-makers. The response by the users has been positive and executive reports and solicited papers have been extensively used as the state-of-the-art literature.

3) Scientific publication

The project monograph was published by a well established publisher. Reference:


THE MAIN PROJECT OUTPUT - THE MONOGRAPH

A scientific publication as the key project output and public delivery includes an overview of the state-of-the-art research and provision of services. It addresses the relationship between poverty, social exclusion and homelessness, research on homelessness - data and research methodology, values and policies in relation to homelessness, services for homeless people and sets the research agenda for the future. Each part ends with the conclusions and policy implications pertaining to the identified problems and action needed. The structure of the scientific publication is:

COPING WITH HOMELESSNESS: PROBLEMS TO BE TACKLED AND BEST PRACTICES IN EUROPE
Edited by Dr. Dragana Avramov

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ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

What was known about homelessness at the beginning of the EUROHOME project?

Concepts and methods

The phenomenon of homelessness is not new but it is only in recent decades that it is perceived in many Member States as a social problem. In the 1980s and early 1990s people sleeping rough were becoming more visible in the streets of European cities. Yet little was known about paths in and out of homelessness.

By 1996 when the project EUROHOME was launched we had not go deeper into the analysis of the extent and features of homelessness. Most scientific research about homelessness was done in the United States and these findings were frequently extrapolated to explain the European situation. In order to go into an in-depth analysis which would take into account the specifically European socio-economic and cultural context it was
necessary to move away from a politicised debate about numbers of homeless people. The first research step needed was to develop a conceptual framework adapted to the European welfare context and to improve methods of investigation.

Developing a conceptual framework proved to be a challenging task. The analysis of the use of the term homelessness showed that it was rather fluid and value-loaded. The living conditions defined as homelessness varied from one country to another, largely in the function of the level of social and welfare protection and housing standards and the distribution of responsibility between family networks and public services. In some Member States people living in shacks, containers, staircases may be classified as living in 'unconventional dwellings'. In other countries people living with friends or relatives in good quality housing are classified by the public authorities as homeless.

This conceptual diversity was frequently ignored in the past when comparing levels and trends in homelessness at the European level.

*Levels of causality*

While addressing different levels of causality macro, meso and micro it was evident that the missing link in our knowledge about homelessness is the better understanding of the relationship between poverty, vulnerability, marginalisation, social exclusion, housing stress, housing deprivation and homelessness.

*Reliability of information about homelessness*

We were receiving information and reports of activities from the voluntary and public services for homeless people but these were not a sufficiently credible basis for the assessment of needs and identification of obstacles to reintegration of homeless people. Those vulnerable people who are not the clientele of standard services remain outside statistics.

We knew little about coping strategies of people at risk of homelessness - about their networking and survival strategies. We knew little about homeless people who do not fulfil the criteria set-up by service providers for the participation in reintegration programmes or who cannot keep up with expectations of service providers and are evicted or drop out from such programmes.

Great caution was needed, but not always rigorously exercised in the past by policy makers and the lobbyists, in the use and interpretation of data from different sources and of different degree of reliability.

Systematic research and monitoring of the impact of risk reducing policies and measures and the crisis intervention and reintegration was lacking at the Community level.
Starting from the overview of the existing body of knowledge and with clear research and policy objectives the project EUROHOME set out to:

- take stock and recommend feasible research methods which can produce reliable data on which informed policies can build;
- broaden the research perspective to issues of poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion as they are relevant for the production of homelessness;
- assess whether the existing public and voluntary services are effectively meeting the diversified needs of homeless people;
- identify models of best practice in prevention and response to homelessness;
- distribute information about models of integrated policies and complementary services which are potentially transferable.

**Aims and achievements of EUROHOME**

Due to the limited time and resources the project EUROHOME could not address all the important questions pertaining to homelessness. No resources were available for field work. Many questions opened during the project will need to be answered in the future research.

The project did achieve the aims set out in the EUROHOME work programme by:
- reporting on what is known about homelessness;
- identifying the key risk factors of homelessness in the European welfare context;
- examining how are services meeting the diversified needs of homeless people
- by identifying requirements for informed policies and highlighting models of best practice in the development and implementation of prevention and crisis intervention.

Research of homelessness, like research about social exclusion in general, is inherently policy oriented. An academic interest in the subject is an indispensable component of sound research, but it is not a sufficient reason to address the issue. The ultimate justification of an academic input into research about homelessness lies in the social dimension of its aims. The mobilising force for the implementation of the project EUROHOME was the aim to promote policies to prevent homelessness and to contribute to the development of effective instruments and measures to assist those individuals and families who become homeless.
SUMMARY OF THE MAIN PROJECT RESULTS
AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

THE STATE-OF-THE-ART RESEARCH OF HOMELESSNESS AND PROVISION OF SERVICES IN EUROPE

by Dragana Avramov
Population and Social Policy Consultants (PSPC), Brussels, Belgium

The European policy discourse on housing exclusion in the 1990s reflects an awareness that homelessness can persist as a serious social problem in prosperous economies on the one hand, and by dissent about the nature of social processes which generate or are conducive to housing exclusion, on the other hand. The political debate tends to disassociate situations of housing exclusion from social processes at work. The social perception of homelessness as a marginal situation which affects a small number of people largely determines the scope of the political action, perception of social responsibility and allocation of public resources for tackling housing deprivation. In the few European countries in which legislation or administrative practice address homelessness as an issue of public responsibility, there are marked differences in the perception of living and housing conditions which fall in the homeless category. A comparative overview of legislation and administrative practice reveals that the term homeless is used to cover quite diverse living conditions of socially deprived individuals or households (Avramov, 1995a and 1996). There are marked differences in the criteria for the identification of homeless populations who are eligible for housing assistance and those homeless who may expect only humanitarian assistance.

The European research discourse has largely been influenced by the policy context under which homelessness emerged as a social construction in Europe. The early studies were simple counts of literally homeless people sleeping in night shelters and on the streets. At the time of the growing visibility of homeless people in the second half of the 1980s there was hardly any credible primary research in Europe about paths into and out of homelessness. Small scale research about needs and problems of homeless people was limited to situations of no abode or to night shelter users. Throughout the 1980s the major research efforts to count, describe and identify problems of homeless populations were made in the United States. Findings from the United States were frequently extrapolated to the homeless populations in developed market economies in general. The conceptual field of European research of homelessness in the early 1990s has evolved along two mainstream approaches: homelessness as a housing problem and homelessness as a problem of social 'fragilisation'. The analysis of processes which are conducive to homelessness went in two directions: system inadequacy and personal deficiency.

It is only in most recent years that the homelessness research agenda at the European level is taking into due account the organisation and functioning of society and in particular its social policies and services. The role which public provisions play in the protection against
vulnerability in the European context is increasingly being acknowledged. Research questions which are opening the Pandora's box regarding the future of social and welfare protection in Europe, namely "What would Europe look like without social protection and welfare safety-nets?" and "How can we make social protection and welfare assistance more effective and efficient from the point of view of the public, service providers and users?" are a challenge also for research on the housing dimension of social vulnerability, exclusion and integration.

After initial stock taking and 'cataloguing' situations of homelessness in the early 1990s there is now a clear cognitive and policy need to relocate the realm of homelessness from the periphery of research to the core of the new policy context of social exclusion research. That is why in this report I will first broaden the perspective by addressing homelessness in the framework of social exclusion and social integration processes. Then I will look at the levels of causality which need to be addressed in research of housing deprivation and homelessness and finally will report on what is known about levels and trends in homelessness and policy responses.

I intend to show that the weaknesses of early research efforts and lack of empirical documentation to support many of our research hypotheses do not originate from the biased or underdeveloped social theories but rather from a lack of resources to implement targeted primary research in which all levels of causality could be addressed. I argue in this contribution that pragmatic obstacles can explain the scientific reductionism which prevailed in the early 1990s and which served as fertile ground for the quick -fix policy and lobbying platforms throughout the 1990s.

Lessons learned from research

Social exclusion and homelessness: broadening of perspective

Research about poverty in Europe has evolved, over the past two decades or so, towards a wider debate, measurement and analysis of deprivation in both distributional and relational terms and the broadening of perspective towards issues of social exclusion. Research about homelessness has lagged behind. It suffered from both a too narrow a perspective and too much generic ideological judgement.

It is only in recent years that research is gradually moving away from the focus on individual deficiencies towards the analysis of social processes which are conducive to different degrees and forms of housing exclusion. As long as research of homelessness was limited to the phenomenological level and focused only on the literally homeless it constituted a legitimate, albeit a narrow research domain. But, in order to break the deadlock of a static approach homelessness research needed to broaden its perspective. The enlargement of the research domain posed new challenges. In its initial phases it tended to blur the perception of its main subject - housing deprivation and homelessness - and it opened ground for misinterpretation.
Some social activists and lobbyists (mis)took the broadening of the research perspective as an identification of the phenomenon of homelessness with other phenomena such as poverty, social marginalisation and social exclusion. It is only in recent years that it has been effectively argued by researchers that the interpretation of the process of production of homelessness as being identical to the production of poverty turns a blind eye to the specificity of paths into and out of homelessness. Housing deprivation is perhaps the most obvious indicator of material deprivation in Europe today. Homeless people are a small albeit the most visible fraction of the socially excluded. This, however, does not mean that we can automatically regard as identical paths in and out of poverty and various situations of social exclusion with paths into and out of homelessness. Homelessness as a specific form of extreme social exclusion and social detachment of individuals cannot be understood and tackled effectively from the perspective of generic debates about unmet housing needs, unemployment and material deprivation which 'ultimately and inevitably' lead to homelessness.

Resources, opportunity and ability to make use of social institutions - namely family and informal networks and public provisions - are the supporting pillars of social integration in contemporary societies. The erosion of one or more of these pillars, be it through lack of access to material resources, social barriers to access meaningful activity or lack of access to care and support, is conducive to marginalisation and different forms of social exclusion. Social exclusion entails an accumulation of deprivation in several of the most important domains of human activity: labour, education, consumption of public services and care, family and informal networks, communication, political participation, leisure and recreation. Its material dimension includes poverty in terms of the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or a household and its relational aspects include inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power (Room, 1995; Duffy, Paugam, Soulet and Vranken in Avramov 1999). Exclusion is associated with social stigmatisation and isolation, low self-esteem, the feeling of not belonging and never having been given a chance to be included in the society.

The underlying common denominators of social and housing exclusion are lack of material resources and weakening of social ties. Material poverty may be said to be a dependent variable of homelessness in developed market economies. It operates in conjunction with other risks. A broader look at the society and vulnerable groups shows unequivocally that only a small proportion of very poor people become homeless. But when we limit the perspective to homeless people only, then poverty seems to be a common denominator of homelessness.

All homeless people are poor. Homeless people experience material deprivation as the overwhelming majority depend on welfare, day labour, casual work and/or begging. The impact of the lack of material resources refracts through the limited ability of poor families to provide assistance to the vulnerable or non-earning adults. Poor families may be able to provide support and care for young adults only as long as they remain in the parental household. For those in pursuit of independent living arrangements, or for conflict-burdened families, the home leaving of one of its members often implies cessation of
transfers of resources and services and weakening of social bonds. Informal networks of socially weak families tend to be limited to the neighbourhood and networks generally have a low capacity to transfer material and non-material resources to those who move away to another district, town or region. Research indicates that the majority of people unable to fend for themselves end up on the street or in an emergency shelter after relatives and friends are no longer able or willing to provide accommodation. However, not all homeless people originate from poor families.

Small scale research illustrates difficulties which homeless people have to establish and maintain family and informal networks and to make use of other social institutions. These difficulties seem to be partly inherent to social structures and ways our societies operate and partly to personality features of people affected. Indeed, social ties are built through most important domains of human activity which bind housing with family life, work, health and culture. The majority of those who become roofless and end up on the street or in an emergency shelter for homeless people are poor, have no stable work, have weak health, can no longer rely on family and friends for help and are not well equipped to take part in or make use of social institutions and the mainstream culture.

In order to look at homelessness as a social process rather than just as a condition of 'non-housing', the research community needed to address risk factors, risk groups and ways risks materialise for particular individuals and families belonging to risk groups. Initially this brought considerable confusion about the habitual use of the concept of risk. In social research methodology the notion of risk is understood as the probability of an event occurring. The risk period is conceptualised as the duration of the non-occurrence of a given event (Yamaguchi, 1991). People under eviction proceedings are at risk of becoming homeless but the event has not occurred yet and may never occur. In the cost-benefit analysis conceptualised and widely used by economists it is postulated that success comes when opportunities exceed risks. By analogy some social scientists interpret the notion of being at risk as having poor opportunities or few options. In market economies, it is argued, one can more easily take risks when one has multiple opportunities. Changing a job may be opportunity-enhancing for highly skilled people. But, moving from welfare to a casual job may be too risky for a low-skilled individual. Duffy (1997a) argues that for the poor and disadvantaged groups 'flexibility is both more risky and more difficult to achieve'.

First research hypotheses in the domain of homelessness analysis emerged around the notion of risks as a consequence of social 'fragilisation' due to the increasing burden of housing costs. Indeed, contextual research confirms that difficulties in maintaining housing may be considered to be conducive to social exclusion both in its material and relational dimensions.

Low income people may suffer serious deprivation because they are overburdened by housing costs. The issue is not only what percentage of household income is spent on rent and related housing costs but what amount of disposable income remains for other needs after housing costs are paid. Research points in the direction of a conclusion that housing
costs are causing deprivation and may be contributing to the 'ghettoisation' more particularly of the urban poor.

Rent and housing related costs are permanent costs. In most European market economies they are the highest expenditure of an average household. As a proportion of household income housing is followed by the expenditure on food. Research has shown that socially vulnerable people have to make serious savings on nutrition, medication, education, communication, culture and leisure in order to keep up with market rents. Containing telephone costs to a minimum, not being able to buy or having to give up a car and to cut down on public transportation costs may lead to social isolation. Housing costs may be said to be one of the key causes of general deprivation of the unemployed, those with casual or low paid jobs, and people dependent on welfare transfers or low pensions. While the causal relationship between poverty, poor housing conditions and deprivation due to high housing costs can be documented, the relationship between housing costs and homelessness is less obvious and under-researched.

The broadening of perspective is necessary to include in the analysis of housing exclusion not only those literally homeless using night shelters, soup kitchens or people living on the street but also people living under conditions of severe housing stress in dilapidated housing estates, in crime ridden neighbourhoods, conflict burdened households and overcrowded apartments. The broadening of perspective is necessary so that we can address the process of exclusion and paths into and out of deprivation and vulnerability. But broadening of the perspective requires conceptual rigor and research discipline (Soulet and Tosi in Avramov 1999). The conceptualisation and development of assumptions as to why and how risks do or do not materialise for particular individuals belonging to risk groups, analysis of the risk period and rates of occurrence of the event during the risk period, relationship between transition rates and explanatory variables require scrupulous research and use of advance methods.

**Risk factors and causes of homelessness**

The first step towards understanding homelessness is the acknowledgement of the complexity of paths into homelessness. The second step is imminently analytical. It entails separating or breaking the complex deterministic system into its component parts and regrouping into meaningful systems the indicators, explanatory variables and causes. In a simplified way it may be said that the decomposition of the complex reality is necessary so that we can analyse, measure and connect the variables; reconstruction is necessary so that we can interpret, assess prospects for the future and explain why and how things happen the way they do.

Research about homelessness has made sufficient progress so that we can make informed assumptions about *macro* or structural causes, *meso* or intermediate causes, and *micro* or proximate causes (often referred to as personal causes) as components of the deterministic system. The structural, intermediate and proximate causes of homelessness are different
levels of causation and not independent variables of homelessness. The combination and the feedback between background, intermediate and personal factors causes homelessness.

My personal research has led me to identify the following components of the three levels of causation which are specific to the housing dimension of social exclusion. They are relevant for the accumulation and organisation of research findings and the connection and interpretation of the phenomena of housing exclusion and homelessness.

The key structural factors of housing exclusion may be identified as:
- lack of affordable housing;
- lack of adequate social protection;
- lack of adequate assistance and care for individuals with mental disability or personality disorders;
- juridical and social segregation of particular individuals or classes of individuals.

The way these macro social factors operate may be summarised in the following way:
- Lack of affordable housing entails a severe competition at the bottom level of the rental market. Individuals who have a social, physical or mental disability are weak competitors and are at risk of being excluded from the regular housing market.
- Lack of adequate social protection of people who do not have enough income to live in a way compatible with human dignity ghettoises people in severely sub-standard housing and run down neighbourhoods.
- Lack of community-based mental health care for individuals suffering mental and personality disorders is one of the key determinant of homelessness for those belonging to the risk group. People who do not need to be institutionalised but need specific care and support in order to be able to live in independent housing are at risk of becoming homeless if not assisted by the community.
- Legislation which restricts movement, access to land or housing for particular groups or classes of individuals (e.g. travellers and Gypsies, ethnic minorities, non-nationals, migrants, ex-offenders, mentally or physically handicapped) is one of the key structural cause of homelessness. Even when legislation does not sanction segregation, social practice may still operate as a strong factor of housing exclusion. Research shows that particular ethnic groups, individuals who cannot produce a secure employment record and those with a visible physical or mental disability are discriminated against in the private rental market.

The missing link in research of housing exclusion and homelessness remains the identification and analysis of intermediate causes and better understanding of ways they operate. We can advance hypotheses about the importance of structures and functions of:
- family;
- friends;
- informal networks;
- neighbourhood;
- peer groups;
• street-gangs and other sub-cultural groups;

But, we still know little about ways these networks operate. We have no reliable research which could highlight how networks may be preventing or exacerbating housing exclusion and homelessness.

The proximate or personal causes of homelessness are a set of factors associated with a personal history and personality features of individuals. These may be conducive to social isolation and homelessness. Proximate causes of dislocation from regular housing may be identified as:
• history of inadequate institutions (orphanage, succession of youth care institutions and foster families, mental hospitals, prisons, etc.);
• troubles in the family;
• dropping out of school;
• substance abuse;
• mental disability or personality disorder.

When risks materialise they may result in temporary living conditions which exacerbate fragility and produce new proximate causes. Sleeping rough, in an emergency shelter, squatting, and, becoming estranged from the family may be associated with minor criminal activity and identification with the counter culture on the street. If social intervention does not occur in these initial phases of the process of detachment, the condition of homelessness may lead to:
• prostitution;
• major criminal activity;
• heavy substance abuse;
• severe mental disability.

The experience of life on the street and in emergency shelters where individuals encounter abuse, crime and self-abuse may become a determinant of long-term and life-long rupture of social ties and detachment from the values of the mainstream culture.

In a somewhat simplified way it may be said that the identification of structural factors which tell us how the society is organised helps us to identify the general risk factors of homelessness. The identification of intermediate or meso level causes, through which background factors operate, tell us which specific population sub-groups are most exposed to risks of homelessness. The micro or personal causes help us to perceive which particular individuals in a specific society are running the highest risk of homelessness.

The notion of risks implies a possibility, threat, hazard, chance of loss or peril. It can be measured as the probability of an event occurring. The size and the composition of groups for whom risks materialise and who find themselves homelessness depends ultimately on the effectiveness of the system of family and social protection. In all societies only a small proportion of individuals belonging to groups at risk of homelessness fall through all the
existing social safety nets. Some of those who encounter the world of homelessness are able to develop personal coping strategies and build their own paths out of homelessness. Some are effectively assisted by the public authorities. Others just drift and rely on daily survival. A universal rule for every exposure to deprivation and hazard which affects those belonging to the risk groups and those who become actually homelessness is: the longer the struggle - the higher the casualties (Avramov, 1997).

The organisation and functioning of society and in particular its social services illustrate how risks materialise or how they are buffered in different European countries. Although there is a general shortage of affordable housing, the unemployment rate is high, and the divorce rates are among the highest in Europe, there are almost no homeless families in Finland. Those families who found themselves homeless are accommodated in temporary apartments for a few weeks before they are provided permanent accommodation. In 1996 360 household composed of two or more persons (many of them Ingrain returnees awaiting permanent accommodation) were reported to have been temporarily homeless. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, the overwhelming majority of those officially recognised as homeless are families. They may find themselves as homeless on waiting lists for housing for several years.

**Excluded from housing = excluded from official statistics**

The first practical obstacle to a comprehensive analysis of housing exclusion is the lack of reliable data organised into meaningful groupings which would document the living conditions of people exposed to housing stress and those who find themselves homeless. Generally, contextual data can be used as indicators of the key structural causes and small scale research of actually homeless people may give information about proximate causes of homelessness. The *meso* level causes are least researched. The connection between poverty, social marginalisation, social exclusion, housing stress, the nature and strength of networks of socially vulnerable groups and individuals, personality features, individual handicaps and homelessness remains largely an unexplored territory.

Data collected in household surveys provide an abundance of information about housing conditions of people who have a home. But they tell us nothing about homeless people and their living conditions. Technically, the absence of homeless people from household surveys from which data on housing conditions of the population are drawn are easy to explain. The sampling method for household and family budget surveys is based on a selection of respondents from a pool of people who have a home. A private household is generally defined as a unit composed of people who share a dwelling and housing-related costs. In some countries the definition of a household will focus on the sharing of accommodation and income (e.g. Ireland). In others, it will focus on whether members share accommodation and meals (e.g. Spain), or household chores or the use of a living room (e.g. UK). Although the meaning of living together and sharing may vary between countries, everywhere a household implies an address, a dwelling. The majority of homeless people do not have an address in a conventional dwelling. They do not live in private households. They do not have a principal residence.
Population censuses in Europe do not follow the same sampling technique as housing and household budget surveys. Homeless people are not intentionally left out of the count. But, so far, no specific effort has been made to ensure a comprehensive coverage of this population sub-group. No effort has been made to process and tabulate data in a way which would make it possible to identify homeless people as an aggregate. Even if we assume that homeless people are included in a statistically significant manner in the general population count it is difficult to imagine how this population could be identified as a specific group on the basis of census data. Namely, no country has developed an official definition of the conditions of homelessness for census purposes. In any case, one should not expect to obtain from a population census data which can be better gathered in targeted surveys. Indeed, population censuses are a massive counting exercise which is too bulky a tool and too expensive an enterprise to be used for collecting data about homelessness and housing deprivation which affect a small proportion of the total population.

Technical aspects explain how homeless people remain beyond official statistics. They do not provide an explanation why in a value-knowledge society in which services are planned and resources allocated on the basis of information, we have no reliable data about homelessness and the housing dimension of deprivation. The conspicuous absence of data on living conditions of homeless people in EUROSTAT’s Social Portrait of Europe (1996) and the absence of comprehensive survey of homelessness at the European level confirm that authorities are willing to measure social progress only in terms of the improvement of housing conditions of well-housed people (Avramov, 1997).

**What have we learned about the extent of homelessness and housing deprivation?**

One of many reasons for the lack of data about the prevalence of homelessness is a lack of agreement about what homelessness is. In order to distinguish homeless people as a separate category we need a specific definition. It comes as no surprise that only countries in which there is a statutory obligation to assist the homeless or a high degree of political commitment to house the homeless there is an administrative definition of homelessness in official use.

In the United Kingdom positive law (Housing Act, 1985) imposes a statutory obligation on local authorities to provide housing to homeless people found to be in priority need. People are homeless if they do not have access to housing or if they do have housing but access to it is denied. The criteria for the identification of people eligible for accommodation are developed in the guidelines for the implementation of the legislation. They are: that the applicant is homeless or threatened by homelessness, that she/he is not homeless or potentially homeless intentionally, that she/he has a priority need.

The legislative definition in Ireland is enshrined in the 1988 Housing Act. Under the Act someone is homeless if, in the opinion of the authority, there is no accommodation available which he/she can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, and, if a person
is living in a hospital, country home, night shelter or other such institutions because they are unable to provide reasonable accommodation from his/her own resources.

The Housing Fund of Finland which conducts an annual survey on homelessness uses an operational definition which enumerates a series of situations of homelessness which affect persons living outdoors or in temporary shelters, in night shelters or other shelters for the homeless, in institutions or institutional homes either temporarily or permanently due to lack of housing, prisoners soon to be released who have no housing, persons living temporarily with relatives or acquaintances due to lack of housing, families who have split up and are in temporary accommodation due to housing.

If we resort to administrative definitions the population which is included in the homeless category will obviously vary from one country to another. Furthermore the opinions of public authorities as to who should and who should not be considered to be homeless and entitled to assistance may vary from year to year in the function of resources allocated rather than in the function of the level of needs.

A group of experts who prepared a report on homelessness for the Council of Europe proposed the following definition of homeless people "individuals or families socially excluded from lasting occupancy of a suitable dwelling" (Council of Europe, 1993 p. 23). The authors operationalise the definition by identifying situations of homelessness which range from rooflessness to unacceptable housing conditions. Similarly Daly defines homelessness as "a continuum of condition and need" (1993 p.16) and identifies circumstances which can be combined to form a definition of homelessness and which range from rooflessness, houselessness and insecure accommodation to inferior or sub-standard housing.

While descriptive definitions provide a useful nomenclature, a combination of descriptive and normative elements of above definitions has left too much space for freehanded interpretations of concepts such as 'unacceptable', 'insecure' or 'inferior'. Outside the research community such definitions give grounds to the 'game of numbers' in which figures are blown up to imply that tens of millions of people in Europe are homeless. What the sum of figures stands for is in fact a small proportion of literally homeless people and an overwhelming majority of housed albeit badly housed people - those living in old housing, sub-standard accommodation and overcrowded dwellings.

My personal research has convinced me about the usefulness of a causal approach in defining homelessness. The housing dimension of deprivation is characterised by the absence of a personal, permanent, adequate dwelling. Difficulties and obstacles in accessing and maintaining a home are seen as defining criteria of homelessness. A social condition is thus defined through social mechanisms and processes which induce it. **Homeless people are those who are unable to access a personal, permanent, adequate dwelling or to maintain such a dwelling due to financial constraints and other social barriers, and those people who are unable to access and maintain such a dwelling**
because they are unable to lead a fully independent life and need care and support but not placement in institutions.

Concepts such as personal, private and adequate which I refer to have been extensively elaborated by the United Nations (see for example 1992). The proposed causal definition, nevertheless, has its share of shortcomings. Namely, at present we are not able to identify with precision the 'weight' of clusters of causes (associated with financial constraints, social barriers and need for care) and their interrelationship. However, the key assumptions incorporated in these definitions are based on reliable research across Europe and in my view contribute to a better understanding of what is specific to homelessness.

Exclusion from housing is a process marked by the accumulation of problems associated with poverty, breakdown of family and social networks, personality disorders, isolation and social detachment of individuals. Homelessness is neither a group characteristic nor is it a static condition. For the overwhelming majority of people who find themselves homeless it is not a life-long condition. The majority of those affected experience only an episode of literal homelessness.

A socially correct way to assess the level of needs for housing and assistance and care for people unable to access and maintain a home from their own resources would be to ensure a statutory obligation to provide and monitor the demand over time. In practice, however, what is usually monitored is the level of provision by a variety of institutions which range from soup kitchens run by charities to social housing provided from public funds. Thus what is currently on the market of services is (wrongly) identified with the level of needs and by analogy a wrong assumption is made that the number of service users stands for the number of homeless people.

*Homeless people as users of services and groups at risk of housing stress and deprivation*

Services for homeless people are often the only source of information concerning the tip of the iceberg of housing deprivation. In many European countries the number of current users of services depends on the supply rather than on the demand for accommodation assistance and care (Table 1). Thus, countries with a weak institutional framework of assistance will record a small number of homeless people together with countries with strong preventive policies and measures.

The number of people dependent on services for homeless people cannot be explained by macro economic parameters. Indeed, less prosperous European countries do not register a higher number of service users than countries with the higher GDP per inhabitant. The number of people estimated to be homeless in Greece, a country with no minimum income scheme, is lower than in the Netherlands, the forerunner country in social protection. The number of people officially recognised as homeless or threatened by homelessness in the UK is 40 times higher than the estimated number of homeless users of services in Spain. In the UK local authorities have a statutory obligation to house homeless people found to be in priority need. Spanish authorities make no such commitment. Figures provided by public
and voluntary services for homeless people tell us more about housing standards and the level of development of services than about the extent of housing exclusion.

Table 1. Number of people dependent on services for the homeless in the early 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>On an average day</th>
<th>Over the course of 1 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>8,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>490,700</td>
<td>876,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2,947</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>346,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>364,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2,667</td>
<td>7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>78,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>9,903</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>283,000</td>
<td>460,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Avramov (1996)

The interpretation of the prevalence of homelessness and exclusion from adequate housing in an international comparative perspective needs to take into account national housing standards and environmental factors, infrastructure, climate and general habitat. People living in shacks, tents, containers and caravans are not considered to be homeless in Portugal. Public authorities cannot be held responsible for providing proper housing. In Sweden, by contract, a caravan is not considered to provide adequate housing. Local authorities can expect to receive a court order to provide proper housing if they fail to offer accommodation to the needy which corresponds to the housing standards compatible with the Swedish measure of human dignity. In the United Kingdom guidelines for the implementation of the homelessness legislation have in practice become guidelines for the attribution of social housing. Authorities argue that the number of people accepted for housing under the homeless legislation is much higher than the number of homeless. Thus, comparing figures about service users in Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom requires great rigor.

In order to understand homelessness in a comparative perspective we need to take into account the social context within which risks of homelessness materialise. Comparing only numbers of users of services for homeless people and social, demographic and medical profiles of those who are considered to be homeless in different countries can be misleading. Currently available information about service users is a useful indicator (not a
measurement) of needs which are met. The number of users of services is furthermore useful information for service providers - in market economies it justifies their existence.

Homelessness is a residual of public, family and informal protection. The composition of the homeless population ultimately depends on the efficacy with which institutions and networks operate. It is generally known that people who are at risk of homelessness have a combination of two or more handicaps and have experienced multiple severely stressful life experiences. Low income or no regular income, low educational attainment, poor qualification, a history of mental health problems, chronic illness, alcohol and drug abuse, experience of institutionalisation (psychiatric hospitalisation, jail, orphanage, foster care), traumatic events in the family of origin, sexual abuse and domestic violence constitute a web of handicaps and traumatic events which may be conducive to homelessness.

The stronger the public and/or family support is, the stronger and more serious are handicaps which lead a person into homelessness. Typically, families at risk of homelessness are better protected than single persons; women are better protected than men. If a woman falls through all social support safety nets and ends up sleeping rough she is more likely than a man to have a history of mental health problems which precede the experience of homelessness. Research in the USA and Spain (Koegel, 1996; Vazquez and Muñoz, 1996) confirm that among people sleeping rough and those using soup kitchens, temporary shelters and other emergency services for the homeless, women more often than men will have had severe mental disorders before and during their transition to homelessness. Mental disorders are a risk factor of homelessness which does not operate independently from other social and personal handicaps. Risks can be reduced or reinforced by the system of social support. The nature and the targeting of the system of protection will determine which personal handicaps will be conducive to homelessness.

The number of service users is the measure of the emergency housing demand which is met. This indicator does not tell us about the level of unmet needs for emergency accommodation and other services for homeless people nor about people in housing need in general. What do we know about living conditions of people who are not covered by housing surveys because they do not live in houses and flats, because they do not live in a private household, because they do not have a principal usual residence, because they rotate between a street, squat, transitional accommodation, marginal, often illegal lettings? How many people depend on night shelters and soup kitchens? How many people rent a single occupancy room on short term basis (while they hold a casual job or the week in which they receive a welfare benefit) and double up with acquaintances and relatives or squat when they run out of meagre resources? What coping strategies are developed by households living under conditions of severe housing stress? Although answers cannot be found in official statistical publications general indicators of housing exclusion can be identified from a variety of sources.

Although no systematic count of people in housing need has even been attempted by the statistical offices, it is possible to use the available data as proxies for an initial estimation of the number of people who are living under conditions of severe housing stress due to bad
housing, overcrowding and tenure insecurity. Estimates about the prevalence of housing deprivation are possible only for some European countries. On the basis of available data from public and non-profit service providers, primary research, population censuses and secondary sources I have estimated the prevalence of housing deprivation for the 15 European Union countries.

People experiencing material hardship form the core of risk groups which are exposed to housing stress and threatened by housing deprivation. In the European Union those at highest risk of housing deprivation emerge from the lowest income tranche which encompasses:

- 57 million people living below the poverty threshold;
- 31 million people dependent on welfare;
- 18 million unemployed dependent on unemployment benefits or family transfers.

In terms of bad housing conditions it can be estimated that in the European Union at least:

- 15 million people live in severely substandard and/or overcrowded dwellings;
- 2.4 million people live in "unconventional dwellings" which are mobile, semi-permanent or not built for human habitation.

In terms of housing insecurity and housing stress in the 15 European Union countries it may be estimated that:

- 1.6 million people are under eviction procedures;
- 400,000 people are evicted each year.

It may be estimated that homelessness affects each year:

- 2.7 million homeless people who rotate between friends and relatives, furnished rooms rented on a short term basis and services for homeless people;
- 1.8 million people dependent on public and voluntary services for homeless people.

Source, Avramov 1999

All of the above conditions may overlap and therefore it is not possible to add any of the given numbers in order to estimate the prevalence of housing exclusion. The above figures may be considered only as a preliminary indicator of the housing dimension of stress and deprivation in the most prosperous European countries.

What have we learned about recent trends in homelessness and housing deprivation?

The 1980s mark a decade of accelerated improvement of housing standards and housing conditions in general. The 1980s are also a decade of growing visibility of homelessness. In the 1980s and early 1990s a visible presence of people sleeping rough in European cities coincides with an invisible pressure on services for homeless people. Fragmented research and information gathered by service providers enables us to describe a trend in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It may be summarised as follows. A growing number of people who
could not afford a home from their own resources were turning to services for homeless people. The duration of stay in shelters and transitional dwellings funded by public and voluntary organisations was increasing. A growing number of women with and without children were being provided temporary accommodation in shelters for homeless people. The smallest, albeit the fastest growing population of users of services for the homeless seem to have been women and young adults in the 18 to 25 age group.

However, in the second half of the 1990s there are indications that trends may have reversed in some West European countries. Information from Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, the United Kingdom and West Germany seem to indicate that the number of homeless people users of services has been decreasing.

Recent figures which are documenting a decline in the number of users of services for homeless people in several countries put before researchers a number of important questions to be answered. The same type of data from service providers which now indicate a decline in numbers have been used by the research community, social workers, service providers and their lobbyists to argue that there was an increase in homelessness throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Can we then conclude that the most recent figures announce the reversal of the trend in homelessness? If that is the case how can the decline in homelessness be explained? The mid-1990s coincide with an increase in structural risks of homelessness, (unemployment, decline in the provision of publicly funded housing for rent, rent increases and cuts in social benefits) and yet the number of people for whom risks materialise is decreasing. The question as to why and how under conditions which are exposing more and more people to risks of homelessness the number of people who have become homeless seems to have declined can at best be addressed through a number of hypotheses (Avramov, 1998).

It is not possible to quantify trends in homelessness in a consistent, statistically relevant manner for all the European countries. Emergency, basic need services are typically provided by charities, non-profit organisations and voluntary associations. They neither have the means nor the know-how to engage in data gathering and analysis. In fact, the humanitarian nature of services provided by voluntary organisations may exclude asking of questions about the origin or the nature of problems of their clients. Data on trends are generally available only when public authorities have a statutory obligation to provide housing for the homeless and/or when emergency services provided by the voluntary organisations are funded by the public authorities. We generally have to resort to proxies and indicators from a variety of sources in order to identify trends.

The first countries to react to the growing homelessness by developing and implementing integrated preventive policies and complementary services for homeless people were the northern European countries. Finland is a country with an outstanding record in containing housing deprivation and reducing homelessness: between 1987 and 1994 the number of homeless people has been reduced by half. The number of people who found themselves homeless has continued to decline throughout the second half of the 1990s (Kärkkäinen in Avramov 1999). The number of users of services for homeless people seems to have
decreased in recent years also in Sweden, West Germany and Belgium. In these countries the supply of services has not decreased and therefore the decline in the number of clients cannot be interpreted as a decline on the supply side. The decline in the number of people accepted on waiting lists for housing under the homeless legislation in the United Kingdom has also declined but it is not yet clear whether this is due to a fall in demand or in supply.

In most southern European countries a relatively large stock of sub-standard housing and single-occupancy rooms accessible to low-income people have traditionally been a buffer against a rise in the number of those literally roofless. Several hundreds of thousands of people live on the borderline of homelessness in shucks, tents, containers, caravans, staircases, caves or premises not actually designed for human habitation. They are generally not recognised by the public authorities as homeless but are classified as people living in ‘unconventional dwellings’.

In eastern and central European countries homelessness has become visible only in the 1990s and is generally associated with the difficulties of transition to market economy. It is often argued that the present upsurge of homelessness is largely a legacy of the former establishment but researchers in some countries also acknowledge that the recent closings down of worker’s hostels and even orphanages have pushed some of the most vulnerable adults and children onto the streets. Nothing is known about their number. Preliminary research points in the direction of the conclusion that the burden of housing costs has increased substantially for the whole population, that the security of tenure has decreased for socially vulnerable groups, that the population at risk of homelessness is increasing and that people who find themselves homeless live in extreme misery (Avramov, 1995b; Duffy, 1997b). What differs currently between European developed market economies and countries in transition from planned economy are not so much paths into homelessness but chances of receiving public support and assistance when homeless and prospects for getting out of homelessness.

The visible homeless, those sleeping rough or in night shelters, are only the tip of the iceberg of people experiencing housing deprivation. The hidden homeless - those living in forced cohabitation under conditions of severe family conflicts, domestic abuse or overcrowding - and people at the borderline of homelessness living in dilapidated accommodation unfit for human habitation, form the overwhelming majority of those experiencing deprivation. But we have no data to document recent trends in hidden homelessness, housing stress or housing deprivation.

Lessons learned about tackling homelessness

What have we learned about preventive policies and services for homeless people?

There has been no comprehensive analysis in Europe about the impact of current direct and indirect policies on housing deprivation and homelessness. Conclusions about effects of policies are generally drawn from contextual data, macro economic parameters and the creative reading of statements of political intentions. Lack of resources and policy interest
in a scientifically sound analysis of whether policies work and what unintended effects they may produce has been a major issue of concern within the EUROHOME network of researchers. Daly (in Avramov 1999) discusses different regimes of social policy and concludes that there is no immediate cross-national patterning between welfare regimes and the extent of homelessness.

Comparative overviews of policy options and practice in various European countries indicates that the strong political will and an effective commitment in terms of (material and non-material) resources are the key variables to be analysed (Avramov, 1995a; 1996). Policy choices translated into practice in advanced welfare states show that anti-poverty and social integration measures are more effective when income protection is accompanied by a comprehensive system of housing supply, and, housing subsidies, benefits, allowances. The Nordic countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden have been successful in progressively removing obstacles to housing for low-income groups. They also implement a generous system of income transfers which enable people to maintain a home (Kristensen, Koch-Nielsen, Kärkkäinen in Avramov 1999). They have all managed to contain the effects of structural causes of housing deprivation and to reduce homelessness over the past 10 years or so.

In countries which focused their anti-poverty measures on minimum subsistence means and emergency assistance for the homeless but pursued throughout the 1980s the policy of disengagement from the public funding of permanent housing for socially vulnerable groups - risks of homelessness persisted (Busch-Geertsema in Avramov 1999). In many countries the lack of adequate housing assistance to low-income groups has been a serious deficiency in the system of social protection.

In countries with a weaker public system of welfare protection lack of adequate housing support to low-income and non-earning groups has been an additional stumbling point in the development of a comprehensive system of protection from poverty (Tosi, Sapounakis in Avramov 1999). Lack of a guaranteed minimum subsistence means and a new market housing strategy which does not foresee efficient safety nets for the poor are increasing risks of poverty and housing stress in southern European countries as well as in countries in transition to market economies. In southern Europe the absence of effective public policies and measures, the family support has been so far the most effective (and often only) buffer against homelessness. Housing deprivation in terms of sub-standard housing and overcrowding remained however widespread. In many countries family solidarity has traditionally played a significant role in preventing homelessness of adults with no income. However, changing family structures and culture are affecting the functional basis of direct family support. These changes have not, so far, been accompanied by new welfare models.

Transition to market economies in eastern and central Europe has not been accompanied in the 1990s by effective social protection and welfare and housing assistance to those who are too young or too old, too weak or too slow to profit from the new economic opportunities.
In order to go beyond just informed assumptions in addressing the impact of policies on housing deprivation and homelessness there is an urgent need to evaluate how well are current social policies, welfare benefits and housing allowances reinforcing housing security of individuals and families. There is a cognitive and policy need to analyse whether and how policies, measures and services are reinforcing social cohesion at the European, national and regional levels. There is need to develop housing impact methodology (lessons can be learned from family impact studies) and to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of policies which are aimed at helping people to maintain housing and measures and services set in place for people who find themselves outside the housing system.

The consolidation of European Union requites reforms of welfare protection on different levels. It also requires that the system ensures sustainable living conditions and that people are treated fairly in their daily life. Innovative institutional changes which take into account competition, globalisation and sustainability have to be based on an informed dialogue. Informed choices are needed in order to alleviate existing social tensions, to deal with various forms of spatial dimensions of social exclusion and to promote social integration. Change and dialogue is needed to achieve gradual harmonisation of sustainable policies of welfare protection and measures of social integration. A pre-requisite for informed choices is sound knowledge about the impact of past and present social, welfare and housing policies and targeted measures.

Within the scope of the EUROHOME project we could not develop and implement a policy impact approach - due to financial constraints and time limitation. However I consider the recommendation to pursue this research road as one of the key research challenges for our network in the future.

As for responsive policy measures they have traditionally been influenced by the way homeless people are perceived. Social detachment of homeless people has often been interpreted to imply that homelessness is a lifestyle choice. Homeless people were seen as consumers and abusers of public services and resources. This perception of homelessness leads to assertions that the greater the number of services provided the higher the number of 'free loaders'. By analogy it was assumed that people will intentionally make themselves homeless in order to profit from the public handouts. The Finnish example extensively discussed by Kärkkäinen in the project monograph testifies to the fault in reasoning regarding the 'free loader-hypothesis'. Our research unambiguously shows that the higher the number of effectively assisted and cared for people - the lower the number of those who become homeless and remain a heavy and costly burden for public institutions.

The Nordic countries which can be quoted as an example of best practice in integrated policy approach to homelessness show that tackling difficulties associated with homelessness requires complementation between preventive and responsive measures and a well thought approach to services. In the late 1990s models of best practice are those schemes which extend services far beyond temporary emergency assistance. They acknowledge that homelessness is not only a housing condition (Koch-Nielsen and Børner
Stax, Koch-Nielsen, Brandt, Kärkkäinen in Avramov 1999). They operate under the assumption that housing the homeless is indispensable but that it is not a sufficient tool for social reintegration of people with multiple problems. They provide for people in need of housing and social support and their aim is to resettle homeless people into independent housing and to provide sufficient support and care so that they are able to stay in individual housing. Depending on the set of specific needs of individuals, the integrated approach implies that in addition to personal housing (as opposed to placement in institutions) formerly homeless people may expect to receive: individual guidance; counselling on how to manage their financial resources; how to reconstitute family and social ties; professional training; access to employment; psychological and medical support. This approach also questions the validity and usefulness of the assumption that all homeless people can -ought to-will-be integrated in the labour market.

Although there is evidence that effective preventive and responsive policy measures can reduce homelessness, many European countries seem to be giving way to pressures to reduce the public involvement. The new policy climate seems to be characterised by a shift away from comprehensive preventive measures and a move towards responsive measure of mainly short-term nature. This is accompanied by a lip-service to innovation and new forms of partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors.

More and more public resources are being channelled towards emergency provisions which include temporary accommodation. This is often done without examining whether these provisions are actually determined by client needs. The effectiveness and efficacy of services is not monitored from the point of view of providers, other institutions and clients. There is an urgent need to develop performance measurements of services and to develop standards of service provision. We have found no evidence that voluntary services are more effective, less expensive and more client-friendly than publicly funded and publicly run chains of services. Unless more focus is put on the control of quality and material and non-material costs and benefits of services in general and crisis intervention in particular the result could be that the short-term funding of exploratory pilot projects may turn out to be a policy flirt with innovation rather than a commitment to a pursuit of flexible but efficient and stable chains of services.

In the 1990s initiatives have been launched by numerous institutions in Europe with the aim to describe innovative projects and to collect information about pilot projects and new partnerships. But, there has been no coordinated effort to evaluate the impact and to measure the real outcomes in terms of material and non-material costs and benefits of such projects. There is no project which brings together at the European level experts to develop adequate methodology for performance measurements which could be implemented at the local, national and European levels. Paradoxically, at the time of budgetary constraints which impose reforms in the welfare systems in Europe there are currently no scientifically sound tools to evaluate the effectiveness, efficacy and long-term outcomes of past and current homelessness policies, outcomes of crisis intervention and supported housing services for socially deprived individuals and families.
The deadlock of the mainstream policy debate about services and the role of different partners in the resettlement-rehabilitation-reintegration programmes highlights the need for a U-turn in rethinking services. As researchers we can reiterate the importance of acknowledging different levels of causation of housing deprivation and homelessness. The importance of the analysis of the interaction and the feedback between different levels of causation is not a matter of academic pedantry. To ignore or to deny the underlying structural causes, just as to ignore or deny the impact of personal histories and personality features, is disruptive for an effective action. In the public debate about homelessness the policy makers typically tend to ignore or underestimate the impact of structural causes; the lobbyists tend to ignore or underestimate the impact of personal factors. An uninformed debate about homelessness is often translated into costly ad hoc programmes and services which fail to address the real needs of homeless people.

**Services for homeless people are increasingly becoming a market-driven sub-sector driven by an economic cost-benefit rhetoric and (re)production of clients.** What we have learned from our research is that services for homeless people are expensive. Costs to the public may be as high as ECU 1,809 per month for one place in an institution for homeless people (Hanover, Germany) and ECU 940 per month for long term housing provision in flats combined with social support for single homeless persons. These costs to the public are one more in the chain of reasons why services need to be made more accountable to the general public and to their clients.

**Responses to Social Emergency**

Responses to crisis situations which may be associated to the need for temporary accommodation are frequently marked by the lack of clarity about the order of magnitude of the population in need and the provision of care and services without examining whether these are actually determined by client needs. Some groups in need of emergency assistance may not receive sufficient protection and public attention because they are less visible or other groups may have better organised lobbyists who exercise greater pressure on behalf of their clients. A few highly publicised cases of neediness are frequently interpreted as generalised trends. Or all those who turn to services for crisis intervention may be labelled as homeless. The lack of understanding of social processes which generate housing and social exclusion are often translated into inadequate services.

We know that the number of services for crisis intervention is increasing at an unprecedented pace in many European countries. There are doubts that they may be operating as revolving doors for disadvantaged groups. They may be providing more care that the clients need and/or wish to receive. In many countries there is a fragmentation of services, competition between service providers and lack of co-operation between specialised services. Crisis intervention is highly costly, not sufficiently need-based and the success rates in terms of outputs and outcomes is generally unknown. This void needs to be filled by methodologically sound evaluations of policies and services by means of policy impact studies and performance measurements of services from the point of view of providers, other institutions and users.
Under current conditions an exchange of information at the international level needs to go a step further than just stock-taking of ‘good’, ‘best’ and/or ‘innovative’ practice only on the basis of what policies and providers intend to achieve. Criteria for the measurement of success or innovation are usually set by providers and outputs and outcomes remain beyond the critical analysis of performance from the point of view of other institutions and clients. Making an inventory of measures or projects without an evaluation of whether they actually work, how many disadvantaged people they actually reach and how much they cost are not of much use for the translation of proposals into a realistic plan of action.

The unfeasibility of crisis intervention provided by public and voluntary organisations as a solution to housing deprivation may be illustrated by the huge cost to the public and the lack of convincing evidence about its effectiveness. “Because of their high personnel costs, voluntary organisations’ hostels which offer assistance by social workers are often extremely expensive” warns Busch-Geertsema (1999, p.478). The costs per day per person of temporary accommodation of homeless people in major German cities are between 40 and 70 Euros according to this author. **If extrapolated at the European level the cost to the public of sheltering some 1.1 million people by the organisations working with homeless people could range per day between 44,000,000 and 77,000,000 Euros.**

The domain of service provision is a policy twilight zone. It is necessary to address the deadlock of the mainstream debate about services and new partnerships which is more based on ideologies than on sound knowledge. The debate about innovative models which are (presumably) transferable although we do not know whether they actually work and how much they actually cost has not contributed much to tackling homelessness or social exclusion for that matter.

We have shown with the EUROHOME project that services are mushrooming across Europe and may be providing more ‘care’ than the clients actually need. Under these circumstances reducing the debate about tackling homelessness to a debate about ‘models of best practice’ resembles an attempt to reduce the issue to a mere technical task of ‘writing-out recipes’ just because a product looks appealing - rather then looking for remedies which require more rigour and are less marketable.

A thread connecting all the contributions to the EUROHOME project is the ultimate conclusion that there is no quick-fix solution to homelessness. Action is needed at the level of integrated policies which bind social protection, welfare assistance, housing policies, housing support with complementary services providing material and non-material support and care to people with specific multiple needs. The composition of the population that becomes homeless varies between countries and over time. Services for homeless people need to be systematically monitored in terms of the quality of assistance and care and material and non-material benefits for the public and clients.
POVERTY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND HOMELESSNESS - POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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Constructing the theoretical field of homelessness

The fragility of the conceptual field indicated by the term homelessness has been focused on repeatedly in the debate on this subject. It has often been claimed that homelessness, above all when it is intended in the strictly literal sense, does not constitute a substantial and consistent theoretical category and also that it is not politically useful. The considerable incongruity of the definitions is underlined in confirmation of this and also the fact that dissent over the processes implied by homelessness extends even to fundamental aspects.

Common sense and commonplaces strongly influence the social construction of the question. To some extent, the weakness of the research is a consequence of this. The situation reflects the strong political determination of the subject homelessness. In the case of homelessness, the 'natural' interrelationships between social theory and research on the one hand and social and political constructions on the other are so closely woven as to represent an extreme case. It has frequently been claimed that the very subject of homelessness is determined by its political value, that it was in fact the need to deal with its socially alarming aspects - or to control its visibility - that 'invented' the field of homelessness.

There is great dissent over what homelessness is, its nature and the processes that constitute it and it is a dissent - confirming the relationships between research and social/political construction of the subject - that is essentially implicit and not the result of debate. The various definitions and points of view are taken for granted on the basis of common sense notions - which may be in any case incompatible with each other - and their apparent obviousness makes any comparison and discussion superfluous.

How to find theoretical consistency and methodological rigour is the great challenge for the research on homelessness. The analytical and policy "usefulness" of the category homelessness will depend on the possibility of strengthening the conceptual field in this sense. In fact, the very fragility of the conceptual field may support an alternative conclusion: that homelessness is not an appropriate category - that this category is analytically and politically useless or even misleading. This viewpoint may be supported with good reasons.

One essential condition is to place the theme in the debate on poverty and the theoretical framework developed by this debate, and to clarify the relationships between homelessness and poverty. This will provide the necessarily wider context in which the social production of homelessness may be investigated.
This has also been the historical movement followed by the debate on homelessness during the past decade. In some ways the broadening of perspective - from studies focused on homeless individuals and their "disabilities" to comprehensive studies concerned with macro-structural factors; from search for single factor explanations to consideration of the complexity of forces at work etc. - has implied a convergence with studies on poverty and social exclusion.

The consequences on the consistency of the field, however, have been contradictory. On the one hand the extension has had very positive effects: it has involved the refusal of stereotypes - homelessness as a question of personal disabilities, homelessness as just a question of affordable housing etc. - that have proved to be scarcely productive in terms of research, misleading in terms of advocacy, and dangerous in terms of social construction of the question homelessness. On the other hand there has been the risk for the question of homelessness to dissolve in the big sea of the research on poverty without even raising the question of whether specific factors should be taken into consideration.

A basic point is therefore to make clear the relationships - of both continuity and discontinuity - between homelessness on one side and poverty, social exclusion and housing deprivation on the other side. Locating the question homeless in the wider conceptual frame of research on poverty should imply a rigorous and systematic effort to understand what is specific to homelessness. Is it a particular form of poverty or social exclusion? Or does it represent an/the extreme degree of it? And are characterising features such as the absence of a home, vagrancy etc. essential for a definition or can we consider them as chance factors? In what direction are significant elements to be sought: in the absence of housing or in the absence of social relations or in the breaking of social ties?

In fact, the effects of the growth of socially vulnerable areas on the production of homelessness are uncertain. While it is true that all factors at work in impoverishment/exclusion processes are virtually relevant for homelessness, it is somehow obvious that homelessness involves risk factors and chains of cause and effect with specific characteristics, which do not necessarily coincide with those of poverty, nor even with those of social marginalisation.

**The polarisation of meanings**

Two different things are spoken in the debate on homelessness: social marginalisation - in its most extreme forms: desocialisation, disaffiliation, break of social ties...; and housing exclusion - the lack, to a lesser or greater literal extent, of a home. Both problems are expressions of the "reappearance" of poverty in developed countries.

The simultaneous presence of the two themes in the debate creates a duplicity in the terms of reference - held together by the polysemous nature of the word "home" - which is the main source of inconsistency in the field of homeless. In the debate, this duplicity is taken for granted and the coexistence of the two themes is afforded little attention and is rarely elaborated on, thus avoiding the knotting problem of the relationships between them.
Naturally the two conditions are likely to be associated (at least in one of the two senses: while it is easy to be socially marginalised living in houses, it is less probable that remaining without housing for a long time will not be accompanied by marginalisation). Nevertheless these are conditions and processes that are different and a rigorous construction of the field of homelessness must start with frank recognition of this difference.

This polarisation takes place around two meanings of 'home': on the one hand the lack of a space - a 'shelter' - and on the other the absence of social relations or ties which in turn would reveal situations of social exclusion or marginalisation. The more common image of homelessness - the socially marginalised homeless (often identified by terms such as 'of no abode', 'sans domicile fixe', 'senza dimora' etc.) - corresponds to the latter reference. The other pole is given by 'not having a house': an appropriate term may be 'housing exclusion', provided it is used in a reasonably restricted sense, without extending it to all the situations of housing deprivation.

The different views are given different emphasis in the various national debates: which means that they also reflect "objective" differences between the various national frameworks. The opposition between the two notions, however, is a general feature of the debate, and may be observed within any national debate. In fact, this opposition represents the great unsolved point of dissent in the debate on homelessness. The two notions identify two different research "objects", that are to a certain extent independent. They also raise different questions, differently linked to the "reappearance" of poverty in our societies: on the one hand the general problems of the connections between poverty and housing deprivation, and on the other the question of those types and processes of social exclusion or marginalisation that are qualified by the privation or loss of housing. In the debate on homelessness, this latter question is commonly identified - therefore exacerbating the difference between the two notions - with the marginalised single homeless, characterised by multiple deprivation and traits of social "disinsertion". Often reference is made to those extreme outcomes of the processes of social exclusion that are signalled in the debate as "disaffiliation" (see Castel), loss of the capabilities necessary to perform the elementary functions of everyday life (see Sen), etc.

We may assume that this polarisation is constitutive of the field of homelessness. This means that a sound theoretical construction of the field must/should at the same time admit/recognise the difference between the two questions, and keep the two notions/questions co-present in the field, in order to see where they intersect.

The transfer of interpretative schemes from one "object" to the other may appear manifestly untenable - for instance the extension to all the situations of housing exclusion of interpretations which apply to the no abode. The transfers however are understandable is we admit that around the two basic notions two different, alternative paradigms are constructed. The two types of deprivation are taken as the bases for two different definitions that move in opposing directions. The two notions identify different
interpretations on an analytical level and different solutions to problems on a practical level.

The framework: poverty and social exclusion

We may take up the new debate on poverty, particularly in those versions that resort to the notion of social exclusion. This debate pays particular attention to various factors that are also fundamental to the debate on homelessness.

The contributions published in the monograph Coping With Homelessness: Issues to be Tackled and Best Practices in Europe give a very full picture of the subjects of the debate and of why a new frame for the analysis of poverty had been formed:

- the notion of poverty as a process. "Poverty today is better defined as an ongoing process rather than as a fixed state... The progressive accumulation of difficulties from their origins to their final effects (means) a 'social disqualification' (process that) takes into account the increasingly common phenomenon of long term lack of regular work" (Paugam in Avramov 1999);
- precariousness in employment and the weakening of social ties as the two (variously interlinked) sets of factors on which social exclusion develops;
- the breaking of social ties as the extreme outcome of the process;
- the growth in the risk of exclusion resulting from an increase in social vulnerability, which occurs as the effect of the employment crisis and of the various processes that make social ties more fragile. The latter have their roots in the transformation of family structures and models and in the decay of previous forms of sociality;
- the contribution made by new trends in social policies, new orientations of governments and new policy models to increase (the risk of) exclusion (Duffy in Avramov 1999). The reduction of public intervention may create additional inequalities and protection gaps.

The notion and the debate on social exclusion furnish two essential elements required for an understanding of homelessness, two elements that in fact have been fully incorporated in the debate on the homeless: the idea of a breaking of social ties as the outcome of possible personal histories of precariousness and the idea that the situations of vulnerability at the basis of exclusion processes are on the increase.

The notion of social exclusion is, however, also part of a more general change that has occurred in the study of poverty: a new paradigm has taken shape, that narrates what is "new" in poverty. The methodological indications of this paradigm are fundamental for an understanding of homelessness:

- the importance of the problems of deprivation that do not just involve economic poverty or lack of material resources, but also inadequate participation in social life, which in its most severe forms of drifting becomes moral and social disintegration, uprooting etc.
The accent on these dimensions raises the complicated question of just what the relationships are between material poverty and social exclusion and between poverty and homelessness (Duffy in Avramov 1999);

- the discontinuity with respect to previous pictures and phenomenology of poverty: the intervention of new factors leading to disaffiliation, as has been said, but also a modification of the systemic relations of social inequality ("the passage from a vertical society, a class society with people high-up and people low-down, to a horizontal society where the problem is not to be up or down but to be in or out": see Touraine), and the constitution, in this way, of a "supernumerary" population, a population nobody knows what to do with, an "unusable underclass" etc.;

- the relationships between the new frames of poverty/social exclusion and the restructuring of social policies as factors of exclusion, and as a stake of the political game: the notion of exclusion may represent both a demand for new, more effective policies and at the same time a point of reference for the reduction of social policies with respect to universalist welfare models... This confirms the wisdom of recognising in the use of the notion of exclusion - its social construction character. This is particularly evident for the homeless.

The new theoretical and conceptual frames of poverty have brought renewed reflection to match the new processes of poverty/social exclusion. Nevertheless congruent use of the debate would not be possible if we did not relate critically to objections that have been raised over the notion of social exclusion, pointing out its limits and risks from both an analytic viewpoint and that of the policies implied. These objections are of immediate interest also for an analysis of homelessness.

On the one hand the notion of exclusion brings up an "objective" change: the increase in the risk of breaks on a personal level (break of social ties, disaffiliation... ) and the threat to social cohesion that these represent or denounce (risk of "social fracture"... ). On the other hand and at the same time, it may represent a designation of "reductive" policies.

In this sense, the shift of attention from processes and from the social (systemic) production of poverty to a focus on its acute and more visible forms is crucial. The social exclusion frame becomes a "paradox object", which clearly represents the dislocation of the social question currently in progress. "Either the social question is shifted from the centre to the periphery and an analytical reduction is carried out which focuses on the most visible effects of a more general movement, and thus deprives itself of an in-depth understanding of the destabilisation of society. Or the issue of exclusion is reintegrated at the hearth of the social question. However, in doing so exclusion becomes a secondary object and is diluted as a notion; it was no more than an indicator launching the reflection which itself does not constitute the focus of the reflection, nor the conceptual cornerstone of the analysis" (Soulet in Avramov 1999).

The dislocation of the question is closely interconnected with the political turning-point, characterised by the effort to redefine social policies. As observed by Castel, recourse to
exclusion may dissociate marginal situations from the processes which produced them and give them meaning, therefore obstructing the interrogation of the social mechanisms of the system responsible for the current ruptures. This analytical reduction results in a misrecognition of what exclusion entails, "a general dynamism of precariousness which defeats assured status", and refers to policies of a remedial nature aimed at a particular public. "This explains the successive array of measures whose main feature is to intervene time after time to patch up the social net which has been ravaged. In this sense the political popularity of exclusion has to do with the savings allowed by the level and extent of the measures taken (Soulet in Avramov 1999). "It seems more and more realistic to deploy interventionism for treating the most visible for ms of malfunctioning rather than to control the process which sets it off because dealing with its effects can be carried out in a technical manner whereas coming to grips with the process itself demands political action" (see Castel).

A proposal on this basis was made to consider exclusion as a "concept-horizon", constituting "at once a fundamental question of the functioning of the whole of society and an intrinsic limit on the object itself, which must be rejected as forcefully as possible to find other tools of analysis". "For research workers, the notion of exclusion is not of interest in itself, because it does not correspond to a category of scientific thought. But at the same time it inspires reflection and helps to structure many research studies" (Paugam in Avramov 1999).

The notion of exclusion also has analytic limits. The very vagueness of the notion, which follows from its eminently practical character, reveals its conceptual uncertainty and its poor analytic capacity. Its ideological use increases its semantic imprecision, and this authorises an uncontrolled use. Here the use of this term as a substitute for an explanation. There is a risk of a variable geometrical concepts which fluctuates according to representations and preoccupations (Soulet in Avramov 1999). "It names numerous different situations by erasing the specificity of each one. In other words, exclusion is not an analytical notion. It does not lead to precise investigations of the contents which it claims to cover" (see Castel).

Its fundamental limits concern the way of understanding the relationship with society, the character of weakened/broken social ties that constitute social exclusion or non-integration:

- a negative definition, which does not take account of the characteristics of the relationships of exclusion and of their specificities and variance. "Exclusion can be reduced to living an existence defined by a lack: lack of work, of family, of a home, of education, of social relations, of access to institutions, of participation in society" (Soulet in Avramov 1999). Exclusion is a qualifier which is essentially negative by obscuring "the necessity to analyse positively what the lack is composed of". "It names numerous different situations by erasing the specificity of each one" (see Castel).
- an unrealistic assumption of total exclusion, that does not recognise the elements of relationship/integration that are found even in exclusion situations. "It is difficult to
imagine someone who is totally excluded. Someone excluded is still included no matter how little” (Soulet in Avramov 1999). “No doubt there are nowadays ins and outs but they do not inhabit a separate universe, strictly speaking, there are never extra -social situations” (see Castel). In fact, it is exclusion from the sphere of social activity of employment which very often determines our interpretation of reality. This, in turn, leads to misrecognising other forms of inclusion;

- an idealised vision of the relationship with society, which is not probable anymore and which risks not taking account of the diffusion of situations of precariousness, of new models of integration, etc. of not recognising, that is, the new factors which actually gave rise to the debate on social exclusion. "Part of the confusion caused by recourse to this notion comes from the reference to an implicit model which presupposes an idealised relationship to the social. This reversal of exclusion is based on an autonomous subject who has a rewarding and identifying professional activity, and adequate network of social relations, considerable potential of consumption... Yet, not only does this model occur less and less frequently in reality, but its non-reproduction would amount to crossing the barrier between insertion and exclusion” (see Roy).

Finally, a certain use of the notion of "process" in the research on social exclusion may be criticised. The insistence on the cumulativeness, the sequential character of the process, the reasoning in terms of "phases", may lend support to the idea of automatic mechanisms in the path along the process of exclusion. In some way the logical working of the idea of exclusion seems to suggest the normality - or the inexorability - of a cumulative process that would normally lead from situations of precariousness to final radical exclusion outcomes.

**From poverty to homelessness**

One idea of homeless corresponds to the idea of disaffiliation or desocialisation and can essentially be described in terms of the weakening/break of social ties that constitute social exclusion. The terms used to qualify the advanced stages, or outcomes, of the processes of exclusion correspond to those with which the homeless are defined in the conventional sense - the no abode, the marginalised homeless: social relationship deficit, loss of capabilities, uprooting, etc.

From this point of view, not only do the schemes for the analysis of social exclusion function to explain homelessness (understood as such), but the "no abode" can be taken as the paradigm of exclusion: itinerancy, vagrancy, desocialisation are representative of those extreme forms of disinsertion for which some propose that the term exclusion should be reserved.

This representation does not nevertheless exhaust the definition of homelessness. It may represent an important aspect, or a specific type of homelessness: but it is obvious that the lack of a home must be considered as a fundamental element in the representation of the problem. The conceptual field of homelessness is given by the crossing of the two sets of problems. In fact both types of deprivation - housing and social or relationship deprivation
- occur in the current definitions of homelessness. Analysing the loss of a home as a simple ingredient - or additional ingredient - in a process of may not be sufficient if one's objective is to constitute a theoretical field of the homeless. After all, "the lack of a home is the rationale for having a separate social category called 'homelessness'" (Vranken in Avramov 1999).

The relationship between the two deprivations raises essential questions for the definition of the field of homelessness. In opposition to the idea of homelessness as social marginalisation, there is the representation of homelessness as a housing problem. As already seen, this implies a polarisation of meanings and frames which is essential in the constitution of the field of homelessness.

The introduction of the housing dimension brings up a set of specific questions: where is housing deprivation to be placed in the processes of exclusion and marginalisation? how the privation or loss of housing is related to different types and stages of poverty?

In the analysis of individual paths to social exclusion, the accent is more often placed on the lack or the loss of housing as a feature of processes of disaffiliation and on the function of these factors in the drift towards marginalisation. The prevalent focus of attention on extreme situations in some ways reflects the logic of the theoretical frameworks of exclusion, which invite one to see the process of exclusion as a progression towards extreme outcomes or as a process that is given meaning by its extreme outcomes. In reality the notion of process should oblige us to extend this type of analysis to the entire process of exclusion, it should invite a dynamic analysis in which the different types and degrees of housing deprivation are connected with different types and stages of social exclusion processes. Such an analysis would show that being without housing may be part of different life courses and have different "evolutive" meanings: a stage in a process of marginalisation, but also a temporary condition, and even a stage in an "upward" process, or in a process of social integration (this is the case, for example, for many foreign immigrants).

Between social exclusion and lack of a home, all combinations are possible. The type of the homeless marginalised and desocialised which is so common in the debate on homelessness is only one possible combination. In this case the lack of housing constitutes one aspect of a wider syndrome of social exclusion. Housing exclusion however may occur without that involving marginalisation and even less so disaffiliation or personal disabilities. There are people who are "simply" excluded from housing: they may be just too poor to afford housing offered on the market, or they may lack (formal or de facto) qualification for access to social housing etc.

Housing exclusion without marginalisation is a widespread phenomenon and represents an important area for policies, an area in which the policy principles for dealing with marginalisation (e.g. social reintegration programmes) do not apply and which has been pushed to the margins of policies by the insistence on the "socially excluded". Here too some theoretical attitudes that are current in the analysis of poverty may have played a
negative influence. The insistence on the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon and on the cumulative character of the processes at work risks hiding that there are relative deprivations, sectorial poverties and poverties that do not involve problems of marginalisation - also in the conditions of society in which the new processes of poverty work.

Given the different mix of factors, housing dimensions may assume different meanings and play different roles in the exclusion processes. After all, this is one consequence of the commonly held idea that homelessness is a diversified, heterogeneous phenomenon. Careful analyses are needed that make clear the different exclusion paths, the different interplay of social exclusion and housing exclusion, the different risk patterns.

The "housing thesis" has the merit of setting the problem in the historical circumstances in which the "new homelessness" appeared. The lack of shelter as a characterisation of homelessness may constitute something new. Rossi states it explicitly for the USA. "The meaning of homelessness was not (in the 1950s and 1960s) centred on lack of shelter (...). To be homeless in that period meant primarily living without the social relations that are implied in the meaning of home, namely, living alone without spouses, parents, or children". In other words, a more difficult general housing situation may have made the housing problems of the homeless even more serious and perhaps also have made the role of housing factors more important than in the past. The housing thesis - by embracing all the situations of housing exclusion in one single frame - raises precisely the question of why "people with problems are today without housing" (Marcuse), and how changes in housing markets and policies may have contributed to this.

The causes of homelessness

The recent debate on poverty indicates the main critical factors for dealing with causality in this field. An initial criterion is the distinction between the different levels of analysis, specifically as regards the macro/micro opposition: the causal dynamics, and the notion of factor itself, change according to the level of analysis. Secondly, there is the impossibility of identifying a single underlying cause at the heart of the phenomenon of poverty or homelessness. The explanation must be sought in the interrelations between the different factors at each level and in the mechanisms connecting the different level (Avramov). So it is not even possible to claim any "regular pattern" in the chains of events that produce poverty and homelessness. The causes vary according to the groups (one important distinction from this viewpoint is between single homeless persons and homeless families) and according to the places. Moreover the factors involved are likely to be different in the case of the marginalised homeless as compared with the simply excluded from housing. Despite the insistence on the heterogeneity of homelessness, this simple fact is often overlooked.

These criteria - that are of great importance for the discussion of the role of the housing factor - are theoretically recognised in studies on homelessness. It would be a question now of making their application in actual research practice more rigorous and systematic. A
challenging task however, because it runs into a number of general theoretical difficulties, which are particularly acute in research on poverty.

One particularly serious difficulty regards the links between the different levels of analysis. The prevailing model in research on homelessness today is founded on the idea that structural factors define the risk, and personal biographical case histories must be looked at in order to understand who will actually be become homeless. This point of view, however, involves the well-known theoretical "heterogeneity" between macro and micro levels that make it difficult - or impossible - to connect them. We lack a coherent set of methods for bridging the gap between the micro/individual and the macro/structural.

Placing the problem of homelessness in the debate on social exclusion obviously implies a point of view on policies: that effective policies for homelessness are policies against exclusion, or that policies that are effective against exclusion are also effective against homelessness.

We may assume, first of all, that the problems at the origin of (new) policies against exclusion are pertinent:

(a) the whole range of policies for fighting poverty and ensuring social protection are important;

(b) but they are not sufficient: the "normal" protection is not sufficient, as is shown by the actual existence of homeless even in systems with widespread protection (a definition of homelessness typical of countries with powerful social protection systems, identifies them as those that fall through the safety net);

(c) the fight against social exclusion must work on both the failings implied by the notion of exclusion, not only the lack of fundamental resources, but also the inability to fully participate in one's own society;

(d) the idea of exclusion involves additional requirements for policies that touch on the system of motivations implied in exclusion. Neither the offering of resources nor the granting of rights is sufficient to avoid social exclusion if the capabilities and functioning of the individuals are not addressed.

The problem remains of what importance the specific nature of homelessness has in the construction of effective policies, or whether policies aimed at homelessness should be virtually identified with policies against exclusion. Evidently the persisting uncertainty at the analytical level on the specific nature of homelessness translates into uncertainty over policies: the question remains open. (The idea that policies against homelessness should be conceptualised as mere adaptation of the general welfare housing and anti-poverty policies may be supported with good reasons).
It is possible, however, to define the general lines connecting the various interests in a policy system. Vranken for example proposes a "an integrated concept in which general policies, poverty policies (included social exclusion) and specific homelessness policies are integrated. The general policies must provide the general context, poverty policies can reduce direct processes leading to homelessness and homelessness policies are rather apt at combating the specific problems related with it and not taken into account by general and poverty policies". Another set up (Hartmann) sees social policies as a general frame, with respect to which policies aimed at homelessness appear as specific actions taken essentially at a local level.

One specific point regards the need for articulated policies and the need that they relate "positively" to different situations.

On one side, the plurality of policies is implied by the fact that action may start from various points in the chains of factors which may produce homelessness.

On the other side, the heterogeneity of homelessness needs to be taken into account. While heterogeneity is recognised theoretically, the label homelessness tends to reduce solutions to uniformity.

One important aspect of this articulation derives directly from taking social exclusion as a reference and from the insistence on its process nature. This signifies a multiplicity of policies and services as a function of the processes of the production of homelessness: policies that "stretch out" along the whole process of exclusion, from prevention to reinsertion. If it is true that prevention constitutes a decisive element at stake and that it is consistent with a correct interpretation of the processes that produce homelessness and provides an initial principle on which to articulate policies, then adequate attention must also be paid to the actually homeless in the direction of both reintegration policies and "stabilisation" action. This also requires further and greater efforts with research.

If the accent is placed on housing exclusion, then a further (and partly different) set of policy problems opens up, which touches on the various points mentioned with regard to the "housing thesis": the relationship between housing measures and social policies, the relationship between general housing policies and specific policies etc.

The debate reported above leads to question a common idea - often taken for granted by the homeless advocates - that good solutions to the problem homelessness must be essentially looked for in good housing policies, and that provision of cheap housing would be the main road to the solution.

The debate suggests instead a dual policy direction: for the homeless with no social integration problems, a specific affordability policy, aimed at providing very cheap accommodation; for the marginalized homeless, a provision of integrated packages in which accommodation is accompanied by other, social support services. This seems to
prevent any simple identification of policies aimed at the homeless with (conventional) housing policies for low-income groups.

Of course this does not imply that a substantial supply of cheap housing is insignificant for the homeless - even for the extremely marginalised homeless. On one hand, the point raises the difficult question of the filtering mechanisms in housing markets, and on whether/how these mechanisms work for these segments of market. As has been said, the role of housing factors in the production of homelessness is an uncertain and still under-investigated research issue.

On the other hand, a distinction should be made between "production" of homelessness and "solutions". In general no homology may be assumed between the (causal) chains and paths to homelessness on one side and the role assigned to housing in the solutions on the other. The importance that a home has in terms of solutions may be supported whatever interpretation is made of the factors. The availability of appropriate housing, for instance, is a requisite for "integrated" actions aimed at social reinsertion of homeless persons.

The construction of the homeless is as important in "making" the problem as are "objective" factors such as labour market processes or family processes. The importance of the constructed character of the problem as a criteria for analysis and policy-oriented identification of it is a central theme of the debate.

The perception of homelessness as social construction has various consequences. First of all it has clear analytical implications. Attention to the constructed character involves a way of analysis: an analytical model based on "interaction", not "substantialist", but aimed at investigating the interactions that make the problem. There is the rejection of naturalistic viewpoints and attention - with regard to what "makes" the problem of homelessness - to dimensions such as labelling processes, perceptions and self-perceptions, and policies as determinants of homelessness. The accent on the constructed nature of the problem also has direct consequences on how to imagine the policies and where to seek the most effective criteria for them.

Moreover the accent on the constructed character of homelessness means that the various (opposing) points of view on the nature of homelessness and the processes that produce it must be discussed with reference to the function they perform in the game of construction and as the stakes in the conflict that develops with the construction. The great determinant is the conflict over the redefinition of social policies after the crisis of Welfare systems, and the stake is what kind of "reduction" to operate with respect to the universalistic forms of solidarity that have been typical of the Welfare state.

Some conflicting viewpoints in the construction of homelessness are structural and have accompanied the entire evolution of the debate. The main ones are that over social versus personal determinants, and that over the housing versus the "social" definition of homelessness. The different points of view could even be incomprehensible if not set in the game of social/policy construction. Current simplifications could not be explained if they
were not backed by the interrelationships between the representations proposed and the social construction of the problem, and appraised with reference to the political and public communication processes.

The category of homelessness itself may be seen as an element of this political game. The objections that have been aimed at the category of homelessness come from their policy implications. The criticisms are centred on two main arguments that proceed from the 'reifying' character of the category. On the one hand a strongly heterogeneous category is reduced to uniformity. Another aspect is that a reduction of the problem and of the policies would occur. Homeless would be 'cut off' with respect to other wider questions: poverty, the lack of affordable housing, etc. The identification between homeless and "no abode" may accentuate this meaning.

As for the idea that homelessness is a housing or a right to housing problem, the difference between the opposing arguments centres essentially on the degree of inclusiveness it is wished to achieve and the relationships of continuity/discontinuity it is wished to claim with respect to the wider problems of poverty and housing poverty, and therefore on the meaning that should be given to targeted policies. The housing thesis has the merit of rejecting the "emergency" approaches to homelessness, based on the split between normal and special housing that has been typical of the tradition of welfare housing policies. On the other side it risks not to recognise the great innovation that is at the heart of the new trends in social housing policies: the attempt at "taking responsibility in the housing field for the effects of the extension of the phenomena of poverty, precariousness and exclusion" (see Ballain) - a trend which also implies the integration of non-housing measures in housing policies.

THE RESEARCH OF HOMELESSNESS: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

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Homelessness research faces unique challenges and thus the question of appropriate methods is crucial in order to obtain data at the national as well as at the European level that can be used as a solid foundation for policy development. The following summarizes the idiosyncracies of this field of research, the status quo of currently available data in Europe, provides subsequent conclusions, and points out major policy implications.

Challenges and methodologies

Typical challenges in homelessness research are related to the nature of the research population and are an ongoing subject of refinement and improvement in order to generate comparable data across countries. Before even defining the homeless as a sub-population, the conceptual question arises if homelessness needs to be seen as a phenomenon in itself
or as a symptom of a larger phenomenon in the context of housing exclusion, social exclusion and poverty.

More than is the case with other topics, research about homelessness is prone to the influence of ideological underpinnings. Whether homelessness is seen as a phenomenon caused by individual characteristics or whether it is seen as the result of structural deterioration impacts on the nature of research and ensuing policy recommendations. The focus on the individual can provide insights into individual coping behaviour and the way service providers can assist in this process. The structural focus at the macro level stresses deteriorating or improving circumstances. Either focus can provide information, yet care has to be taken under what assumptions it is collected and used. Furthermore, quantitative data, in particular numerical estimates of homeless people, have to be examined within the country-specific context, related to policies and likely outcomes, particularly when comparisons among countries are made.

These considerations, naturally, inform the various definitions of homelessness that are used in research. It appears that in some European countries such as Germany, Finland or the U.K. a trend towards changing paradigms away from investigations of individual traits of the homeless towards contextual studies that take structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and housing shortages into account can already be observed. The need to integrate homelessness research into the body of knowledge on related issues still needs to be emphasized.

In sum, definitions of homelessness on which consequent research is based are closely related to ideological preconceptions on the cause of homelessness as well as to pragmatic methodological decisions. It is clear that homelessness is a multifarious problem, and especially if the emphasis of research designs is on housing, care needs to be taken not to neglect the wider social context. It is crucial to pay attention to how the phenomenon is studied. Ideally, homelessness research will be defined as investigations of the processes that lead to homelessness, investigations of actual homelessness as well as investigations of homelessness careers over time (which may well include periods of time were individuals are not homeless).

**Concepts and definitions**

The different aims as well as the resources available lead to a variety of operationalizations of homelessness. Currently, as can also be seen in the chapters of the monograph *Coping With Homelessness: Issues to be Tackled and best Practices in Europe*, research definitions on different levels of accuracy are in use and include distinctions such as the following:

- service-users and non-users;
- long-term homeless and temporarily homeless people (with parameters of x days defined);
• actually homeless, individuals threatened by homelessness; potential homelessness individuals presently having housing and individuals not having housing according to that definition;
• staying in a hostel, bed and breakfast, staying in a squat, temporarily with friends, non-residential institutions, residential institutions, sleeping rough;
• living outdoors or in temporary shelters, in night shelters or other shelters for the homeless, in institutions, prisoners soon to be released who have no housing, persons living temporarily with relatives and acquaintances, families who have split up or are living in temporary housing;
• homeless, roofless, marginally housed.
Regardless of the definition chosen, categories are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, most likely one definition will not suffice for all purposes. Rather, careful consideration of research objectives needs to inform the choice of any given research design, paying particular attention to the questions that unclear situations can raise.

It has to be decided if the defined homeless population will, for example, include those in mental or drug treatment institutions or correction facilities or people staying with families or friends for lack of income to afford independent housing. Another consideration regards potential qualitative distinctions in housing situations between, for example, those who are staying with friends temporarily and young people who cannot leave the parental home for lack of resources to afford own housing; people resigned to their fate in overcrowded or otherwise inadequate lodgings as compared to those registered on application lists for social housing; or someone evicted and temporarily homeless versus someone living in the streets for years.

Particular attention in the definition of research populations needs to be paid to vulnerable groups who are potentially at risk to fall into homelessness in order to understand the processes leading to homelessness and to enable the formulation of preventive measures. For risk groups, too, definitions are required. Dragana Avramov distinguishes risk-prone people and risk carriers while at the same time, however, conceding that the only available data about the homeless is cross-sectional. Therefore this distinction escapes empirical documentation. In other words, definitions of risk groups will depend not only on the requirements of research designs but also on the accumulation of knowledge about causal factors leading to homelessness which may or may not be included in research designs.

To decide if someone with unstable housing scenarios is homeless, whose standards apply, especially across countries, or how often an individual has to sleep in shelters or in make-shift accommodation and for how long in order to be considered a member of the homeless population are crucial in the conceptualization of the research design and also relate to the problem of relative or absolute standards of accommodation as well as of poverty.

In sum, conceptual questions relate mostly to the following domains: the period of time without housing or without adequate housing that defines homelessness, the point of view that defines homelessness, and the definition of adequate housing or housing norms which
may go beyond physical housing norms and include (or exclude) notions of autonomy. The chosen concept and consequent data that studies provide are closely related to the translation of such data into policy measures targeted at the homeless population and its sub-groups or related populations such as those that are not actually homeless but can be considered at risk for homelessness.

**Ethics and numbers**

Homelessness research is as much an issue of ethics as it is one of methodology. Ethical questions are involved at different levels: the purpose of the research effort, the research design, the research procedure itself, and finally the usage of the data that research yields. To deal with these issues, the following questions need to be addressed: Who is benefiting from the research efforts? Which issues does the research address and whose problems is it trying to solve? What happens with the data and research results, particularly with numerical estimates, after they are published?

Numerical estimates of homeless populations which are so attractive elements of research for policy makers and the public alike are typically faced with distinct problems: undercounts, double counts, and the problem of covering mobility. A population sub-group for which the problem of undercounting is particularly relevant might be illegal aliens. However, estimates of numbers are possible with surveys whose point is the understanding of processes such as in the surveys done in Paris, Vienna and in some of the US studies. Still, counting is a double-edged sword. It is sometimes in the interest of service providers to indicate higher numbers to receive funding. It is sometimes in the interest of governments to indicate lower numbers to reduce public responsibility, and it has been argued that counting should not be the focus of research. Researchers may prefer to emphasize the need to discuss homelessness within the wider context of social exclusion and stress the importance of linking research (and communication) strategies to the social construction of homelessness and of policies against homelessness rather than the accumulation of statistics.

Realistically, both, numbers and deeper analytic insights which come from case studies on coping strategies or housing stress or income deficiency, are necessary. Trends in the extent of homelessness constitute early warning systems based on leading indicators, and numbers are relevant for policy formulation and evaluations.

Homelessness research is de facto action research. Regardless of one's position on the necessity of numbers or the emphasis on them, pragmatic considerations will call for some quantitative data. The way policy processes most likely unfold, concrete numbers are a required tool. In order to create efficient instruments to combat homelessness, numbers are needed to at least gauge the balance between supply and demand in services. At the same time keeping underlying processes in mind is certainly crucial.

To these and other specific research considerations, different data and different methods offer answers to different but equally significant questions.
Data on homelessness in Europe

As Avramov observes data on homelessness is typically derived from two types of sources: Primary sources are those specifically concerned with homelessness. Secondary sources provide contextual information and secondary analyses of sources that are indirectly related to homelessness. All in all, European data on homelessness can be described as patchwork at most. Existing research in the member states varies greatly with regard to its extent, the methodologies used and, consequently, also the reliability of the data. How to coordinate the different sources to make for a coherent data set remains without doubt a challenging task.

Studies

Since the early 1980s when the first systematic investigations of homelessness were attempted, methodologies have become more sophisticated. Marpsat and Firdion observe three generations of homelessness research: the first, that relied mostly on expert opinions; the second that conducted night surveys in the streets and shelters; and the third that began to cover longer periods of time, during daytime, as well as such approaches as the use of administrative records, panel studies, Capture -Recapture, ethnographic studies or telephone surveys of households to probe for homelessness in the past.

Recent European studies employed various methods: The 1993 -94 Paris two-stage sample survey targeted the adult homeless population that uses services. (The project was part of a larger one). It provides qualitative and quantitative data, including a numerical estimate of the population as defined. Basically any item can be included in a questionnaire of this kind and could be used in wider areas. The study gives point prevalence only.

The 1993 ICCR survey in Vienna focused on actually homeless people using the available accommodation facilities as well as those living in the streets and included the perspectives of the homeless themselves, that of service providers as well as the perspective of the authorities. The study yielded qualitative and quantitative data, including an estimate, gained from different populations and their respective points of view which were considered as increasing data reliability. The study covers point as well as period prevalence through inquiries about seasonal changes albeit based on self -report.

In the Netherlands, administrative local and national data gathering systems are emerging that cover the nation's shelters and institutions. On a regional / municipal level, methods are being developed to integrate more detailed information from files on clients from different sources in order to get an integral view on causes and consequences of homelessness. Numerical estimates are not included in either data set.

In Finland, an annual housing market survey that is administered locally and collected into a national survey by the Housing Fund of Finland integrates data collection about the homeless population. The survey is conceptualized as instrument for quantitative data
collection and provides point prevalence. Individual municipalities may supplement the data with own surveys providing more detailed information.

Other European research activities include an ongoing Spanish project that currently concentrates on three lines of research that developed out of an earlier project on mental illness among homeless people: the focus is on the cross-cultural dimension, life histories, and estimates of the Madrid homeless population. The project is designed longitudinally over a three-year period and is implemented by means of structured interviews. It is planned to maintain contact with the selected sample through monthly contacts to minimize missing data. One of the objectives is to achieve what has been identified as a crucial flaw in the European data: comparability with other European cities. The Plymouth survey exemplifies the potential and limitations of the Capture-Recapture method which is based on more than one observation of the same population and provides numerical estimates.

**Databases**

In addition to national data, European databases, potentially, can provide some additional information. EUROSTAT has not been a major source for data on European homelessness so far. As the reasoning goes, EUROSTAT is embedded in, and constrained by, an institutional environment and consequently generally reactive rather than proactive; it has to carry national statistical offices with it and be responsive to the administrators in Brussels. Thus, the priority EUROSTAT gives to statistics on the homeless will largely reflect the importance attached to this subject by its partners. In addition to this point of view, in the spirit of subsidiarity and its mechanisms, another factor is most likely also the methodological difficulty to integrate different national data sets - if they are available at all - into a European information source. The Taskforce on Homelessness, another potential instrument at the European level, is currently dormant.

Databases with marginal relevance to homelessness studies include the family budget surveys, used to derive poverty indicators; the harmonized labour force survey, which sheds light on labour market exclusion, one of the precursors to homelessness; the population census, which, unlike the household surveys, cover the institutional populations and is a potentially more useful source of data.

Potentially the most useful source may be the ECHP household panel. It shares the limitation of other household surveys in that it excludes non-private households without a fixed abode. However, homelessness is not just a stock concept but a process encompassing many social and economic deprivation antecedents, such as labour market exclusion, income insufficiency, housing stress, disintegration of social networks, indebtedness, family breakdown and so on. All these events are covered in the ECHP. Moreover, the ECHP is longitudinal, which would allow for the possibility to trace mobility into and out of homelessness, and it was designed to generate comparable data, thereby permitting some research on "best practices."
However, as the panel excludes non-private households and households without a fixed abode, the ECHP needs to be extended to cover target groups, to truly use its potential. The question of panel attrition regarding the sub-population of interest is subject to regional differences, however, also an additional argument for extension to target groups.

In sum, databases available on the European level, so far, are a negligible source for data on homelessness. While surveys that target the labor market, family budgets or households can provide some contextual information, they do not include specific items on homelessness. Theoretically, questions on homelessness could be added to the population census. However, this is not the case at the present time.

*Research gaps and their reasons*

As Avramov observes, at the national level, targeted primary research of homelessness is rare. It is non-existent at the European level. Household surveys are typically limited to either single problem areas, cover small samples, are restricted geographically and yield fragmented data. Estimates therefore are often based on data gathered for other purposes such as administration of services or fund raisers. Also, longitudinal research is not the norm which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from snapshots of homelessness at a certain point in time that do not allow insights into the processes involved.

Often the quality and in all cases the comparability of these data leave much to be desired. It is clear then that without primary research on the European level no profound assessment of homelessness in Europe is possible. Without that, a unified battle against homelessness where resources can be allocated in a sensible way is undeniably obstructed.

Furthermore, given the fact that certain research situations are disproportionately represented while others remain under-researched, the danger of severely distorted conclusions about characteristics and needs of homeless populations cannot be avoided. Typically research does not cover topics which are crucial to understand border situations and risks of homelessness. These topics include land squatting, squatting of empty housing, illegal lettings, cheap furnished rooms, shared accommodation without contract, vulnerable groups, housing (homeless) careers over time, coping modes over time.

As Tosi and others have pointed out, it is not customary although necessary to link the number of homeless people and other information that surveys may yield to the processes that lead to homelessness. We know very little about the direct causal relationships between certain factors such as poverty and homelessness and what combination of factors pushes which segment of risk populations over the edge into homelessness. It is for this reason that homelessness research needs to be linked to risk factors such as unemployment, access barriers to housing or family distress. Research needs to be integrated in research about social exclusion.

The active commitment and contribution of key actors is needed in order to do the necessary policy-relevant research. While EUROSTAT has taken some initiatives, it has
not been able to provide data on the homeless population, which tends to be outside the technical scope of conventional household surveys. Neither has FEANTSA been in a position to compile cross-nationally comparable data. While consensus seems to be established about the necessity and feasibility of research about homelessness, concerted efforts to stimulate according activities are yet amiss.

In general, the available information on homelessness is simply not sufficient. Two steps are necessary to deal with that situation: Research designs must provide the opportunity to collect and analyze cross-nationally comparable data, and funding bodies must be approached and motivated to attach the appropriate importance to social exclusion, in general, and the phenomenon of homelessness in particular.

Homelessness goes beyond the mere fact of homelessness. It is part of the wider issue of social exclusion and social protection. Homelessness is but a symptom of weakening social solidarity and a breach of the social contract. Profound data on homelessness in Europe that is the basis for adequate policies and measures is amiss despite ongoing more or less sporadic efforts in the member states.

Research is needed. The commitment of key actors at the national and the European level is indispensable to achieve the ultimate goal, i.e. to successfully combat social exclusion in spirit already expressed in the Medium -term Social Action Programme 1995 -1997: "The Commission will continue to promote cooperation on housing issues, social developments in urban areas, and homelessness..."

Summary conclusions and policy recommendations

General

- Innovative and appropriate methodologies and data are a crucial prerequisite for scientifically sound research about homelessness and an indispensable input into policy development and implementation.
- Available data on homelessness in Europe is embarrassingly sparse and non-comparable. National data differs in quality and quantity. Comparable data across Europe does not exist.
- As has been documented, the most costly form of fighting homelessness is crisis intervention after the fact. Prevention is not only more desirable from a humanistic point of view, but also cheaper for the public. Sound research needs to provide the basis for it.
- Proven, potentially feasible methodologies are available. The main obstacles are not the lack of policy-relevant research expertise but rather weak underlying data, insufficient inter-institutional linkages and imperfect mechanisms to harness that expertise.
- Cooperation between all key actors needs to be particularly emphasized: researchers, service providers, official national statistical offices, policy makers as well as funding
bodies have to join forces. This issue concerns particularly the European level where research about homelessness is almost non-existent, yet much needed if the objective of a social Europe for all is to be attained.

- It is necessary to persevere with empirical research about homelessness at the European level that yields, and is based on, qualitative and quantitative data that is reliable and comparable as a first, basic step towards the development of policy designed to combat social exclusion, in general, and, within it, homelessness in particular.

**Methodological Recommendations**

- No single method of data collection will provide comprehensive knowledge about homelessness. An effort to combine all existing resources and forces, with the institutions concerned forging the necessary collaboration, is needed, that is studies of methods for dovetailing data derived from different sources, in particular from administrative and survey sources. An assessment of the different data integration approaches should be closely linked to the specific research objectives concerned.

- Empirical research is necessary because without concrete knowledge of the problem, its extent, its reasons, its long-term outcomes, the solutions are but guess work at best. Primary research is clearly superior to the use of secondary sources however necessary and useful they are to provide contextual information.

- To gain data about homelessness in Europe, studies using comparable premises must be carried out in the member states.

- Research efforts need to take into consideration the precursors of homelessness. Little is known so far about the causal factors of homelessness that can be generalized to the heterogeneous homeless population. Vulnerable groups that are at risk of becoming homeless have to be part of the research efforts.

- Theoretical underpinnings of research need to be developed and structural factors analyzed in relation to the research population concerned and research designed accordingly.

- Decisions regarding research objectives need to distinguish between description and enumeration. In descriptive studies there may be more room to elaborate on a comprehensive definition of homelessness. Studies that aim at enumerating or counting are typically based on definitions that encompass only a particular sub-group of the population. In the interest of comparability, the problem of definition in a standardized form is even more complex.

- For applied research, it needs to be clarified beforehand if the research attempts to provide the basis for preventive approaches (such as planning of housing or prevention of evictions) or for crisis intervention (such as planning for service measures). In the first case, the inclusion of the risk population or vulnerable groups, in addition to those defined as actually homeless is inevitable. In the latter case, reliance on service providers would be necessary. These policy choices have also financial implications. From a long-term perspective, it is documented that prevention is more cost-efficient.

- Another crucial element is time, the distinction between cross-sectional or longitudinal data as they play different roles. Cross-sectional data can be gathered more easily and
are necessary for policy reasons such as to provide estimates of current service needs. Longitudinal data collection provides beyond that a better insight in causes and consequences and requires more time and funding resources. There is no doubt that research results and their usefulness will differ considerably between these two sources. Longitudinal data should be collected wherever possible.

• The importance of constructing reliable sampling frames that take account of the heterogeneity and mobility of the research population needs to be stressed. Common causal factors may lead to homelessness but different sub-populations may still require different solutions.
• In sum, research objectives and designs have to be decided upon around the following considerations: definition of target population, enumeration or description, pragmatic and practical questions of sampling frame (cost-benefit of certain potential steps, enumeration purpose).

Ideally research about homelessness would:

• develop sampling frames and sample designs to reach the greatest possible coverage of the homeless population without duplication (i.e. users of shelters, soup kitchens, outreach programmes)
• consider more than one client group to allow for more than one perspective (homeless, service providers, authorities)
• consider risk populations as part of homelessness research in order to learn more about processes and dynamics and hence inform preventive measures
• collect longitudinal data in order to know about homelessness as a process and also to yield more meaningful estimates of the target population as a whole
• apply methods in research designs that would counteract technical difficulties in research about homelessness (i.e. double-counting, under-counting, access, communication barriers),
• include rural homelessness as a potentially qualitatively different yet certainly under-researched topic
• devise designs covering particularly unclear and thus under-researched situations (i.e. squats, forced cohabitation and other forms of make-shift albeit on the surface more or less conventional housing).
• develop research frameworks that reflect the policy interconnections (social protection, housing) within which measures to fight homelessness are, or should be, tackled.
• given that no one data source can be sufficient to capture the full range of information required on homelessness, develop methodologies for integrating data
• data improvements on homelessness should be undertaken in close collaboration with, or as an integral part of, the activities on national statistical offices that should be involved to the extent national policies provide them with the potential to do so.

Necessary Steps and Accompanying Measures

In order to carry out research along these lines it is necessary:
for key actors to collaborate across agencies and across countries and to raise the funds necessary to do so.

This includes the following accompanying measures:

- the presently dormant Taskforce On Homelessness, set up by EUROSTAT, has been a step in the right direction. It needs to be reactivated and receive the necessary support in order to be effective.
- furthermore, working groups concerned with related issues - housing, social protection, poverty, social exclusion in general - should cooperate closely and on a regular basis with researchers on homelessness. Homelessness is but one of the manifestations of failing social protection systems and, in order for homelessness to be fought effectively, research needs to be included into frameworks that are concerned with the maintenance and development of social protection measures.
- these considerations have an important bearing on costs, which are often quoted as the reason for limited public action to alleviate homelessness. The workshop participants agreed that more research in more countries should be carried out to estimate the cost of preventive measures compared with the actual cost (for example, the health bill) of addressing the problem after it has arisen.
- the recognition of homelessness as a social problem, regardless of the number of homeless people in Europe, is needed. If there were only one homeless person, it would already be one too many.
- input from agencies such as EUROSTAT is much welcome and needed. EUROSTAT can provide support in several ways: encourage national statistical offices to include questions relating to homelessness in their next population census; stimulate, encourage and monitor improvements in existing national data; provide input in the development of sample frames and designs that make for comparable and reliable European data; analyze data from the European Community Household Panel on risks to homelessness and - last, but not least - encourage national statistical offices and research institutes to set up a comparative European Community Panel Study focused on households suffering severe economic and housing stress.
- policy makers and research funding bodies are key actors in the fight against European homelessness. Collaboration is called for on two levels: to systematize and organize existing data and to stimulate and make possible the collection of missing data, nationally and comparably across member states.
- sophisticated and continuously developing methodologies are available; competent research capacities are available; data are not, neither is funding. The reasons for this may be manifold. They need to be addressed urgently.
VALUES AND POLICIES IN RELATION TO HOMELESSNESS

by Inger Koch-Nielsen
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We have all somehow tried to answer the question: what is the connection between welfare policies and homelessness? The aim of dealing with this question is, of course, not only to develop a new theoretical understanding of homelessness, but in the end to influence policies and to provide measures to prevent or combat homelessness.

I will first emphasize the arguments and conclusions of policy relevance in the four contributions prepared under the EUROHOME project regarding values and policies. Then I will present the policy recommendations that have emerged to me through the work with the EUROHOME network. They should be considered as my - I hope - sound conclusions.

Welfare regimes and social policy models

Daly introduces us to the (different) theories of comparative welfare studies trying to apply those systematic approaches to the issue of homelessness. As has been the case all way through the work of EUROHOME she also encounters the difficulties in measuring the prevalence of homelessness. Accordingly she cautions the conclusions to be drawn from the statistics, because probably they mainly reflect the scope of national service provision and the ability of the service providers to measure and report to the system: "Hence it is not impossible that the reported prevalence of homelessness in a country is a reflection of the resources made available to deal with the phenomenon in that country."

Instead she tries to scrutinize the policies supposed to be linked to homelessness: the proportion of social housing and the access to such housing, state payment towards costs involved in housing, and whether the state has a national policy on homelessness either expressed in legislation or through some forms of obligations for the authorities to provide housing or to care for the homeless. Again it seems as if there is no easy predictions about homelessness to be made from the nature of the social policy approach in a country. On the other hand she ventures to conclude that the Nordic approach to social policy has three distinct features that seem to have had a preventive effect when it comes to homelessness. That is a system of generous cash benefits; a widespread network of social services; and citizenship or residence (and not the position in the labour market) as the criterion governing access to services and cash benefits.

"On the basis of this comparison and the experience of other countries, one must conclude that the factors which generate homelessness can only be understood and combated beyond a narrow policy landscape."

Vranken discusses the prerequisites and forms of a functional policy on homelessness. Before we have a policy on a social phenomenon this phenomenon must be recognized as "a social problem". And a social problem is defined as "a discrepancy between a given
reality and a set of standards, a discrepancy that is judged dysfunctional by relevant groups and that is subject of reduction through collective action”. And homelessness has definitely for some time been considered a social problem in Europe. According to Vranken the efforts to solve the problem can be categorized into four policy models different from those that Daly used for her analysis:

- a right to housing model
- the public housing policy model
- the solidarity model
- the social exclusion model

In societies that have developed a good set of policy measures it can be discussed whether the codification of the right to housing as an individual entitlement provides any additional benefits. Nevertheless it is argued, that laws are important instruments of standard setting and might turn out as useful instruments in times of change or if homelessness is disappearing from the political agenda.

The public housing policy model focuses on the provisions of means to ensure the availability of adequate housing.

The solidarity model focuses on the defining of basic social rights and on the distribution of goods. This model is reflected in the social security systems. In this system however, no special attention is paid to groups not covered by the programs or to the non taking up of rights.

In the social exclusion model homelessness is explained by societal processes, and as Vranken considers this to be the ideal model for as well explaining as combating homelessness as a form of social exclusion. The policies should be: 1) multi-facetal, not only focusing on one though dominant factor as housing, but on other domains of policy as well, 2) integrated, meaning that policy towards homelessness must be part of the general policy, but still maintaining its originality, 3) long-term, not only taking care of the immediate needs of homeless people, but also of the problems generated by homelessness in society, 4) preventive, 5) structural vs. individual, meaning a policy towards homelessness - not for the homeless, 6) with participation of the homeless (not only the NGO’s representing them), 7) informed and research-based.

The four above mentioned models do not seem to convene very much with the welfare regimes or social policy regimes used by Daly. It might be claimed, though, that the conservative, continental model comes close to the solidarity model and that the Social Democratic, Nordic model might be subsumed under the social exclusion model - at least intentionally (as far as 1-5 are concerned).

The Nordic model. The two papers by Kristensen (Denmark) and Kärkkäinen (Finland) are so to speak "case-studies" of the Nordic model. Here the intention has been to take a closer
look at the regimes considered to be preventive, integrated, generous, with an extensive network of social services etc. What kind of homelessness - if any - do we encounter in these countries. Have the general policies succeeded? Generally speaking: yes - but...!

There is a remarkable difference between the two countries: In Finland there has been a lack of housing while in Denmark there is a sufficient stock of housing in general and of social housing in particular.

Thus in Finland homelessness has been considered and treated as - in the first hand - a housing problem (which is also reflected in the language: the Finnish word for homeless is dwellingless), while in Denmark, due to the housing policy, homelessness is considered a social problem.

Apart from this difference both countries have - up till now - avoided serious marginalization problems due to the relatively generous social benefits. Secondly there has been the state support for the construction and consumption of housing, enabling low-income families to live in dwellings of a good amenity level. Finally the local authorities have had an general obligation to provide housing and a specific obligation to provide shelter.

Kärkkäinen attaches importance to the fact that the Finnish policy on the one hand did not consider emergency measures to be sufficient, while on the other hand it recognized that general housing measures were not enough. Special measures had to be taken to assure housing for the vulnerable groups. The primary aim was to provide housing for the special groups but within the confines of general housing policies. But she also stresses the dilemma: trying not to brand the homeless on the one hand but on the other hand looking for targeted measures, that require an individual approach to the homeless.

The picture of a homeless person in Denmark is that of a single man, but it can also be a woman with many other problems than the lack of a dwelling. Not infrequently they might have even a residence that they do not want to make use of or rather are not able to make use of because of mental and social insufficiencies.

So in countries where basic social problems and housing problems have been solved due, to the general welfare policies homelessness still exists, but in another shape: those who are considered homeless have for several years been characterized as persons with mental problems and alcohol or drug abuse. So homelessness in Denmark tends to be explained by individual factors and the policy measures to be individual and targeted.

Kristensen presents us with a provocative suggestion: provided that we are not facing a housing problem, but rather facing people with a preference for another way to live - originating from a wish not to be fenced in, in a flat situated in a big housing area away from the preferred environment like the central city or the waterfront etc - should we not allow for an alternative way of living - below the technical standards that we otherwise demand? He stresses that this way of living should not be considered as part of the problem.
- but as a solution. In another chapter (4) of this volume another Danish contributor Brandt ventures the idea of introducing new asylums, or "villages for unusual people" allowing them to live a segregated and different life. The groups in focus of Kristensen and Brandt are indeed different. But behind both suggestions is the idea that we should accept the different, the deviant and not try to "integrate" every person into mainstream society.

It must be stressed in order to avoid misinterpretations, that those suggestions are put forward on the background of the encompassing and general welfare system, where the overall responsibility for homelessness (still) lies with the state.

Reflections and dilemmas

So where does this take us? Are there applicable lessons for policy makers to be learned from this? No - and Yes.

First a caution: the European countries represent different welfare regimes and as we have seen within each regime there exist great differences. Their national welfare systems are rooted in history and ideologies, so systems cannot just be transferred from one country to another - and if they were, we would not be sure of the outcomes. It is probably more useful and relevant to transfer experiences about specific measures for specific groups.

1) Nevertheless there is enough evidence to conclude, that the first sine qua non prerequisite for the prevention of homelessness is the availability of sufficient (affordable) housing. But this is not enough - the authorities must also have an obligation to provide housing and a right to access special groups into housing. This might on the one hand be characterized as a too commonplace consideration - but on the other hand it is a consideration which there is a tendency to "forget" in a period where there seems to be a political preference for targeted measures more than for general measures. So whether or not a clear path can be found from the welfare regimes to the prevalence of homelessness it is important to insist on this.

2) The other general prerequisite is the existence of a policy against social exclusion and serious marginalization, a policy including cash benefits and housing support of a sufficient size, allowing for a decent life not only a life out of poverty. In the Nordic model those general measures were, of course, not introduced or sustained just with the aim of preventing homelessness neither just to prevent poverty. In the Nordic model it is a question of distribution of goods and of equality in life. Equality has of course not been obtained, but studies of the effect of the distributional policies through taxation and income-transfers in Denmark give a very clear picture of how "poverty" or low-income is reduced due to this policy.

3) A third general factor of importance that has not till now been touched upon in this chapter are sudden or encompassing changes in the structure, accessibility or practice of services/institutions (e.g. hospitals, prisons). The same might be the case with changes in the (pre)-pension system or in the conditions for obtaining other benefits. Often the
consequences of those changes are not taken into account until the result shows in the scope or composition of homelessness. What I claim here is not that this will always be the case - but that it might be worth while considering the effect on exactly homelessness when introducing such changes. Again this could probably not be done at an European level - but a general knowledge of effects of different kinds could be expected to exist. And often the service providers might have a rather good idea about what the effects of proposed changes might be.

4) Even in countries where the general prerequisites mentioned above have been fulfilled (more or less) a phenomenon called homelessness still exists. We can only grasp this contradiction if homelessness is understood as a category that different categories of people can float in to. In this perspective homelessness is best defined by the concept of emergency, as argued by Soulet (in Avramov 1999). And in different countries and in different periods of history this urgent need for help is present in new groups.

What are the policy-implication of this? Not that the general measures mentioned above are of less importance, but that there will (always) be a need for institutions fit to meet urgent, but probably quickly changing needs. But we can not leave it there. Meeting the urgent need for food and shelter can not be considered sufficient in a welfare state. There must also be a system, with an obligation to assist those people in getting out of their emergency situation. This demand immediately raises two important questions not to be answered that easily:

1) should the necessary assistance be provided by the institutions for the homeless or rather by the ordinary social welfare services - local or regional? Probably the ordinary services are not really apt to cope with those problems - if they were the urgent need should - theoretically - not have been there. This might be due to many reasons, but the lack of experience and relevant education of the social workers of the ordinary services might be one important answer. On the other hand the wish to avoid branding of the persons might count in favour of leaving the job of integration with the general services. We are here again facing the dilemma of whether targeted measures - though more fit to meet the needs - have at the same time the effects of further stigmatization and exclusion?

2) must the way out of the emergency necessarily be a way into mainstream society? Here we have sufficient experience to give the answer: no it is not necessary - not even fruitful. As can be seen there is a need for a broad range of "half-way housing" or "supported housing".

Finally we might raise the question of the importance of self-organization and self-representation of the homeless. History tells us, that important improvement in the living situation of a group will not occur, until the group can stand up and speak for itself. Or is this just another way of suppressing the powerless - asking them to fend for themselves? From a theoretical point of view supporting self-organization - even at a very low scale - might be recommended. for some groups it is of course not feasible, but that should not prevent the experiment for others. The next question is who should be the promoter of such
an organization? Can we expect the organizations for the homeless to do this, or should we rather ask the state to support such steps?

A more general observation that might also be of policy relevance is that homelessness can be considered a thermometer indicating that something has gone wrong, that somewhere in the system there is a "disease". This means that monitoring and studying homelessness will supply us with indicators of dysfunction and even of where they originate. But the indicators might as mentioned above change very quickly - from one year to another. Therefore monitoring of homelessness is most useful if it is done regularly and gives rise to the question: what does this reveal about ongoing changes in society as a whole?

SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE - NEEDS AND PROVISIONS

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It is difficult to analyse the services provided for homeless people since they are not regarded as part of the ordinary service provision for the nation at large. The planning of services for the homeless is nevertheless part of social policy, of the way society is prepared to assume responsibility for those in need. Each of the EU member states seems to have adopted a path of its own founded on its own social institutions in its attitude to homelessness. As a result, the criteria on which services for the homeless are based differ from country to country. Seldom have countries looked abroad to see how others have addressed the problem. The active authorities and NGOs have greatly affected the nature of the policy adopted and the types of services provided for homeless people. Some EU member states have in fact only recently become aware of homelessness as a problem in society; all in all the problems associated with poverty are so vast that homelessness used not to be recognised as a problem in its own right. There is also one major factor that cannot be predicted, and that is immigration; the social upheavals and unrest in neighbouring territories have presented many countries with large numbers of immigrants, all of whom need housing.

Perceptions of homelessness and conceptualisation of services

Authors of the contributions published in the project monograph have stressed that homeless people are poor people of no fixed abode, and that many of them are deviant in their behaviour and incapable of using the institutions in society. Some of them are, furthermore, aliens, i.e. immigrants.

These descriptions of homeless people and their way of life have been accompanied by debate on the reasons for homelessness. These are felt to be either socio-psychological or structural, or both. The definition proposed by Brandt in Coping With Homelessness with its stress on deviation, looks in both directions for the reasons: "A homeless person is not able to make use of society's relations and institutions (understood in the broadest sense,
such as family networks and private and public institutions of all kinds) due to either apparent or hidden causes relating to the individual or to the way society functions." The reason for homelessness may, according to this definition, thus lie in either the individual or society.

Brandt's definition just goes to show how widely opinions of homelessness may differ (see Børner-Stak and Koch-Nielsen 1998). The reason for homelessness, however it is viewed, seems to have a considerable impact on the types of services provided for homeless people. Even if these people are characterised by all the attributes mentioned - poverty, lack of a home and deviant behaviour - the nature of the services provided for them appears to differ according to which of the characteristics carries most weight.

In examining the services provided for homeless people, we have given some thought to what we regard as the objective. Some of the homeless people may perhaps not be capable of handling their affairs as normal tenants, of bearing the responsibility required by a rental agreement. In most cases they nevertheless need decent housing, either for themselves or alone or shared with others, which they can hopefully look up on as a home. The service provider may see to the paying of the rent and many other practical matters. In this case quality is the primary objective for the apartment, since these people are not fully independent.

This issue has also been examined to some extent via the concepts of housing and home (and houseless and homeless). Housing is a space within four walls, a space that can be made into a home, a place for social relations. The matter becomes a problem when the occupant is unable to make the space into a home and to look upon it as his/her home. He/she is not "housingless", because he/she has housing, but is nevertheless (according to several authors) "homeless". Should we nevertheless aim to provide such a person with housing, a space which can be in principle convert into a home, and help him/her to stay in it? If this potential has never even existed, the person will be eternally homeless. There are major differences of opinion over this distinction in the European countries, and they greatly affect the types of services provided for homeless people.

What do the services thus primarily seek to eliminate: houselessness or homelessness? The provision of care and treatment for the homeless person aims to induce a change so that he/she becomes capable of establishing social relations. If, after this care and treatment, that person is no longer mentally "homeless" but does not have housing (is houseless), has the service provision chain truly fulfilled its purpose?

In the same way we may ask whether the service provision has been successful if a homeless person is given housing but cannot use it or cannot look upon it as his/her home. If that person is incapable of changing, would it be better after all to provide a roof over his/her head in a way that is worthy of human dignity, in special housing?
Deviation as the basis for service provision

Deviation, a person's inability to make use of society's institutions (regardless of whether the reason is felt to lie in the individual, the prevailing conditions or society), creates a need to provide emergency services, to care for and rehabilitate him, to change and normalise him. This need to change, to lead a different sort of life, often springs from the homeless person himself, but by no means always.

Attempts have been made to cure people of deviant behaviour, regardless of whether or not it is regarded as a disease, by means of a broad network of institutions and care homes that vary enormously in their nature and care practices from one society to another. Even if the treatment fails, at least an attempt has been made to isolate these people from others in various kinds of institutions, or else they once again become homeless.

A homeless person must, according to this concept first change before being given a normal home. But when, and on what conditions, is a person regarded as being sufficiently normal to live in a normal home? Countries differ considerably on their views on this, and the issue will always be a problem for any country.

- Unless policy makers do not pay sufficient attention to the problems of deviant homeless people and unless resources for services are not allocated to improve the living conditions of these people, who themselves have very little or no resources to improve their situation themselves, homeless people will doomed to become the (often permanent) occupants of housing designed only as a temporary measure, or they return to being homeless. This situation is the most urgent one to be prevented in the member states.
- Treating deviation to help homeless people, to normalise the clients and integrate them with society, often in a stepwise process, is a necessary effort, especially if based on the wishes of the client, too. But a person should not be required to change, to get normalised before providing him/her with decent human living conditions. Using the requirement of normalisation as a prerequisite for the provision of good quality services usually dooms a person to a circle; while living under inhuman living conditions the effort to change one's life and the way of living may be impossible.
- Caution is needed in identifying what integration really means, over the community or human environment with which the client is expected to integrate and which environments are accepted as the ones the person should integrate with. Who in fact prescribes the objectives of this integration and how much say does the homeless person himself have in the matter? These issues should be researched and the concept of integration clarified.

Poverty as the basis for housing provision

Homeless people are poor, often desperately so. Being poor, they do not have access to or cannot afford a normal home. This may be the result of many factors: unemployment,
sickness, deviant behaviour, exclusion, being a refugee, etc. Those who are unable to make use of society's institutions are particularly threatened by poverty. Whatever the reason for their poverty, the society in which they live either does not wish to or cannot afford to provide sufficient financial resources to ensure them even a minimum standard of living. The social security systems vary and are not fully adequate. Homeless people may not necessarily be entitled to benefits, especially if they are immigrants. Not all countries are currently able to lower their housing costs by means of housing benefits or some other such system, and unemployment causes problems in all countries.

In most countries of the European Union the average level of income and welfare is already high enough to be able to guarantee the basic resources for living. Sufficient minimum financial resources, in form of benefits and allowances should be provided to all people in order to prevent them from becoming homeless solely due to poverty. Sufficient welfare benefit should be targeted also to all citizens independently of their working career.

**Housing exclusion and sub-standard housing as the basis for housing provision to socially vulnerable**

Some countries have solved the housing problem of their low-income population by preserving cheap, substandard housing, in the old inner cities, for example. Demolishing these houses would reduce the supply of cheap housing and raise the risk of homelessness.

By contrast, other countries regard the housing of poor people in substandard stock as running contrary to the ideals of equality and solidarity; the provision of sufficient social housing and the criteria for its allocation are regarded as social issues. Once again the question presents itself of what makes a person so deviant that he cannot be given a home in social housing, and above all, how the sick and deviant can be helped to keep their homes and helped with their everyday problems so that they are not evicted.

Most countries cannot provide enough alternative housing for persons who cannot or do not wish to live according to the norms of the majority. The alternative housing is often in substandard communal housing or old stock, or in housing built by members of the community themselves (such as Christiana in Copenhagen). These communes tend to be illegal and hence temporary.

- Examining homelessness primarily as a housing exclusion problem guaranteeing a sufficient stock of housing, and above all social housing, is of major importance. The criteria for allocating housing should be such that homeless people and other socially voluntary groups also have a chance of being granted a home.
- The support helping the occupant to live in this housing once it has been granted is a field of social welfare which should urgently be developed in order to help vulnerable groups to maintain the housing and to prevent evictions. Eviction may spark off deviant behaviour and other problems, marking the start of a downward spiral for substance abusers and the like. And vice versa, being provided with housing may be an
opportunity to begin a new life and to become integrated with society or the
community.

- Alternative housing for people who are not capable or willing, not with support
  measures either, to live in normal housing should be developed. The alternative housing
does not, however, need to be of a low standard. There are examples in a number of
countries of high-standard alternative housing for homeless people and other vulnerable
groups either separate from or within the social housing stock. The housing, the
apartments are good standard apartments, only way in which it differs is that it is
subject to special regulations and support.

- If homelessness is examined purely as a shortage of housing, and providing normal
  housing is the only way of solving the problem, there is a danger that the homeless
people who also have other problems will be excluded and end up in night shelters and
hostels. Alternative housing is called for, along with care and treatment.

**Emergency services - the first step on a continuum?**

Emergency is an unexpected event which creates an urgent, pressing need. Usually it refers
to very specific situations, the clearest example being the need to survive, i.e. the case in
which someone's life is threatened. The emergency measures are an immediate response to
the situation of a person in urgent need of help.

Our research shows that emergency services are mostly provided by several voluntary
organisations. Each service provider focuses on its emergency tasks; coordination betw een
service providers is not very common. There is not necessarily anywhere to send a
homeless person who is no longer in need of this particular kind of service. So he stays in
the shelter or other temporary accommodation. The situation is that of long -prevailing
precariousness, and not of emergency any more.

The question of the continuum of services, the coordination of services, is also addressed.
Some of unanswered questions may be summarised as: Which authority should be
responsible for this coordination? Voluntary organisations are often funded by public
authorities. Funds from the government or other public authorities are granted separately
for each organisation. Whether or not the funding body requires co -ordination amongst the
different services funded is often unclear and depends on the administrative system of the
particular country.

- There are advantages if the service provision of different service providers are
  coordinated to each forming a chain along a client can proceed. Therefore coordina tion
should be developed. How this will be done depends on the overall system of service
provision in the particular country.

- In some countries the services provided by the voluntary sector are complementary to
  municipal services and at least partly financ ed by the local authorities. Municipalities
have the ultimate responsibility for providing services for homeless people; this makes
the coordination much easier to arrange, but how well the coordination is arranged
depends on the initiatives and resources of the local authorities. Governmental authorities could in some case urge the municipalities to take measures.

- In other countries the service provision is based on services provided by the voluntary sector. In most cases, however, the provider get their finances from the public sector. The financing organisation should set requirement on coordination of services before granting resources.

- The provision of emergency social services should ultimately aim at minimising the demand. However, because there is little or no possibility of the service providers being able to direct clients elsewhere, there is a steady demand for new emergency services. Those who apply for help are in permanent need of help. When there is a distinct lack of overall coordination, the notion of the continuity of services fails to have any meaning. This is a situation which should be urgently tackled with in all member states.

**Separate services or services as part of the ordinary provision?**

Services for homeless people are usually provided separately from other, ordinary services. Is this necessary, and does it guarantee better quality? Ordinary welfare and health services are provided for every citizen or for those eligible, depending on the welfare system of the country. There are no table differences in the way services are managed and financed in the various EU member states. In some, however, the most excluded part of the population is denied access to services as they fail to meet specific eligibility criteria.

In other countries all citizens are eligible for the same services, homeless and other vulnerable groups as well. Special services are provided only if the ordinary service provision is not capable of providing proper services for these people. Services are often ordered in such a way that their coordination and continuity make it possible to guide the excluded person on to the other services he needs. Voluntary service providers, which often show initiative in their service provision, may play a considerable role in the change of services, thus being able to provide services for the very people who derive most benefit from them.

- Although the social housing services differ to a greater or lesser degree from the social welfare the cooperation and the coordination of measures between these sector is absolutely necessary. Inasmuch as services for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless are concerned, it appears that both sectors must be well coordinated in order to maintain the required continuity of service provision, including special housing provision.

**Temporary accommodation - often a permanent low-quality solution**

Emergency action usually results in the provision of temporary accommodation; but how do we define 'temporary'? Shelters and hostels clearly aim to provide accommodation for a short period of time. Many clients (such as elderly homeless people) do, however, spend years in shelters. Emergency can thus often lead to 'long-term temporary' solutions. Thus a
number of homeless people who have stayed in hostels for years do not even wish to move to an apartment of their own any more. They have social contacts in the hostel, and they are perhaps not even capable of living in normal housing.

Must temporary and emergency accommodation facilities necessarily be substandard, as is often the case? Are there any reasons why temporary accommodation should be inferior even if the client will only be staying there for a few days?

- One must question the role and, hence, the use of temporary accommodation. Surely temporary accommodation should be provided only in situations where the client is expected to move on to some other form of accommodation or housing in the very near future.
- The standard of temporary accommodations should be evaluated. The reasons why the standard is kept low should be asked. There are several examples of good practice in the various EU countries by which good quality housing is available on a temporary basis. In some countries there are special 'crisis dwellings', e.g. for victims of domestic violence and other families with children which need accommodation in an emergency; the aim is to prevent mothers with children from becoming homeless and to guarantee proper accommodation even during the first emergency period.

The step model - how far is it needed?

In many temporary accommodation projects providing socio-psychological support the clients have to go through a number of stages in a programme of social reintegration before they are considered capable of living on their own.

A number of such projects have succeeded in re-integrating a significant percentage of homeless people. However, clients often have to go through long temporary periods living in socio-therapeutic communities.

- Research is needed to determine to what extent the stepwise measures are really necessary. Although the aim of this process is to socialise the client to the normal society, does it really do so? Does the long temporary stay alienate him from normal life rather than integrating him in normal society? The alternative would be to allocate an apartment in an ordinary housing environment and to provide support in order to help him deal with everyday life.

Special housing provision

It is evident that there are people who are not capable of living independently, not even with support measures, in ordinary housing. Ordinary housing provision and the housing management staff are not capable of dealing with people with specific problems. Although many such people may need socio-psychological support, they do not necessarily require institutional care.
Why must housing for these people be arranged on a temporary basis? Their problems often demand a permanent housing solution which also incorporates the provision of the socio-psychological help they require.

- Special housing with daily support and help is needed for these people. Special housing is a term not very common in all member states. It in some case refer to low standard housing; however special housing need not be of lower physical standard than other housing. It should refer to good standard housing with which some kind of other service provision is connected.
- There are specific population groups whose needs demand specific facilities and services, e.g. elderly people, disabled people, mentally retarded people. In most welfare states the quality of the special housing (service housing, care homes, etc.) provided for these people is high or at least good. In the case of excluded population groups like former psychiatric patients, homeless people and immigrants the categorisation often results in lower quality housing, thus treating these groups as second class citizens.

These citizens should not be treated as the ones not deserving decent housing. This division should be prevented.

**Housing and home**

Researchers have stressed that it is not always entirely clear what is meant by normal housing and normal mainstream housing. The definition of housing can be founded on the architecture of the dwelling: does it satisfy the requirements of a building intended for human habitation, are the rooms a sufficient size, does the dwelling have washing and cooking facilities? If the answer is 'no', then the building is a hostel or some kind of shelter.

- Except for the architectural plan characteristic for normal housing is that people in normal housing sign a rental agreement or own the apartment, in which case the ability to live independently and to sign a rental agreement is a prerequisite for the definition of normal housing. However, in case of vulnerable persons and households, this prerequisite need not be valid; the apartment can be a normal one, but the rent payment is and should be guaranteed by the service provider which also can provide other support services.

**Preventive and responsive services**

A distinction is drawn in discussions between the measures aiming to prevent homelessness and the services provided for those who are already homeless. Being excluded from housing, eviction, is naturally a major dividing line.

- The services targeted at people who are already homeless should also be regarded as preventive measures since they prevent the homeless person from sliding down the
spiral to rooflessness. Some of these measures may be the same as those designed to help the rest of the population, such as unemployment benefits, social security and above all housing provision, while others are special services targeted specifically at homeless people. The broader the social security is, and the sooner a person is provided with services on becoming homeless, the more the downward spiral can be prevented.

**Uniform recommendations hindered by differences between countries**

It is impossible to make a direct comparison of the services for the homeless and their standard from one country to another. The major social differences between EU member states make such a comparison either difficult or outright impossible. The differences are greatest between southern and northern Europe, the Nordic countries and northern Central Europe. The climate alone gives homelessness a different dimension: unlike in the warm south, it is vital to have somewhere warm to go to for the night in the cold northern winter.

There are also major differences between member states in the income level of their populations and the level and structure of their social security systems. In some countries the basic social security system is the family, while in others social security is targeted mainly at the individual. A person's working history also carries different importance in the granting of benefits designed to ensure a basic subsistence. In particular the right of single people to basic social security differs from country to country, and this affects a single person's ability to obtain and maintain a home. In certain countries some of the homeless people are families or mothers with children, while in others these groups take priority in the granting of social protection and the allocation of housing and are not therefore homeless inhabitants of hostels and night shelters.

A country's housing policy, the groups at which housing policy measures are targeted, the size of the social housing stock and the criteria for allocating housing likewise all affect the structure of homelessness for both single people and families. The proportion of rental housing in the total housing stock also varies greatly from one country to another. Many countries try to reduce the housing costs by means of a housing allowance or benefit, but not all. There are also differences in the use of cheaper, often substandard housing.

The most significant factor of all is, however, probably the extent of the homelessness problem. In countries with few homeless people it is easier to seek solutions and to provide services according to the need. The number of immigrants is of decisive significance: countries that have over the past decade been the receivers of hundreds of thousands and even millions of refugees or other immigrants, either legal or illegal, face a completely different situation from countries where the problem is confined more or less to the native population.

The number and proportion of the most difficult homeless cases, especially of drug addicts, drug-medicine abusers and people with serious mental health problems likewise varies from one country to another. The traditional alcoholic, the most common type of homeless person in the Nordic countries in particular, is less of a problem. The number of homeless
people with more serious problems such as drug addiction and HIV, especially young homeless people, seems to be growing in all member states. These problems are already very considerable in a number of cities. There seem to be few ways of helping these homeless people.

- However, in spite of these national differences, some general principals and goal should be outlined for the service provision for homeless people in the member states.

**Reflections and dilemmas**

Homeless people like all other human beings need basic security:
- economic resources, money to live our everyday lives
- a permanent place where to live, an apartment
- social contacts or/and social support
- something meaningful to do

A street homeless, a person sleeping rough cannot meet many of the basic needs in his everyday life. Often, he/she is so deprived that they do not even expect to meet these needs. Services for homeless people aim at making the living conditions of a homeless person better. Which needs on the list above are the ones which have had a priority in developing the services and which of them are taken into consideration? Or expressed otherwise round; should all these be taken into consideration in the service provision in order be able to help a homeless person properly? The answer is probably yes; the possibilities, the chances for a person to get integrated after a period of homeless are better, the more multi-dimensional service provision is, the more the services allow opportunities for a homeless person to use his own abilities and initiatives, too.

One can ask, however, which goal has the priority in the service provision, to help a homeless person to gain human conditions for his living or to treat, to cure and to normalise him? Even if these goals are not, primarily, contrary to each others, there seems often to be a need to make the requirement of a personal change as a condition for providing other services of better quality. Would it be possible for us, so called ordinary people, to advance in a process of profound personal change while living in very precarious living conditions? And if the person is incapable of changing, must he be doomed to precarious living conditions for the rest of his life?

Emergency services are the services which are available for these people in most European cities. Accommodation is provided on temporary basis. While there often is not many possibilities for a homeless person to go further, to services which would satisfy better his diversified needs, he stays: Temporary accommodation becomes a long-term temporary solution for him. To prevent this situation, a coordination between different service providers and different kinds of services should urgently be developed in the European cities, a coordination which embraces the whole chain of services from emergency shelters up to mainstream housing provision and even, if possible, to opportunities to integrate to
the labour market. Especially during times of unemployment, the opportunities of homeless people to get work are not good; for this reason other activities, from supported working opportunities to self-managed cooperations are important, to satisfy the need to have something meaningful to do. This issue has not been much dealt with yet in the discussion of homelessness.

The decision makers are often reluctant to invest societal economic resources on non-productive people, especially on homeless people or immigrants. However, some studies (Busch-Geertsema, 1996) have indicated that it is often much more expensive for a society to arrange the living conditions of these people on temporary basis, by building and providing temporary accommodations. The cost can be several times higher than the cost of providing these people with normal housing, although the rent must be paid by the society. In case of street homeless people, high cost will be paid by the society, if a homeless person must often be taken into lockup, and furthermore even higher if he is taken to hospital care because of serious health problems, caused by homelessness and severe abuse problems connected to it. Further research is needed to address the cost-benefit aspect of service provision.

The most serious problems connected to homelessness seem to be increasing; numbers of substance abuses using drugs, medicines or several intoxicants simultaneously are increasing. These problems are often connected to serious mental problems, too. Measures how to treat these persons, how to provide services for them are certainly the problems which should be tackled with more concretely while studying homelessness and services for homeless people.

We are experiencing a period of social policy rethinking in Europe. The prevailing paradigm, the prevailing discourse is emergency, instead of one of progress which during the previous decade was expressed by governmental programmes, especially social programmes. In the present day it is required that something must be done immediately. In this light we may ask if can look forward any goal orientated measures announced by governments which would aim at reducing homelessness by planned and coordinated provision of services?

REFLECTIONS ABOUT NEEDS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

by Dragana Avramov
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What have we learned from the EUROHOME project?

The main conclusions may be summarised as follows:

1. Innovative and appropriate methodologies and data are a crucial prerequisite for scientifically sound research about homelessness and an indispensable input into policy development and implementation.
2. While acknowledging that progress has been made in recent years in research, serious gaps which impair the development of informed policies have been identified (Kofler).

3. Available data on homelessness in Europe is sparse and non-comparable. At the national level targeted primary research of homelessness is rare. It is non-existent at the European level.

4. The expert group has developed methodological recommendations, identified methodological requirements and proposed the necessary steps and accompanying measures in order to carry out pertinent policy oriented research about homelessness.

5. The risk concept is important for understanding homelessness. Risk situations are affecting more people due to the employment crisis and new policy trends. Vulnerability factors are multiplying due to the growing duration of risk situations and loosening of social bonds. The area of vulnerability is potentially more of a problem than the entity of current exclusion would suggest (Tosi).

6. The whole range of policies for fighting poverty and ensuring social protection are important but that they are not sufficient as is shown by the actual existence of homelessness even in systems with widespread general protection.

7. The policies for fighting homelessness which are identified as feasible are: multi-facetal (as opposed to mono-facetal), integrated (versus segmented), long term (versus short term), preventive (versus curative) structural (versus individual) with participation of the homeless (versus imposed by public authorities) (Vranken).

8. It is noted that there are two trends in service provision. The first one is a kind of 'super-market approach' as is focused on provision of services without examining whether these are actually determined by client needs. The second one is based on a more thorough assessment of problems to be tackled (Kärkkäinen).

9. Better understanding of the identity crises of homeless people and their self-perception could be of great policy value and be employed in the evaluation of services.

10. It is necessary to learn more about the role and functioning of family and informal networks of socially vulnerable people so that targeted measures can be developed and benefits transferred to reinforce the existing networks, rather than just to continue channelling more and more resources and services to sheltering and assisting people once they fall through the personal safety nets.

11. Integrated policy models developed in Denmark and Finland are identified and described as models of best policy and practice in preventing homelessness and assisting homeless people. It is acknowledged, however, that even in these countries people with multiple problems fall out of the system of standard social and welfare protection.
Complementary services for crisis intervention are needed and exist even in countries with strong integrated policy approach. Services for the homeless who have multiple, albeit, fast changing problems prove to be efficient instruments of reintegration providing that there is a continuation between general social and welfare protection and crisis intervention (Koch-Nielsen).

12. In addressing the issue of models of good practice we could not go beyond a descriptive level as no resources were available for field research. Only contextual conclusions could be drawn about the impact of policies to combat housing exclusion. The future research agenda is determined by the need to implement policy impact studies using modern methodologies.

13. In the current mainstream stock-taking of 'best' practice in the domain of service provision models are generally identified on the basis of what service providers intend to achieve and on self-evaluation. Criteria for the measurement of success are usually set by service providers and outputs and outcomes remain beyond the critical analysis of performance from the point of view of other institutions and clients.

What can researchers further say about homelessness?

14. Researchers can further contribute to the development of conceptual and methodological aspects of homelessness as a specific condition and as part of broader phenomena of social integration and exclusion in advanced welfare states.

15. Researchers can improve data and make extensive use of modern methods for data analysis in order to end the 'game of numbers' about homelessness and housing aspects of deprivation. Researchers have the know-how to gather credible information needed to shape effective policies and efficient services.

16. The composition of the homeless population varies between countries and over time. Researchers can monitor which social processes are contributing to the 'fragilisation' of particular risk groups and which risks are conducive to homelessness in a longitudinal perspective and a dynamic social setting.

17. Researchers can contribute to the better understanding of requirements for effective social inclusion by further analysing coping strategies of people living under severe housing stress in dilapidated housing estates, crime ridden neighbourhoods, conflict burdened households, overcrowded apartments, overburdened by housing costs or living in transitional emergency accommodation or supported housing.

18. Researchers can study changes in patterns of homelessness between countries and over time in order to distinguish temporary maladjustment which can be addressed through palliative measures from structurally induced housing deprivation which may be of a more lasting nature and which may require fundamental changes in mainstream housing, social and welfare policies.
19. Researchers can contribute to the assessment of the monetary and non-monetary costs of social and housing integration and monetary and non-monetary benefits for the public and individuals and families affected by deprivation.

20. The domain of service provision is a policy twilight zone. Researchers can break the deadlock of the mainstream debate about services and new partnerships which is more based on ideologies than on sound knowledge. The debate about innovative models—which are (presumably) transferable—although we do not know whether they actually work and how much they actually cost has not contributed much to tackling homelessness or social exclusion for that matter.

21. We know that services are mushrooming and there are doubts that they may be operating as revolving doors for the homeless. They may be providing more care than the client need and/or wish to receive. Researchers can analyse effectiveness and efficacy of crisis intervention and supported housing.

22. We know that there is fragmentation of services, competition between service providers, lack of co-operation between specialised services. Researchers can analyse effectiveness and efficacy of partnerships.

23. We know that services for homeless people are highly costly, not sufficiently needs based and their success rate in terms of outputs and outcomes is generally unknown. Researchers can contribute to the development of adequate monitoring systems which will make service providers more accountable to the public and to their clients.

What can researchers further say about policies and services?

24. Researchers have recognised that there is an urgent cognitive and policy need to undertake methodologically sound evaluations of policies and services by means of:

• policy impact studies;
• performance measurements of services from the point of view of providers, other institutions and clients.

25. Researchers can develop a methodology for housing and welfare policy impact studies.

26. Researchers can develop service performance measurement methodology.

27. Researchers can develop standards of service delivery in the field of supported accommodation assistance which take into account the needs and points of view of users.

28. Researchers can use their research tools to monitor the impact of policies and performance of services on a rigorous and systematic basis.
As researchers we have learned to think long and work fast. We have already translated most pertinent components from the above list of ‘can do’ into project proposals and submitted them to the funding agencies.

The new project which further pursues some of the above key issues is entitled The Housing Dimension of Welfare Reform - EUROHOME-IMPACT. It has received funding under the 5FP (contract No. HPSE-CT-1999-00038) Research DG and will be implemented in the 2000-2002 period.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

The monograph Coping With Homelessness: Issues to be Tackled and Best Practices is the first comprehensive scientific document in which the state-of-the-art in research, policy and service provision in Europe are analysed by leading experts. The monograph goes beyond a mere analysis of the social and policy background of exclusion. It is a weighty contribution to the better understanding of homelessness issues and provides a sound basis for the development of informed policies and measures to tackle extreme social and housing exclusion.

The monograph is available in the commercial circuit as a research publication. The publisher has distributed the promotional literature in order to inform books to res and potential readers and publicise the scientific publication. The prime potential readership of the book are researchers, policy makers, service providers, students, teachers and social activists.

Four executive reports summarising the main findings, policy implications and recommendation are available upon request. Each report has been distributed to some 70 researchers, policy makers and service providers.

For references see:

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