

Political Theory and Justice
Homelessness in Montréal and Problems with Liberal Democracy

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ABSTRACT

Liberal democracies emphasize and uphold the values of liberty and equality. However, inequalities prevail in such democracies. Homelessness, as an example, persists in liberal democracies. This work examines how homelessness, as a form of inequality, is made possible in such democracies by the use of theoretical and empirical analyses. The theories of John Rawls, Chantal Mouffe and Iris Marion Young are used to understand the meaning of democracy.

The theoretical analysis argues that homelessness is able to exist in liberal democracies through the very principles of such democracies which recognize the right to property ownership thus setting the free market system in place at the basic structure. Through the workings of this economic system that is characterized by profit maximization, inequality is created. A consequence of this is homelessness. I critique Rawls's "difference principle" on its toleration and justification of inequalities, and argue that this principle does not offer a permanent solution to homelessness, as it has the tendency to justify and reinforce the problem in society.

In order to understand ways by which the homeless experience inequalities in the social world, a field study has been conducted with special attention to the issue of exclusion as inequality experienced by the homeless in society. Participant observation, interviews, and life histories are methods used for the study. Findings suggest that homeless persons suffer exclusion in dimensions of the economic, health, housing, and the social.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the best mum the world has ever had and can ever have, the late Mrs. Oluyomi Omole.

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INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracies emphasize and uphold the values of liberty and equality. However, inequalities prevail in such democracies. Homelessness, as an example, persists in liberal democracies. This work examines how homelessness, as a form of inequality, is made possible in such democracies by the use of theoretical and empirical analyses.

Homelessness is a problem that is easily observable in North American cities. It has increased in visibility in urban centres. It is considered a more frightening societal ill because of its visibility. People have contact with the homeless on the street everyday, while others get to know more about them via media. The importance of the study of homelessness on the individual and the society as a whole cannot be overemphasized neither undermined. Homeless persons, especially those perpetually on streets, are constantly at risk of health and survival. Being a problem that has witnessed a significant upsurge, homelessness commands our attention in the 21st century.

There are no accurate data on the number of the homeless in Canada. Statistics Canada in fact, has no data on homelessness. However, homelessness in the Canadian population was first documented in Statistics Canada's census data of 2001. A new category, "shelters" was added to account for types of collective dwellings. Total number of persons in shelters in Canada during the 2001 census was 14,150 while those in shelters in the province of Québec and Montréal were 3,365 and 1,785 respectively. This however is far from an accurate count of the homeless population

(it was not meant to be), as there are many homeless who do not sleep in shelters, and even those that do sleep in shelters might not have done so at that particular night of the survey. However, with the rental vacancy rate falling from 7.7% in 1993 to 3.0% in 1999 in Montréal, and with many low income households paying more than 50% of their income on rents (Layton, 2000:73), more homelessness seems to be emerging.

Coming from a different country, Nigeria, a country which some may argue not to be a liberal deliberative democratic one because of the instability or inconsistency in the realization of democratic principles in its system of governance, as seen in political upheavals that besiege the country, and also the great degree of inequality or gap in income and wealth (between the rich and the poor) that obtains there, one of the culture shocks I encountered on my arrival in Canada was the sight of many homeless in streets and parks; as I never anticipated a great level of homelessness in a “so-called” developed country like Canada, which is highly influenced by liberal democracy. This observation inspired my interest in carrying out this study. I believe that there certainly must be some explanation for the realization of this situation. In this work, the terms, ‘liberal deliberative democracy’ and ‘modern democracy’ shall refer to democracy in its liberal form.

Liberal deliberative democracies uphold the values of individual human rights, liberty and equality; protect the interests of citizens and make for inclusion of citizens in political decision-making processes. I began to ask myself why inequality as this should exist in a large and wealthy country like Canada with a small population of about 31 million people. I also started thinking of how poverty could

have come to play such an important role to the extent homelessness now exists and has become pronounced in Canada. Thinking through these points in relation to what justice should be led me to a thought process bordering on the question of how homelessness is able to exist in a liberal deliberative democratic society.

My work is developed in two parts. The first covers a theoretical analysis of homelessness in liberal democracies. It expounds on the possibility of the existence of homelessness (as a form of inequality), in a society that respects human rights, emphasizes equality and upholds liberal principles. I move a step further to discuss the question, “Should inequalities be justifiable in a liberal democracy?” In this aspect of theorizing the homeless, I make use of John Rawls’ work on liberal deliberative democracy, with particular attention to his “difference principle”. However, in understanding the meaning of democracy itself, in addition to Rawls, I examine theories of two scholars: Chantal Mouffe and Iris Marion Young. John Rawls, being the quintessential liberal theorist offers the best postulation of liberal democracy hence the use of his theory for understanding the meaning of democracy in this work. Mouffe’s theory identifies the consensus model of democracy to be exclusionary in its approach on the point that it eliminates opposing views to what is considered as ‘reasonable’ to advocates of the consensus model. Young’s theory identifies this injustice and argues for a democracy free of inequalities through inclusive political communication in decision-making processes.

To deepen my theoretical understanding on homelessness, I have engaged in an empirical study that provides an understanding of the ways by which the homeless

experience inequalities in liberal deliberative democracies, thus following the orientation of traditional sociology. This is the second part.

This part of my work is qualitative research that addresses the experiences of the homeless in society. It shows ways in which the homeless experience inequality. It seeks to identify recognized aspects of these experiences (i.e., those already known to the public) and also, to discover those aspects hidden from the public. I speculate that there would still be some information regarding the experiences of the homeless that are yet to be known, especially as regards their exclusion in society. I intend to know first of all, whether the homeless feel excluded in society (i.e. their perception), and if so, proceed to know the ways by which they are excluded as reported by them. The question to address here is: “How are the homeless excluded from society?” Areas of exclusion I explore include health, the economic, the social, the spatial, and the political.

The first chapter is the literature review. It explores what has been addressed on the issue of homelessness in the past. The literature here provides information on homelessness from the North American perspective that gives an understanding of the concept of homelessness and its different meanings and definitions. Although much literature on homelessness in reference to the United States is more available than that with reference to Canada, information on the US is viewed as relevant to Canada, as both countries seem to share commonalities on aspects of homelessness. Both countries are democratic and developed; both tend to have the same causal factors or influential factors; and both have related programs in addressing the problem. Also, it is important to note that the literature comprises of submissions of academic scholars

including sociologists (mainly), anthropologists, urban studies scholars, and journalists. Information was also obtained from newspaper publications, government publications, and from academic and non-governmental organization sites on the internet.

In Chapter two, I present theories of democracy in order to gain a good comprehension of the meaning of liberal deliberative democracy. Chapter three focuses on the application of Rawls' principles of justice to homelessness. It considers a theoretical explanation of why homelessness exists in liberal democracies. In chapter four, I present the meaning of social exclusion. Methods and techniques used for data collection for the field study conducted are also identified and discussed. Chapter five focuses on the analysis of data.

I conclude by identifying and presenting how the homeless might respond to the theorization of homelessness after Rawls. I also raise important points from Young's thesis on inclusive democracy in relation to the homeless in our society today. I then recapitulate what has been done and what has been gained from the research, and I offer recommendations on future direction for research on homelessness. I reckon that we cannot start looking for ways of fighting homelessness until we have had adequate theoretical and empirical understanding of the problem. It is hoped that this study enlightens the public more about the problem of homelessness.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Shelter, along with food, health, and personal safety constitute the basic needs of humans. They are fundamental necessities that no one should lack. However, the homeless lack shelter, and their lives are in danger because they are in constant risk of violence that can be meted out to them anytime (Kraljic, 1992: p.7). Survival strategies of the homeless include begging (also known as panhandling); doubling up with friends and relatives, residing in abandoned cars, and sometimes placing children in foster homes (Glasser, 1994). The street homeless are said to sleep rough. Places where homeless persons sleep include park benches, nooks and crannies, bus shelters, sleeping bags, under bridges, squats (e.g., abandoned buildings), parking garages, cars (newly emerged homeless, as a result of eviction from apartment for non-payment of rents, start out sleeping in their cars), motels and hotels (especially used by homeless families), shelters (sponsored by missions, voluntary groups – churches, non-profit agencies, and municipal governments), etc (Layton, 2000).

The homeless population consists of men, women, both old and young, and children. Homeless youths are generally accepted to fall within the age range of 11 to 25 years (Rotheram-Borus, Koopman, and Ehrhardt, 1991), while those above this range are considered to be adults. The homeless population consisted of mainly men, however, “youth and families with children are now the fastest-growing groups in the homeless and at-risk populations” (Anne Golden et al., 1999). Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999), Sociology professors at Iowa State University, define a “homeless” youth “as

someone eighteen years or younger who cannot return home or has chosen to never return home and who has no permanent residence” (p.4). Whitbeck and Hoyt note that according to most studies on runaway adolescents, youth run away from their homes due to family troubles or disorganization rather than “run to something” (e.g., to achieve something). In other words, most youth leave their homes due to problems or difficulties experienced at home, some of which are physical and sexual abuse. The mentally-ill also constitutes part of the homeless population (Hope and Young, 1986).

Past research has indicated that the homeless or people living in bad low quality housing are more likely to have health problems than those living in good housing conditions. Homelessness gets street peoples’ poor health condition exacerbated. Common health problems of street people include tuberculosis, muscle and joint aches and pains (due to rough sleeping), skin diseases, etc (Homeless pages, 2000 - <http://www.homelesspages.org.uk/subs/subjects.asp?sbid=9>). Common ailments include headaches, allergies, swollen legs, chronic cough, sore throats, stomach disorders, etc (Liebow, 1993). Poor diet, sleep deprivation and disorder, violent attacks on street persons, chronic alcoholism (with the risk of freezing to death during winter), the risk of getting infected with sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. AIDS) and respiratory diseases all lead to the deterioration of health of homeless people (Glasser, 1994).

Precipitating causes of homelessness include recent loss of jobs, new discharge of offenders, eviction and running away of youths from homes. Causes of homelessness are not “mutually exclusive”. They are interwoven (Hope and Young,

1986), for example, poverty and inaffordability to pay rents leading to ejection or homelessness as a result of spousal abuse and alcoholism.

Everyone has a right to housing. This is part of the right of every citizen to “an adequate standard of living” recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25, No.1) and the International Agreement on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Section 1, par.1) which was signed by Québec on 21st April, 1976. It is an essential social right which no one should lack. However, the goods and services tax (GST) has made poor people become poorer, as essentials (for human living) purchased are taxed. In Montréal, this leaves poor households to struggle to meet needs in the midst of the recent downturn in work conditions and government cutbacks on social assistance programs (Bennett, 1997).

Who is homeless? What is Homelessness?

Several definitions of homelessness have been presented by scholars, research groups, and government research bodies. Irene Glasser (1994), who addresses homelessness on a global scale, notes that the meaning of homelessness varies from one culture to another, therefore, from one country to another. The National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) considers the homeless to be “any person, family or household that has no fixed address or security of housing tenure”.

Layton (2000) presents definitions which individual researchers, institutes, and research bodies have provided concerning homelessness in the past. One definition is that homelessness is strictly “rooflessness”, where a person does not have a place that has a roof as a covering to live in. Another definition is that given

by Dr. Anne Golden et al. (Toronto Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force) in 1999. The team considers the homeless to consist of "those who are 'visible' on the streets or staying in hotels, the 'hidden' homeless who live in illegal or temporary accommodation, and those at imminent risk of becoming homeless." This definition therefore takes into consideration not only those seen living on streets but the unseen ones too. The next definition of the homeless is more or less the same. It takes into its scope those who live on streets, reside in emergency shelters, and spend a bulk of their income on rent, or live in "overcrowded conditions", thus being at serious risks of becoming homeless (Toronto Report Card on Homelessness, 2000).

Watson and Austerberry (1986) argue that "a problem with the concept of homelessness is the notion of a 'home'. A 'house' is generally taken to be synonymous with a dwelling or physical structure, whereas a 'home' is not. A 'home' implies particular social relations..." (ibid: 8). The meaning attributed to home here involves, but goes beyond housing. A home is indicative of social relationships (the ties and connectedness involved in social relations) found in the nuclear family. Hence, Passaro writes, "That we do not call unsheltered people "houseless", but "homeless," is revealing of the twin functions of the nuclear family as the normative unit of both social and spatial organization. Houses are family "homes," and housing policy is family policy" (1996, p.30). Perin writes that "the territory of home gets into our blood, somehow, and our address comes to be as much a part of our being as anything else" (1988, p.63).

Beavis et al. (1997), who are more interested in the study of Aboriginal homelessness, identify Brundridge's (1987) categorization of homelessness: one,

situational homelessness, which is temporal, and occurs as a result of a sudden and serious “life crisis” e.g., divorce, release from prison, fire violence, etc; two, *episodic* homelessness, i.e. alternating between the condition of being homeless and not being homeless from time to time (at different periods of time), e.g., runaway youths experience this kind of homelessness; and three, *chronic* homelessness, i.e. long-term homelessness which involves living on streets or in shelters for most of the time (chronic substance users usually experience this type of homelessness). Bassuk (1984) submits that “homelessness is often the final stage in a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities, the culmination of a gradual disengagement from supportive relationships and institutions” (p.43).

Causes of Homelessness and Solution to the Problem

Studies have been conducted to discover the causes of homelessness and solutions to proffer to its end. The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) (Sept. 2002) provides two major reasons and supplementary reasons on why people are becoming homeless over recent years. The two major reasons are “*a growing shortage of affordable rental housing*” and “*a simultaneous increase in poverty*”.

Homelessness and poverty are closely linked. Homeless people are regarded as poor because they are unlikely to afford the basic necessities of life: food, shelter and clothing, due to limited resources at their disposal. The fact that housing in particular, in the Western world, takes a huge amount of one’s income makes matters worse for the homeless, as the degree of inaffordability of these basic needs increases. Other major factors which can contribute to homelessness include lack of affordable

health care, domestic violence, and mental illness. It is also noted that addiction disorder increases risk of becoming homeless, causing eviction from one's place of abode. NCH submits that homelessness can only be eliminated if efforts are geared towards providing the homeless jobs that pay a "living wage", adequate support for those who cannot work, affordable housing, and access to health care (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2002).

Bolaria (1991), a sociologist who has addressed social problems in regard to inequality and its consequences, while identifying housing crisis as an "urban problem", notes that it is now difficult for urban populations to buy housing due to increase in its cost. Moreover, people are now finding it difficult to keep up with their mortgage payments thereby resulting in loss of housing, and as such, there is a high demand by the homeless for space in shelters in Canada. Bolaria however opines that the provision of affordable housing is not a sufficient solution to homelessness as many homeless have mental problems, needing more help than just the provision of affordable housing. This stance with Kolata's (1989) view is that many homeless are psychiatric patients with mental disabilities or substance abuse problems, who may still find it difficult to cope in their environment even with the provision of affordable housing.

The "unrealistic" minimum wage (Kraljic, 1992) and the lack of secure employment are also contributory factors to homelessness (Homeless pages, 2000). Those without employment especially find it difficult getting jobs because of lack of address. Those employed but with insufficient or low income may not be able to

afford housing. People may therefore find themselves in an unpalatable cyclical situation: no home, no job; no job, no home.

Glasser (1994) submits that homelessness has increased in developed western countries as a result of inaffordability of decent housing (due to government cutbacks on public housing support, conversion of affordable rental housing from lower to higher income housing (gentrification)), coupled with influential factors such as chronic alcoholism, drug abuse, family break-ups resulting from bad relationships, and “deinstitutionalization of mentally ill persons”.

Passaro (1996) brings into light an interesting aspect on the topic of homelessness which may not be conspicuous in the discourse of the problem. What makes Passaro’s contribution to the academic discourse on homelessness strikingly interesting is that she does not concentrate primarily on the “economic phenomenon of houselessness” as seen in other literature on homelessness. For her, ‘cultural perceptions’ and not only ‘economic predicament’ such as poverty or inaffordability of housing can contribute to, and reinforce homelessness, especially for certain groups of people. She writes on how “cultural expressions of beliefs about gender difference help to perpetuate the homelessness of particular groups of people” (p.1). In other words, “gender socialization and expectation” can reinforce homelessness.

Passaro (1996) submits that both homeless street men and women are in “gender crises”. Homeless men are viewed as “hypermasculinized” and “emasculated”. They are seen to be independent of women, family, and society and are therefore *dangerous, aggressive and violent*, having little or no form of control. These are the hypermasculinized features for men. Homeless men are viewed as

emasculated in the sense that they cannot perform their traditional assigned roles as breadwinners of their families (or being in charge), since they are dependent and are not able to support themselves. This experience is enough to keep them being homeless in frustration of not being able to meet up with the role the society expects them to play. The traditional gender ideologies for women as “weaker vessels”, “vulnerable” and “dependent”, cause homeless women to be more favored in society than men. This public view helps women gain better treatment than men since they are seen not to have deviated much from traditional stereotypes about them.

Still in coherence with the view that gender socialization and expectation can lead to homelessness and also reinforce the problem, there have been cases where men become homeless because they are frustrated with the gender cultural expectations imposed on them by society, which they might not have been able to meet, and so wanted out, quit family life altogether (left their families), and became homeless, ending up on streets and shelters (Passaro, 1996: p.39-40).

In concurrence with factors that have been identified already, Layton (2000) reports that Anne Golden et al. (1999) have presented *increased poverty* due to changes in labour market structure and ‘public policy’ relating to cuts in welfare and eligibility for Employment Insurance, *lack of affordable housing*, *deinstitutionalization and lack of follow-up discharge planning*, and *domestic violence*, as essential causes of homelessness.

Beavis et al. (1997) submit that many Aboriginal peoples stand “at risk” of becoming homeless. Risk factors in Aboriginal homelessness include *socio-economic factors*, *poor housing*, and *substance, domestic and family abuse*. Socio economic

risk factors for Aboriginals include high level of unemployment (which is much worse for the Aboriginals than non-Aboriginal Canadians), low income, dependency on welfare, high levels of poverty, experienced especially within single-parent and large families. There is poor housing on reserve and in remote areas. This results in rural-urban migration. Aboriginals leave their reserve for the urban in search of jobs, education and better conditions of living but are not able to find with their income, suitable accommodation, therefore not being able to cope with the rigors of urban life such as high rents, low vacancy rates, and thus prone to “poverty”, “depression”, “addiction” and “crime” which finally leads to their becoming homeless. “Once off the reserve, these people are no longer under federal jurisdiction, and lose, among other things, their right to free or subsidized housing” (p.9). This creates a difficulty in coping with city life and can lead to homelessness.

Beavis et al. (1997) aver that addiction places Aboriginals at the risk of becoming homeless. Alcohol abuse, a feature of life on the reserve, which urban Aboriginal migrants bring into the city, particularly places them at a high level of risk of homelessness. Landlords do not want heavy drinkers as their tenants because they think of them to have disorderly or unruly behavior and also because they may not be able to pay their rents regularly. Aboriginal women also stand at risk of becoming homeless when they flee their communities for the cities due to shortage of affordable housing and also, in their bid to escape the bitter experience of domestic abuse. Sexual assault and incest are common factors that place women and youths especially at the risk of becoming homeless. Lastly, physical and mental health problems experienced by Aboriginals are also contributory factors to the risk of becoming

homeless. At-risk Aboriginal population includes families, youths, women, ex-offenders, and the elderly (who migrate to cities either for medical or economic reasons). Beavis et al. note that Aboriginal homelessness has common characteristics with the general Canada homelessness; however, what distinguishes them lies in the fact that “at risk” homelessness is highly more pronounced among Aboriginals than non-Aboriginals.

A long-lasting solution to homelessness, and not a quick one that gets homelessness out of sight for a short period of time, only for the problem to resurface, and even get aggravated, is best for the society. Putting an end to homelessness requires the utilization of a multiple approach due to various needs of the homeless population. Gathering from what academics and journalists have reported, Kraljic (1992) identifies the following as strategies and programs which the public and the government can put in place to abate homelessness: (a) Increase in national minimum wage to that which can realistically cater for shelter and food as basic necessities of life; (b) Provision of decent low and moderate income housing – renovation of existing buildings instead of building more shelters; (c) Concerted effort of business, government and volunteer organizations or individuals towards the eradication of homelessness. Bennett (1997), Montréal housing activist, noting the increased homelessness that has taken place in Québec, with Montréal having a great share of the population, submits that “a universal rent control” is needed to enable people to afford housing. He writes,

“The Québec minister responsible for housing must impose real mandatory universal rent control. This social measure has become necessary because the private market is incapable of supplying housing at prices that reflect the thousands of tenant households’ ability to pay. The higher the rents that

tenants have to pay, the less money they have for food and other necessities” (p.24).

Programs for implementation for helping the homeless include arrangement for or provision of day-time refuge (to prevent roaming on streets) to housing in shelters. Homeless families can be provided with ‘transitional housing’ – housing provided with a variety of intensive support services for low-income families for a fairly long period of time, a program geared towards their attainment of permanent housing (Glasser, 1994). Hope and Young (1986:273) write that “chronically mentally ill people need comprehensive psychiatric and medical care, continuity of care, and individually designed treatment regimens”. Diversified programs addressing these needs need be put in place.

Beavis et al. (1997) have proposed that provision of good and affordable housing along with “community development” is the solution to Aboriginal problem of homelessness. Community development should include the provision of jobs for individuals and also, empowering plans, programs and services geared towards self or personal development of individuals (“self-government”).

Who or What Is Responsible? The Homeless individual or Structural Forces?

Some scholars and commentators think that there is now a change in the attitude of the public toward the homeless. Previously, the homeless were viewed as deviants who do not deserve our sympathy; those who are homeless due to their failures as individuals (Dear and Wolch, 1987). However, in recent times, as McLaughlin (1987) and Halpern (1989) submit, homeless persons are now viewed as victims rather than deviants. They are seen as victims of the consequences of the way

the society is structured, causing them to be unable to afford housing. A reason that might have facilitated this change in peoples' perspective about the homeless in recent years is the upsurge of homeless children and youths now seen on streets and getting enrolled in shelters. In the past, children did not constitute a major part of the homeless population as they do today. Since children are not expected to fend for themselves, their state of homelessness cannot be explained in terms of personal failures.

There are two sides to the debate on homelessness. On one side is the argument that places responsibility on the homeless themselves as regards their personal traits, difficulties, and failures, with the view that the homeless individual's personal problems are as a result of his or her personality flaws, some of which are drug addiction and mental illness (Bassuk, 1984; Whitman, 1989). These are personal problems of the homeless.

As Kozol (1988) and Schutt (1989) submit, homeless advocates on the other hand, argue that causes of homelessness are structural: homelessness is a result of some societal factors at play, which produce or create the very conditions of homelessness. These advocates argue that societal factors such as non-availability of low-income housing and the economic transition towards low-paying jobs are factors that contribute to homelessness. One of such advocate, Jack Layton, who considers homelessness to be a political phenomenon, argues that the government, through public policies (that affect the handling of allocating Canada's resources, of which housing is one), is to blame for the creation of the very conditions of homelessness evident in our cities today (Layton, 2000: p.14). Layton is optimistic that if the

government can establish policies that make for the provision of good affordable and decent housing and support services, homelessness will be greatly reduced, if not totally eradicated.

Lee, Jones and Lewis (1990) present the public's view on urban homelessness. Their research on people's attitudes towards homelessness indicate that citizens now view homelessness as a result of how the society is structured rather than the long-held traditional view that explains homelessness in terms of self-induction. In their study, 'personal choice' and 'work aversion' were used as indicators for self-induced causes while 'bad luck' and factors of structural forces were used for societal causes.

Explaining homelessness in terms of structural forces is recent. Religious groups, social justice advocates, scholars, and the media have all contributed to public awareness of the view (Hombs & Snyder, 1982). They argue that no person would desire homelessness. Rather, changes in the basic structure cause homelessness. This indicates that people are now more compassionate towards the homeless and blame them less for their situation, arguing that homelessness is a result of structural conditions rather than individual shortcomings (Lee, Lewis, and Jones, 1992; Link et al., 1995a).

However, this is not to conclude that many citizens do not oppose this recent view; many still hold the traditional view or ideology on poverty regarding homelessness. Phelan et al (1997) submit that a homeless person, aside from the hard experiences placed on him or her by the condition of homelessness itself, suffers stigmatization in society and is as much blamed for his situation as "a domiciled poor

man” is held responsible for his economic status. Those who take side with the individual orientation (individual shortcomings) towards homelessness, argue that homeless persons are responsible for their situation (socio-economic status) because of lack of effort, laziness to work or lack of proper management of money, or ineffective use of opportunities available in society.

As Jones et al. (1984) identify, explanations for the stigmatization of the homeless by their fellow citizens can be found in the conditions of homelessness itself. One, as homelessness is the most visible form of poverty, the sight of the homeless occupying public spaces may be disruptive and disturbing for people. Two, many homeless are usually untidy and unclean because of difficulties involved in being properly groomed, they may therefore, not be of pleasing appearance to others; their appearance may be repulsive to citizens. Link et al. (1995b) also point out that the public views homelessness as a shameful condition just as it considers drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness as shameful conditions too, as people in this condition are thought to have chosen irresponsible lifestyles. Many people believe that most homeless people are mentally ill, and they extend the stigma of irresponsible lifestyle attributed to mentally ill people to the homeless. However, today, people are more compassionate toward the homeless and also show willingness towards the implementation of support policies for them despite the shame (stigma) that may be attached to their state of homelessness.

Phelan et al. (1995) have conducted a study to find the association between education and attitudes of people towards the homeless. They submit that education influences the political attitudes (the social and the economic) of citizens towards the

homeless through socialization. They explain the socialization model as the process whereby attitudes, views and opinions, beliefs and values, are being taught, communicated, and transmitted to people through a process of “social learning”. This is to say that schools for example, as educational institutions, serve as avenues for the transmission of values to students. When students learn these values, their attitudes are influenced. The greater the schooling therefore the greater the influence on peoples’ attitudes towards opinions and beliefs on homelessness. Phelan et al.’s findings suggest that educated people are more likely to have tolerance for homeless people by their support for them having individual rights and other forms of civil rights. However, the educated would have less support for the provision of financial aid to the homeless by not sharing the view that homelessness is a result of systemic forces.

However some academics are of the opinion that homelessness is a result of both individual and societal factors. Floyd (1995) argues from the perspective of ‘personal’ and ‘structural’ factors being responsible for homelessness. Personal factors include family problems, addiction, poor health, rifts between landlord and tenant which may result in dislodgement. Structural factors include unemployment, low paying jobs, condemnation/demolition of rental units, release from jail and deinstitutionalization. A good response to the elimination of homelessness therefore must adequately consider both personal and structural dimensions of homelessness.

Anti-Homeless laws in Canada; the Portrayal of Homelessness in Media

Reports have been made regarding anti-homeless laws, actions, and measures that are being passed by provincial governments and municipalities. Over the past decade, restrictive ordinances that relate to the homeless have been instituted in some provinces in Canada. Shafer (1998) reports the by-law that was passed in Winnipeg in 1995, which puts a restriction not only on the mobility of beggars in the act of begging, but also on their method of begging, as specified by law terms. The Ontario government enacted the “Safe Street Act” in January 2000, which bans squeegeeing and panhandling. The government put this ban into effect so as to enable free and safe mobility of citizens in the province, thereby ensuring “public safety”. A breach of this law charges a fine of \$500 for first-time law breakers, \$1000 or 6 months in jail for those who repeat the offence (CNews 2000). Cities in Canada with anti-panhandling by-laws include Calgary, Ottawa, Québec City, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Panhandling, an activity which some homeless engage in is totally prohibited in all public areas in Ottawa, whether during the morning or night (National Anti-Poverty Organization, 1999). Don Mitchell (1997:311) however contends that the prevention or curtailing of the homeless’ movement or presence from public space is an “invasion” upon their (civil) rights as citizens.

Klodawsky, Farrell, and D’aubry (2002) conducted a research on reports on homelessness in “The Ottawa Citizen”, over a period of four years. Through the use of content and discourse analyses, they suggest that homelessness is often portrayed by the media as a difficult problem to tackle. Furthermore, they submit that the media often suggests that citizens experience difficulties in rendering help to the homeless

as media reports place more emphasis on problems that still occur even when help is offered to the homeless in society (e.g., report such as ‘homeless man freezes to death not far from a shelter’). This action by the media overlooks important points and aspects regarding problems associated with homeless persons’ complicated past histories, as well as their ‘demographic and geographic’ diversity (p.126, 140). Klodawsky, Farrell, and D’aubry write that the implication of this is that the public, through their exposure to media reports, might be influenced in supporting anti-homeless laws, and view such laws as legitimate. Klodawsky, Farrell, and D’aubry suggest that this negative portrayal of the homeless via the media has “implications for local politics”, in that it stands influential in policy-making for homeless persons, e.g., in the future, the government of Ottawa might have to choose higher taxes to better support the homeless or lower support-level for housing for the homeless.

In this chapter, I have presented definitions of the homeless and meanings of homelessness as provided in the literature on homelessness in North America. I have identified types of homelessness (e.g. situational, episodic, and chronic) evident in the society. I have also identified the different causes of homelessness which are either structural or personal. These include unemployment, lack of housing, lack of affordable health care, drug and alcohol problems, deinstitutionalization of mentally disabled people and bad family relationships.

The argument on structural/personal causal factors of homelessness is still a debate among many academic scholars and researchers. However, it is indicated that in recent times, structural factors are considered more to be responsible for homelessness, thus reducing the blame on homeless persons. Some academics

however are of the view that homelessness is a result of the combination of both structural and personal factors. Strategies and solutions to the problem have also been presented. These include provision of decent low-cost housing, establishment of a universal rent control, minimum wage increase, the provision of medical care for mentally ill people, and provision of jobs.

Having explored ways of understanding homelessness from the literature, I move to the next chapter where I examine and present the meaning of liberal deliberative democracy. Since my work focuses on homelessness in such democracies, it is important to understand what a liberal democracy is. In other words, it is important to understand the type of society to which the discussion on homelessness here is directed at, this being a liberal democratic one. In understanding such a democracy, I look into three theories of democracy, which are the works of three scholars: John Rawls, Chantal Mouffe, and Iris Marion Young. I explain liberal democracy from the work of John Rawls in four books: A Theory of Justice, Justice as Fairness: a Restatement, Political Liberalism and The Law of Peoples. I follow this up with Chantal Mouffe's view of democracy (being different from that of Rawls) and her critique of Rawls' theory, bringing out deficiencies in liberal deliberative democracy. Here, Mouffe's theory serves as an avenue for understanding and distinguishing liberal democracy from any other type of democracy. I also present Iris Marion Young's model of deliberative democracy, a normative theory, which she sees as the best model for bridging the gap between democracy and justice.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF DEMOCRACY

In this chapter, my aim is to explore the meaning of liberal deliberative democracy in regard to justice and to point out the challenges it faces. One such important challenge is the complexities created from the combination of liberalism and democracy. Realizing the tension created with the merge of liberalism and democracy from the critical perspective of radical democracy, my assertion is that as of today, political philosophy has not excelled to the point of presenting us with a theory of democracy that speaks of justice all the way through. Other types of democracy also have their own challenges in producing a just meaning of democracy. It is therefore important not to ignore different voices or opinions on the meaning of democracy but to welcome these ideas, for out of these contestations we can hopefully at least glimpse a theoretically adequate definition of a just democracy.

I discuss Rawls' liberal democracy and principles of justice; Mouffe's critique of liberal deliberative democracy, and how it overemphasizes consensus, with its subtle elimination of the place of antagonisms, which for Mouffe, constitutes 'the political' in democratic theorizing; and Young's emphasis on inclusion in the deliberative model in regard to public decision-making and the place of political communication in deliberative democracy. I also draw out the point of convergence between Mouffe and Young, especially on the point of an 'agonistic' model of democracy which would make for more inclusion in deliberation. However, it is seen in Rawls's postulation that liberal deliberative democracy emphasizes equal rights

and freedoms for all citizens and seeks to protect the interests of citizens by the application of principles supported by the best reasons at the basic structure of society. I now start with Rawls's postulation.

JOHN RAWLS

Rawls defines liberal democracy as "justice as fairness". Justice as fairness, which Rawls submits to be an ideal theory, answers the question of deciding the most suitable principles to be applied to the basic institutions of a democratic society. Society is viewed as "a fair system of social cooperation between citizens regarded as free and equal" (Rawls, 2001: p.39, 65). Thus justice as fairness "takes the primary subject of political justice to be the basic structure of society" (Rawls, 2001: p.39). This is because political principles are applied to the main institutions (political and social) of society, and since it is assumed that citizens live and relate within society's basic institutions, then, they are affected by principles applied to the basic structure for its regulation (Rawls, 2001: p.40).

The basic structure comprises of the main political and social institutions that fit together and function to assign rights to citizens, and coordinate citizens' activities to be within a framework of social cooperation, and also, see to the proper distribution of outcomes realized from such social cooperation. It comprises "the political constitution with an independent judiciary, the legally recognized forms of property, and the structure of the economy (for example, as a system of cooperative markets with private property in the means of production), as well as the family" (Rawls, 2001: p.10).

The “principles of justice” are applied to the basic structure. However, they are not directly applied to the internal life of society’s institutions such as the family, churches, labor unions, firms, universities, etc. For example, the principles do not directly and exactly tell universities how to direct classes, or specify the number of intakes for a session, or how parents should distribute family wealth among its members. These social arrangements are however, indirectly constrained by the principles of justice (“background justice”) which operate at the basic structure (Rawls, 2001: p.10). For example, universities are expected not to be discriminatory so as to establish and preserve “fair equality of opportunity” for all. Consequently, three levels of justice prevail: one, *local justice*, the level at which principles apply “directly to institutions and associations”; two, *domestic justice*, the level at which principles apply to “the basic structure of society”; three, *global justice*, the level at which principles are applied internationally (this refers to “the Law of Peoples”) (Rawls, 2001: p.11-2). Domestic justice is the level of justice I am concerned with in my work.

Citizens are equal in the sense that they all have moral powers which give them the capacity to engage in social cooperation. They all possess *the capacity for a sense of justice*, which is “the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from the principles of political justice that specify the fair terms of cooperation” (Rawls, 2001: p.18-9). The principles of justice specify the terms of cooperation, and the moral power gives citizens the capacity to engage in such cooperation. The second moral power that citizens have is *a capacity for a conception of the good*. This, as Rawls states, is the “capacity to have, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the

good” (2001: p.19). These moral powers of citizens serve as the basis of equality because they help citizens to function in fair terms of cooperation since citizens are now able to view themselves as equal to one another. Citizens are free in the sense that they can “affirm”, change or “revise” their conception of the good, so far as the decision is made on reasonable grounds. In other words, citizens are at liberty to choose for themselves, the conception of the good, as long as the decision is in line with the reasonable (Rawls, 1999: p.33; 2001: p.18-9).

Citizens are reasonable and rational when in their deliberation and selection of the political conception of justice, they view one another as equal and free, and they operate on fair terms when they select, support, and work with the tenets of the view with the best reasons from the deliberations made on available conceptions of justice (Rawls, 1999: p.136). This fair term of cooperation among citizens is characterized by *reciprocity*. Reciprocity here requires that “when terms are proposed as the most reasonable terms of fair cooperation, those proposing them must think it at least reasonable for others to accept them, as free and equal citizens, and not as dominated or manipulated or under pressure caused by an inferior political or social position” (Rawls, 1999: p.14). In other words, citizens do not accept such proposals as a result of pressure or manipulation from parties (citizens’ representatives); citizens should be able to see some reasonableness in the proposals presented by the representatives and then act in line with the terms. In this way, citizens operate and interact with one another on fair terms of cooperation.

Justice as fairness is based on two principles:

one, “each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all”; and

two, “social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society” (Rawls, 2001: p.42-43).

The first principle is for guaranteeing “the fair value of political liberties” of citizens. It concerns citizens having equal claims to equal civil and political rights. The first part of the second principle speaks of the allowance of the existence of inequality in society as long as all citizens have fair equal opportunities to positions in society (e.g. a person’s right to equal access to jobs for which he or she is qualified for), while the other part is for adjusting the “social and economic inequalities attached to offices and positions” so that they are to the greatest advantage of the least well-off in society (Rawls, 1993: p.6-7). The first principle is assigned priority however over the second, and covers “constitutional essentials”, i.e., they are important principles contained in the constitution of a regime. Likewise, the first part of the second principle (which speaks of fair equality of opportunities for all citizens) is assigned priority over the second part. The latter part of the second principle is governed by the *principle of difference*, which is to operate within the basic structure that fulfils the first principle (Rawls, 2001: p.46, 61). Rawls submits that basic liberties are not absolute and may conflict with one another. In other words, we can have less of some in order to have more of other liberties. It is a matter of prioritization. However, such rights and liberties should be equal for all citizens. The scheme at the basic structure therefore has to be well-adjusted so that such liberties are secured equally for all citizens: these basic liberties are to have equal guarantee for all citizens, appropriate “social

conditions” necessary for developing and exercising their two moral powers (Rawls, 2001: p.111-12).

For Rawls, “the least advantaged are those who share with other citizens the basic equal liberties and fair opportunities but have the least income and wealth” (Rawls, 2001: p.65). This is to say that the least well-off might have the least primary goods; the latter, being necessities of life, and not merely things we may “want”, “prefer” or “desire” but much more, “social conditions and all-purpose means that are generally necessary to enable citizens adequately to develop and fully exercise their two moral powers, and to pursue their determinate conceptions of the good” (Rawls, 2001: p.57-8).

Primary goods include one, ‘the basic rights and liberties’. These consist of “freedom of thought and liberty of conscience; political liberties (for example, the right to vote and to participate in politics) and freedom of association, as well as the rights and liberties specified by the liberty and integrity (physical and psychological) of the person; and finally, the rights and liberties covered by the rule of law” (Rawls, 2001: p.44, 58). Two, ‘freedom of movement’ and free occupational choice made possible by the existence of various available opportunities, which serve as avenues for citizens to pursue various ends; three, ‘powers and prerogatives of offices and positions of authority and responsibility’; four, ‘the income and wealth’ needed to achieve these ends; and lastly, ‘the social bases of self-respect’ needed to give citizens a sense of worth and also boost their confidence in pursuing ends (Rawls, 2001: p.58-9). The social bases of respect as stated here are not interpreted as “an attitude toward oneself” rather, it refers to the idea that citizens recognize the fact that

all have equal basic rights, including the least advantaged, and they operate and interact with one another with this understanding, being reciprocal in their acts of treating one another as equals (in rights) in their relations with one another (Rawls, 2001: p.60).

Fair equality of opportunity obtains when all citizens have ‘fair’ and ‘equal’ chance at attaining ‘public offices’ and ‘social positions’ in that citizens with the same level of ‘abilities’, ‘willingness’ and aspirations to exercise those abilities or skills should have the same ‘prospects of success’ in accessing such opportunities to positions in society; their level of success is not to be based on (i.e. influenced or affected by) their social class (Rawls 2001: p.43-4). Rawls specifies that fair equality of opportunity refers to *liberal equality*. To attain this, certain requirements need to be applied to the basic structure: a free market system must operate within the confines of adjustments in trends of economic forces made by political and legal institutions, in order to restrain extreme inequalities (‘concentration of property and wealth’) that may lead to ‘political domination’ (Rawls, 2001: p.44). The basic structure of society is thus seen to have two roles in regard to the application of the principles of justice. Regarding the first principle, the basic structure “specifies and secures citizens’ equal basic liberties and establishes a just constitutional regime”. For the second, the basic structure “provides the background institutions of social and economic justice in the form most appropriate to citizens seen as free and equal”. These institutions see to the just distribution of advantages (both economic and social) (Rawls, 2001: p.48), thereby checking or preventing excessive inequalities (Rawls, 1999: p.49).

Rawls submits that all liberal conceptions of justice of any liberal democracy have three characteristic principles: *one*, these conceptions identify and list “basic rights and liberties”, just like those found in a constitutional-oriented government; *two*, they designate ‘special priority’ to these “rights, liberties, and opportunities” channeled towards the general wellbeing of all; *lastly*, they assure “for all citizens the requisite primary goods to enable them to make intelligent and effective use of their freedoms” (Rawls, 1999: p.14). Rawls therefore holds that a just liberal democratic society is one that “combines and orders the two basic values of *liberty* and *equality* in terms of three characteristic principles” of the liberal conceptions of justice (already identified above) (Rawls, 1999: p.49). Therefore, equality and liberty are central to the discourse of liberal deliberative democracy.

Rawls, in his exposition of a liberal democracy, further postulates four basic facts of liberal democracy that can be “confirmed by reflecting on history and political experience”. These are: *the fact of reasonable pluralism*, *the fact of democratic unity in diversity*, *the fact of public reason*, and *the fact of liberal democratic peace* (Rawls, 1999: p.124). The fact of *reasonable pluralism* is the fact that we can have a plurality of different and conflicting, but reasonable comprehensive doctrines such that these different and irreconcilable doctrines all still recognize and unite on the idea of ‘equal liberty’ and ‘separation of church and state’. This is to say that these irreconcilable, yet reasonable doctrines support the political conception of justice for different just reasons from the perspectives of these different doctrines. Here, no doctrine is superior to another; they all support and reach consensus on the idea of equal liberty among citizens. *Democratic unity in diversity*

concerns the fact that to achieve ‘political and social unity’ in a liberal democratic regime, citizens are not obliged to support one single ‘comprehensive doctrine’. Democratic unity can be achieved regardless of the pluralism and distinctiveness of citizens’ doctrines (moral, philosophical or religious). As Rawls puts it, democratic unity in diversity can be realized through “reasonableness and rationality of political and social institutions, the merits of which can be debated in terms of public reason” (Rawls, 1999: p.124-25). In other words, democratic unity can be realized with the existence of pluralism of comprehensive doctrines when reasonableness and rationality obtain at the basic structure where the principles of justice are applied.

Public reason speaks of acknowledging the fact that agreement on the principles of justice cannot be realized on the basis of citizens’ comprehensive doctrines. Rather, in choosing the principles of justice, we appeal to “a reasonable family of political conception of right and justice and so to the idea of the politically reasonable addressed to citizens as citizens” (Rawls, 1999: p.125). In other words, the conception selected from various available principles which are deliberated upon to be the political conception of justice is usually that with the best reasons. The deliberation process on the appropriate conception to be selected by citizens is the reasoning process. The fact of *liberal democratic peace* relates to the point that liberal democracies are peace-loving and peace-keeping. Such societies do not engage in war except in self-defense or when they render help service to liberal or decent (decent societies are non-liberal, however, they observe some liberal principles – they recognize, honor, respect and follow the principles of justice and make room for their

members to be involved in political decision-making (Rawls, 1999: p.3)) societies in defense against external aggression (Rawls, 1999: p.125).

Rawls submits that in a liberal democratic society, the principle of justice is affirmed by citizens with different comprehensive doctrines. Citizens support the political conception of justice for reasonable reasons from the different perspectives of their comprehensive doctrines. These doctrines will agree to the reasonableness of the principle of justice selected. The reasons for supporting the conception of justice may vary but they are usually supported by the best reasons. Hence, the political conception of justice is said to be affirmed by “reasonable overlapping consensus” (Rawls, 1999: p.32) - citizens support the conception of justice for different, yet reasonable reasons.

For Rawls, a well-ordered constitutional democracy is also a deliberative democracy (Rawls, 1999: p.138). Rawls identifies three essential elements of deliberative democracy. The first is “the idea of public reason”. The second is “a framework of constitutional democratic institutions that specifies the setting for deliberative legislative bodies. The third is the knowledge and desire on the part of citizens generally to follow public reason and to realize its ideal in their political conduct” (Rawls, 1999: p.139). These elements of deliberative democracy make us understand the importance of ‘reasoning’ among citizens in the selection of the conception of justice. Also we are able to know that to have a deliberative democracy in place, a set-up background that would allow for, and support the deliberative process in a just way is needed. Also citizens have to desire to select the conception

supported with the best reasons as the political conception of right and justice during deliberations.

Deliberative democracy speaks of deliberations made on political conceptions of justice among 'free' and 'equal', 'reasonable' and 'rational' citizens. Deliberation itself involves the exchange of views, opinions, and ideas on public political questions, and the challenges and debates on the supporting reasons for such views. During deliberation, revision of political opinions takes place when discussed with other citizens (Rawls, 1999: p.138). Public reason is important here because "it characterizes such citizens' reasoning concerning constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice" (Rawls, 1999: p.139). In the process of deliberation, citizens appeal to reasonable political conceptions of justice in addressing political questions. The opinion selected, which participants agree on is the most reasonable which is in line or consistent with constitutional essentials and basic justice. Public reason can be realized in public elections. Citizens however, will have to be educated about the basic aspects of liberal deliberative democracy for deliberative democracy to prevail, as quality decisions on political and social problems cannot be made when we have a non-informed public (Rawls, 1999: p.139). I now move to Rawls's submission of the original position at the domestic level which he views as very important in the selection of the political conception of justice.

The idea of the original position is addressed so as to present how fair terms of cooperation should be specified in a liberal democratic society. Rawls views the *original position* characterized by "the veil of ignorance", as a model of representation for liberal societies. The idea of the original position is important to

address because it constitutes the process by which the conception of justice is selected. The original position refers to the representation of ‘free and equal’, ‘reasonable’ and ‘rational’ citizens involved in ‘fair terms of social cooperation’ by parties in selecting a political conception of justice. The parties (i.e. representatives of citizens) do not have background knowledge on the views (i.e., comprehensive doctrines) held by the citizens they represent. The representatives are kept from knowing the social position of citizens or their comprehensive doctrines, so as not to affect their selection (which should be fair) of the conception of justice. The parties however are symmetrically situated; with each having equal say in selection process (Rawls, 1993: p.23-4). When representatives of citizens have limited information regarding the comprehensive doctrines of those they represent in the selection of the conception of justice, they are said to be behind or operating behind “a veil of ignorance” (Rawls, 1993: p.25).

Rawls provides a reason for viewing the idea of the original position as important when addressing justice as fairness. Given the fact of reasonable pluralism, citizens cannot agree on the same moral principles due to different and various comprehensive doctrines that they hold. Therefore, a better alternative would be to select principles of justice (which all citizens should be able to agree to) under fair conditions in which “the veil of ignorance” is in place. This is realized in the original position. The agreement on the principle of justice would be among free and equal citizens; the agreement will also be fair to them (Rawls, 2001: p.14-5). The original position carries with it “the idea of social contract” (Rawls, 2001: p.15) characterized by “reciprocity”, where principles of justice are selected under fair terms to protect

the interests of citizens, and citizens in return, agree to such principles and walk along terms specified by the principles.

Rawls identifies five essential features of the original position as a model of representation. These are: *one*, fair representation of citizens by parties; *two*, rationality of parties; *three*, the selection of the conception of justice to be applied to the basic structure of society from available principles of justice; *four*, the selection of the conception of justice with the best reasons; and *five*, selection of conception of justice with best reasons that would protect citizens' interests (Rawls, 1999: p.30-1). The conception of justice is selected under fair conditions and arrived at by choosing the principle that is supported by the best reasons. The parties as rational representatives select the most reasonable principle to them, which they also think would be the most reasonable to the citizens they are representing.

So far, I have presented Rawls' theory of liberal deliberative democracy. I have presented his postulation of liberal democracy to be 'justice as fairness', based on two principles that concern the civil and political rights of citizens, fair equality of opportunity (liberal equality), and the difference principle. I have also addressed the original position as a model of representation at the domestic level, the facts and features of liberal deliberative democracy. In summary, from the exposition I have made on Rawls's democratic theorizing, liberal deliberative democracy is the combination of the core values of the democratic tradition which are equality and popular sovereignty, and the core values of liberalism which are individual right and liberty, in which the selection of the political conception of justice is arrived at through deliberations among free, equal, reasonable, and rational citizens. Views,

opinions, and ideas concerning public political questions are debated, and those supported with best reasons are selected to be applied to the basic structure. I now move to Chantal Mouffe's theory and her critique of Rawls's model of liberal democracy. As we shall see, Mouffe seeks to caution democratic theorists of the tendency of eliminating or reducing antagonisms (which constitutes the political) to a non-significant level while theorizing democracy. Mouffe presents a different approach to democratic discourse, and simultaneously, explicitly points out the weaknesses of liberal deliberative democracy.

CHANTAL MOUFFE

Mouffe (2000) puts forward 'the paradox' of modern democracy, and tries to examine its 'diverse political and theoretical implications' (p.2). To realize this, she presents modern democracy by distinguishing two aspects of democracy: 'democracy as a form of rule', and symbolic structural setting for the exercise of democratic rule. The first aspect speaks of the core values of the democratic tradition - equality and popular sovereignty; the second aspect touches on core values of liberalism – individual right and liberty. Mouffe submits that what makes modern democracy 'modern' is found in the influence of the liberal tradition (with its strong values of human right and liberty) on traditional democracy; with the latter now having as its constituents, liberal thought and the democratic principle of power being vested in people and place.

Mouffe holds that modern democracy is a new "political form of society" which is articulated between two different traditions: "on one side we have the liberal

tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights and the respect of individual liberty; on the other, the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty” (p.2, 3). This articulation, she avers, is contradictory in nature, as constraint is placed on the exercise of sovereignty of the people due to the manifestation of liberal thought which situates power in individuals. The union of liberalism and democracy therefore produces bitter struggles far from the smooth process liberal democratic advocates purport it to have. Thus Mouffe argues that it is important that democratic politics understands that these two logics of liberal democracy are incompatible in the last instance, and that it is impossible to have a perfect reconciliation of both (p.5). This is to say that the tension between equality and popular sovereignty (from traditional democracy) and individual liberty (from liberalism) cannot be reconciled. The point of tension is lucid and simple: a democracy that emphasizes popular sovereignty, vesting power in the majority (the people) cannot reconcile with democracy that emphasizes power in the individual. The attempt to reconcile these two creates tension.

Mouffe (2000) therefore aims to examine the way in which political theory could contribute to breaking this deadlock brought about by these two irreconcilable logics of democracy. In doing this, she first of all, argues that ‘the consensus model’ of democracy in line with theories of deliberative democracy

“is unable to grasp the dynamics of modern democratic politics which lies in the confrontation between the two components of the liberal-democratic articulation. In other words, it is the incapacity of democratic theorists and politicians to acknowledge the paradox of which liberal-democratic politics is the expression which is at the origin of their mistaken emphasis on consensus and sustains their belief that antagonism can be eradicated” (p 7-8).

Mouffe sees John Rawls to be guilty of this charge in his attempt to reconcile democracy with liberalism through deliberative procedures in the field of political theory (p.8).

Mouffe reports that Rawls attempts to solve the traditional liberal problem of how we might overtime achieve a “stable and just society of free and equal citizens” that have differential yet “reasonable religious, philosophical and moral doctrines”. This problem concerns how liberty and equality might exist in the midst of pluralism. Rawls sees consensus on political fundamentals as the solution to this problem. This way, the conception of justice can gain support from its reasonable citizens regardless of their doctrinal differences on matters (Mouffe, 2000: p.23-4), hence the importance of having reasonable citizens, who would uphold the concept of justice. Reasonable citizens uphold liberal principles by understanding and acting out the principles of justice in fair terms of cooperation among themselves.

However, bearing in mind Rawls’ view of reasonable persons as those who accept the fundamentals of liberalism, Mouffe recognizes (from Rawls’ approach) that it would mean that those who oppose, or do not accept the fundamentals of liberalism would be termed ‘unreasonable’. This, Mouffe critiques, as it suggests that opposing views cannot be reckoned with, since liberal deliberative democracy only deals with the ‘reasonable’ and seeks to achieve consensus on the conception of justice. This, Mouffe asserts, makes Rawls’s approach to lack “the constitutive role of the political”. When those who oppose liberal principles, yet probably advocates of other models of democracy, are seen as unreasonable, and therefore anti-liberals, their opinions are shunned, their views are considered as illegitimate in a liberal

democratic regime, thus making for the elimination of antagonisms in democratic politics (p.24-5). What constitute 'the political' for Mouffe are 'antagonisms'; this, Rawls has eliminated in his theory by emphasizing the reasonableness of proposals for the conception of justice, all in attempt to achieve consensus.

Mouffe also critiques Rawls' theorizing for an overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines. Mouffe relates Rawls's solution to the liberal problem bordering on achieving an *overlapping consensus* of the reasonable moral and philosophical doctrines, each giving its endorsement on the political conception of justice from its own perspective. For Rawls, a well-ordered society establishes overlapping consensus around the principles of justice as fairness (Mouffe, 2000: p.26). In the original position, with 'the veil of ignorance' in place, the principles of justice are chosen with the legitimate consent or endorsement of reasonable free and equal citizens. The citizens view the chosen principles as fair and reasonable irrespective of differences in their comprehensive doctrines, just as the representatives view them to be fair and reasonable too for citizens, thus consensus on principles of justice is reached. Mouffe, further reporting Rawls argument writes that "once the controversial doctrines have been relegated to the sphere of the private, it is possible, in his view, to establish in the public sphere a type of consensus grounded on Reason (with its two sides: the rational and the reasonable)" (p.28).

Mouffe, in response to this view (Rawls's submission on the issue of consensus), critiques Rawls's emphasis on consensus in that it eliminates antagonisms giving no room for opposition of views. Thus she writes,

“What Rawls’s view of the well-ordered society eliminates is the democratic struggle among ‘adversaries’, that is, those who share the allegiance to the liberal-democratic principles, but while defending different interpretations of what liberty and equality should mean and to which kind of social relations and institutions they should apply” (p 30).

Mouffe therefore criticizes the model of deliberative democracy for its exclusionary tendencies. She notes that advocates of liberal deliberative democracy seek to reconcile liberal values with the principle of popular sovereignty, trying therefore to link up “rationality” (defence of liberal rights) with “democratic legitimacy” (represented by popular sovereignty) and also establish a rational consensus (after deliberations on political views and opinions have been made). This produces exclusion, as consensus blocks differential voicing on issues. Mouffe argues that it is impossible to achieve rational consensus without producing exclusion because of the non-recognized opposing views (p.45-6) and if this, then, “the expression of a hegemony and the crystallization of power relations” (p.49). The argument here is that in the very attempt to establish rational consensus through the model of deliberative democracy, hegemony is created which is in favor of those in support of the consensus reached. Consensus is realized through public deliberation, and of course, not everyone’s view can be taken or represented, therefore, some are excluded when we establish rational consensus. Democracy thus becomes an avenue for the manifestation of hegemonic relations which speak of the ‘demos’ (those on this consensus) and ‘the outsiders’ (those with views outside the consensus).

Mouffe submits that since it is impossible to realize an ultimate reconciliation between the “two constitutive logics of liberal democracy”, democratic political theory might as well abandon the search for their reconciliation; hence, her

postulation of *agonistic pluralism* in order to ‘redescribe’ liberal democracy. This, for her, is the best way to recognize and address the tension that exists between the two identified logics of democracy (p.5, 8-9). The *agonistic model of democracy* would be a remedy for the deficiency of the liberal deliberative democratic model in that it recognizes the place of ‘the political’ in democratic theorizing (p.99).

Mouffe presents the difference between ‘the Political’ and ‘Politics’ for adequate understanding of the agonistic model. *The Political* refers to the “dimension of antagonism” which may occur in various forms of human and social relations. *Politics*, on the other hand, “indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of ‘the political’” (p.101). Therefore, “politics aims at the creation of unity in a context of conflict and diversity; it is always concerned with the creation of an ‘us’ by the determination of a ‘them’” (p.101). The aim of democratic politics therefore, in relation to agonistic pluralism, is to present the ‘them’ as an adversary, and not an enemy to be destroyed, thus not disregarding or rejecting opposing views but instead, treating advocates of such opposing views (to ours) as “legitimate opponents” (p.101-2). Mouffe holds that an adversary is one who shares with us “ethico-political principles of liberal democracy” (liberty and equality), but whom we have disagreement with on interpretations and implementation of those principles; disagreement which cannot be resolved through reasonable deliberation (p.102). Our understanding and acknowledgement of the ‘the political’ and ‘politics’ can thus be appreciated in the agonistic model.

Antagonisms, according to Mouffe, emerge in two different forms: *antagonism proper* and *agonism*. Antagonism is “struggle between enemies”, i.e., struggle between persons with different ‘symbolic spaces’ (i.e., interests and values, e.g., a struggle between a Marxist and a Liberal); agonism is “struggle between adversaries”. Here, adversaries “share a common symbolic space”; they share common values but may have different approaches (e.g., struggle between a liberal democrat, and a radical democrat). It therefore follows that the aim of democratic politics using the agonistic model is to transform ‘antagonism’ into ‘agonism’ (p.13, 102-3) so that we might make room for contestations and differential voicing on political issues, rather than eliminate them. Therefore, democratic contestation (making room for dissent) must be kept alive to ensure true modern pluralist democracy, thus Mouffe writes,

“Instead of trying to erase the traces of power and exclusion, democratic politics requires us to bring them to the fore, to make them visible so that they can enter the terrain of contestation. And the fact that this must be envisaged as an unending process should not be cause for despair because the desire to reach a final destination can only lead to the elimination of the political and to the destruction of democracy. In a democratic polity, conflicts and confrontations, far from being a sign of imperfection, indicate that democracy is alive and inhibited by pluralism” (p.33-34).

I have presented Mouffe’s argument and criticism on the elimination of antagonisms in liberal democracy, and her proposed agonistic model of democracy which would allow for these confrontations in democratic politics. Mouffe’s argument in a nutshell is that it is important to appreciate the fact that there exists tension in combining liberalism with democracy, as these two have elements which work against each other: Liberalism seeks to empower *the individual* by emphasizing

individual rights and liberty while democracy empowers *the people* by emphasizing equality and sovereignty (of people). The tension that exists here should not be discarded, as it constitutes the political in democratic theorizing. A way of handling this situation is to adopt the ‘agonistic pluralism’ approach which allows for confrontations in democracies. This should be kept in place rather than overlooked. I now move to Iris Marion Young’s proposed version of deliberative democracy which places high worth on inclusion, and examines the role of political communication in the process of deliberation, all in order to ensure justice.

IRIS MARION YOUNG

Young (2000) develops and analyzes “a normative theoretical connection between democracy and justice”. To have a wide gap existing between democracy and justice speaks of injustice. For Young, a way of eliminating this injustice is by widening democratic inclusion. She therefore proposes the use of *the deliberative model of democracy* for the realization of this goal, as she argues that this model makes for the validation of just policies (p.17).

In order to show reasons for the preference for the deliberative model which promises to secure and achieve true democratic justice, Young identifies and compares the deliberative model with the aggregative model of democracy. She submits that the ‘aggregative model’ views democracy as “a process of aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies”. Basically, the goal here is to select leaders or public officials who will satisfy the most widely-

expressed interests and preferences of citizens. Therefore, the aggregative model reduces democracy to the negotiation of the most strongly expressed interests (p.19).

Although both aggregative and deliberative models “share certain assumptions about the basic framework of democratic institutions” (e.g. rule of law, voting as a means of decision-making when consensus is impossible to reach, freedom of speech, assembly, and associations (p.18)), Young identifies the shortcomings of the aggregative model which prevents the model from being capable of providing the means for validating the most just policies. These include the lack of information as to the motives that influence peoples’ preferences. We do not know ‘the origins’ of these preferences and interests, e.g., we do not know whether ‘reasoning’ or ‘fear of threat from others’ or ‘altruistic care for others’ are responsible factors for such held preferences. This would mean that policies and public officials are selected according to the extrinsic display or identification of the most strongly-held preferences, thus disfavoring less strongly-held views, and also, ignoring the intrinsic aspect of influential factors of motives behind all preferences presented. Moreover, the model lacks a public-oriented form of interaction among democratic citizens in the decision-making process, as it involves individuals engaging in instrumental reasoning in securing their interests (p.20). With the aggregative model, it is seen that decisions are made through the selection of proposals or interests with “greatest numerical support”, and not by selecting proposals supported by the best reasons, hence Young’s advocacy for the use of the deliberative model.

The deliberative model, Young submits, entails participants in a democratic process, making and presenting proposals geared towards solving problems, with

participants trying to persuade others of the reasonableness of their arguments or proposals for the acceptance of such proposals. The democratic process involves an atmosphere for solving problems characterized by contestation, dialogue, testing and challenging of ideas and opinions. For the deliberative model, participants do not arrive at decisions by choosing the preferences with the “greatest numerical support”. Rather, decisions made by the collective are based on the selection of proposals that are considered to be the most reasonable (p.22-3).

Deliberative democracy according to Young covers ideals of *inclusion*, *political equality*, *reasonableness*, and *publicity* (p.17, 23). *Inclusion* is to involve all persons affected by decisions made in the ‘decision-making’ process, i.e., including those to whom “decisions and policies significantly condition” their options for action. *Political equality* means that those affected by the decisions reached should be “nominally included” on equal terms during ‘decision-making’ process. They should have ‘equal opportunity’ in expressing their views and ideas. This can be achieved by a third condition of equality: freedom from domination. This is in the sense that every participant in the ‘decision making process’ is free to present views or proposals; nobody can compel another to accept his or her own proposals (p.23).

Reasonableness, according to Young, refers to the willingness to want to engage in discussion of views, opinions, and proposals, and to select those proposals that are supported by the best reasons. This is in the sense that participants enter discussion in order to solve problems, and reach agreement on decisions for solving such problems. Participants are said to be reasonable when they are willing “to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate”. In other

words, participants are reasonable when they have open minds to the contestation of their proposals by others and are willing to listen to the reasons provided for such contestations, making their views to be subjected to revision, all in the goal of solving problems (p.24-5). Thus Young writes, “To be reasonable is to be willing to change our opinions or preferences because others persuade us that our initial opinions or preferences, as they are relevant to the collective problems under discussion, are incorrect or inappropriate” (p.25). *Publicity* means that “the conditions of inclusion, equality, and reasonableness, finally entail that the interaction among participants in a democratic decision-making process forms a public in which people hold one another accountable”(p.25). Young submits that the deliberative model is more adequate for democratic theory and practice because it protects the interests of individuals in politics and policy making within the orientation of inclusive equality. In addition, the model promotes cooperation among participants, and also makes for solution of collective problems, thereby promoting justice (p.26). Everyone participates in the discussion of proposals during the decision-making process that is public-oriented, thereby facilitating interaction and cooperation among citizens.

Since attaining a just democracy through an equal and inclusive decision-making process is the thesis statement of Young’s book, understanding the meaning of justice, for her, is very crucial. Young identifies *self-development* and *self-determination* as ideal values of social justice. These, she takes as assumptions. The value of “self-development” refers to the capability of individuals to learn, develop, and use skills provided or made available by just social institutions, to further develop themselves in various aspects of life. The societal institutions are to create conditions

for the realization of the self-development of citizens in the “distribution of resources and positions”. This would make them better persons in society, as they would be able to express themselves on social life issues in appropriate discursive contexts (p.31-2). A just institution would provide the necessary condition for its citizens to develop these skills and also create an environment for them to express their views on social life.

“Self-determination” refers to being free and able to participate in decisions that concern or affect or determine one’s action. This speaks of freedom from domination, i.e., the meaning of freedom lies in the absence of “relations of domination”. It is important however to note that there would still be some restriction on the way one leads one’s life or carries out actions by institutional conditions. This is why Young sees it as pertinent that citizens are involved in the making of institutional decisions (decisions affecting them), so that relationships that occur become reciprocal in nature: citizens participate in decision-making for making institutional regulations; institutional regulations apply to or bind citizens. In this way, citizens are involved in the making of ‘collective regulations’ that help prevent domination by another (p.32). Bringing these two values together, Young defines social justice as “the institutional conditions for promoting self-development and self-determination of a society’s members” (p.33).

The model of deliberative democracy attempts to eliminate or flush out injustices that exist in democracies with structural inequalities such as exclusion or marginalization of the less privileged in society, and give meaning and a place to equal inclusion of all citizens in the decision-making process through communication

(p.34-6). However, Young points out that this model, which places great emphasis on inclusion, may have exclusionary tendencies that may stand in the way while aiding democracies with structural inequalities get rid of injustice. To this end, Young identifies limitations on some interpretations of the deliberative model. These include *privileging argument* and *privileging unity* (p.36-7).

Young submits that some formulations of deliberative democracy tend to privilege argument (argument being “the construction of an orderly chain of reasoning from premises to conclusion” (p.37)) more than other forms of (political) communication. Young writes that “given the heterogeneity of human life and the complexity of social structures and interaction, however, the effort to shape arguments according to shared premises within shared discursive frameworks’ sometimes excludes the expression of some needs, interests, and suffering of injustice” (p.37). When an argument concerning an issue is channeled within a particular context of meaning or understanding, such argument is said to be privileged more than other communicative modes, thereby silencing other needs. Not all forms of political communication take the form of argument; therefore, recognizing argument as the only important communicative mode causes other forms of expression to be excluded in ‘deliberation’.

Young’s submission of the limitation of deliberative democracy as regards privileging unity borders on the non-receptiveness of the model to difference. Young submits that deliberative democratic theorists, as regards public discussions, concern themselves with the “common good” discourse. They however have two approaches to the discourse: one, having a commonness of interests on policies at the start point

of discussion; two, consensus on principles selected as a goal to be reached, and not that which is ultimately in place at the beginning of deliberation. Both interpretations give place to the assumption of commonness, thus emphasizing unity among members (p.40).

The problem with deliberative democracy's assumption of common understanding at the commencement of deliberation is that in multicultural societies, differential interests obtain and therefore, we cannot confidently accept the assumption that all share the same understanding on issues. To give essence to the assumption of common interests in pluralist societies (in a way) therefore would be to exclude other different interests. This contradicts and prevents the materialization of the function of "openness to difference" that the deliberative model is supposed to perform (p.41). The idea of a common good therefore, here, is a means of exclusion, especially if participants with interests other than the dominantly shared one are the less privileged in society. This simply means that their views and interests may not be reckoned with. This is injustice (p.43).

Young challenges the act of viewing "reasonable open public debate" as that which is 'orderly', 'polite', 'dispassionate', and that which runs smoothly in a calm manner. She calls "the normal condition of democratic debate a process of *struggle*", which should take place especially in societies with social group differences and societies with injustices. This is because the differences already indicate divisions in interests and view points of participants in democratic debates, and this in turn produce struggles in the sense that there arise criticisms and oppositions of views in the process of deliberation. The less advantaged in society are said to often have to

struggle to be heard in order to effect changes in the societal conditions that create the injustice they presently suffer; they have to “struggle for greater justice under conditions of inequality” (p.49-50). However, this is not to view the deliberation process as a hard-core enemy opposition-like process. Young sees ‘struggle’ as “a process of communicative engagement of citizens with one another” (p.50). For her, the process of deliberation (when citizens voice out their opinions and interests, which are debated upon, weighed and reasoned out, and contested) is a *struggle*. This is deliberation through communication. Young notes that having “disorderly, disruptive, annoying, or distracting means of communication” in debates over issues also play a positive role by attracting others to join in the debate, thus facilitating inclusion. She therefore endorses the ‘agonistic’ model of democracy (p.49-50).

Young presents the model of deliberative democracy as a process characterized by inclusive political communication which takes place between citizens and public officials. This involves equal inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of decisions made. Young argues that democracies often violate “the norm of inclusion”. She identifies two forms of exclusion that can result from “political discussion and decision-making”: *external* and *internal* exclusions (p.52).

External exclusions are more obvious forms of exclusion than internal exclusions; they are more noticeable than internal exclusions. External exclusions occur when some individuals or groups are intentionally not involved debates over issues that concern them or when some individuals dominate deliberation process thus excluding some others (p.52). Here, some citizens are kept outside the debate

process from which decisions are determined. The most prevalent type of external exclusion involves the exercise of political domination over the less privileged (who lack the power or resources to influence decisions), by recognized influential powerful economic and social actors in society. Young cites the buying of media time by economically well-situated citizens to control public discussion of an issue, thus excluding others from participation, as an example of external exclusion (p.54).

Internal exclusions occur when people “lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making” (p.55). This is to say that people may still experience exclusion despite their being nominally and formally included in discussion and decision-making process, in the sense that their views and ideas may still not be reckoned with or treated as important to consider and discuss. They may take part in debates and in the ‘decision-making process’ but their views are not counted as important, and may be regarded as ‘silly’ especially when such views are not in line with the dominant views regarding issues at hand. Therefore their participation does not count; neither does it carry any weight in decision-making. For example, people may experience internal exclusion when their views are regarded as out of order and thereby dismissed. These people are involved in debates and decision-making, however, they lack the effective opportunity to influence others on their views.

Young is particularly concerned about those unnoticed injustices in society: internal forms of exclusion. She therefore theorizes three modes of political communication which would make for more inclusion and justice in democracies. These are: *greeting*, also known as public acknowledgement, *rhetoric*, and *narrative*.

Rhetoric, greeting, and narrative are modes of communication (that constitute everyday interaction) Young identifies as complementary to argument (which is also a mode of communication) and not replacements for argument (p.56-7). Young demonstrates the place of these three modes of communication in political discussion and decision-making. Greeting in this context, refers to a situation of political communication whereby participants explicitly acknowledge one another. It is the means by which participants get their views, claims, and arguments acknowledged and not ignored by other participants through e.g., hugs, handshakes, and 'literal greeting' like 'hello' (p.57). Young makes use of Emmanuel Levinas' approach to explain the role of greeting in communication. Levinas identifies two aspects of communication: one is a process of "subject-to-subject-recognition"; the other is an aspect of "expressing content between the subjects". He calls the first aspect 'the Saying', and the second aspect, 'the Said'. In 'the Saying', participants recognize that discussion transpires among them, and therefore, recognize one another as persons involved in discussion. This is the stage whereby an opening is created for participants to engage in communication. At 'the Said' stage, participants acknowledge one another's greetings, i.e., thoughts on issues; this constitutes the content of communication (p.58).

This can be extended to communication in the political realm. Greeting is a process whereby participants open up and acknowledge those involved in discussion. This phase of communication involves the process of establishing and maintaining 'bonds of trust' sufficient enough to facilitate discussion and the acknowledgment of participants in the discussion. The bond of trust established already attracts members

to listen and then eventually acknowledges the content of the discourse (p.58-9). Thus Young writes that “the political functions of such moments of greeting are to assert discursive equality and establish or re-establish the trust necessary for discussion to proceed in good faith” (p.60). The importance of gesture in greetings (in communication) process lies in its ability to make us recognize others as participants in discussion. Therefore, the political function of greeting in regard to the deliberative democratic model is that through communicative gestures, it facilitates acknowledgement and recognition of parties in discussion on issues, or interests, thus, getting everyone included.

Rhetorical speeches are often disregarded and thought of as unworthy of our attention because it is often argued that they appeal to our emotions and imaginations, and not to our rational minds. It is argued that rhetoric is often used to appeal to emotions, channeled in a way to the advantage of the user in appealing to the conscience of its audience thus having manipulative tendencies. However, Young submits that there is ‘a place’ for rhetoric in political communication in regard to deliberative democracy. This is because, for her, rhetoric constitutes “an aspect of all discourse”; and if part of all discourse, then, a part of political discourse. Moreover, rhetoric makes positive contributions to democracy. Therefore, while argumentation (following after rationality) is placed in high esteem in political communication in the deliberative democratic model, rhetoric should not be discarded, as it is a constituent of political discourse (p.63-4).

Rhetoric itself refers to the way a message or content of a discourse is said. The way the message is conveyed may add color to the message itself. As Young

submits, “rhetoric includes at least the following aspects of communication, which overlap and can occur together”: the *emotional tone of discourse* (all discourse carry some form of emotional tone); *figures of speech* e.g., simile, metaphor, etc; *visual media, signs, symbols*, etc; and finally, the act of directing these aspects of rhetoric communication to the audience one is appealing to, and also, making one’s claim to be in line with the assumptions unique to that particular audience (p.64-5).

Rhetoric, which can be accompanied by argument in political communication, serves positive functions. *One*, it helps in getting an issue gain entry into the list of items or points to be discussed or addressed. The use of “emotionally charged language” may move deliberators to take the issue seriously and give it a fast hearing. *Two*, rhetoric helps with the presentation of claims in appropriate manner that is in line with the context of discussion for the ‘particular public’ it is being addressed to (p.66-8).

Narrative is another form of communication other than argument that can be used in political discourse in situations where there is lack of ‘shared understanding’ on issues. “Political narrative differs from other forms of narrative by its intent and its audience context” (p.72). The purpose of engaging in political narrative is not to merely tell stories but to ‘make a point’ to others concerning an issue in political discussion. Through narratives, participants can demonstrate or make known to others the injustices they suffer in society. Those who lack the terms of expressing a claim of injustice can make use of narratives to drive home their point about the wrong they are suffering; they can tell stories that reflect or relate their oppression to the audience

(p.71-2). Here, a form of narrative would be a relation of an experience of the wrong one is suffering.

Young, in concluding her postulation on the three modes of political communication of the deliberative model, submits that assertions, argument, reason, *greeting*, *rhetoric*, and *narrative* are all modes of communication that contribute to political discussion that aims for the resolution of ‘collective problems’ in a just manner in an inclusive deliberative democracy (p.77). Young is however quick to add that there may be dangers of ‘manipulation’ and deceit in the use of rhetoric, greeting, and narrative in political communication. However, since criticism stands as the “only remedy for false or invalid arguments”, listeners to these communicative modes (rhetoric, narrative, and greeting) should be on guard, and be at alert to detect such manipulation in communication (p.79).

Rawls, Mouffe, and Young – Areas of Convergence and Divergence

The three theorists discussed, Rawls, Mouffe, and Young, all have one ultimate goal in common: achieving a just democracy, however different their approaches may be. I however wish to draw out the points of convergence and divergence of these theorists. Young endorses Mouffe’s proposal of agonistic model of democratic process. Even though an advocate of deliberative democracy (a model characterized by consensus achievement), Young recognizes that democracy cannot exist without adversary because in the process of deliberation, there exists different views and interests, and consensus reached on the selected view cannot be the same for all. Moreover, contestations would make for more inclusion. It would especially

create an avenue for the less privileged's voice (who are more likely to lack the opportunity in taking part in the decision-making process), to be heard. The latter are likely to be more involved in "struggle", as they have no other choice than to engage in such struggle if they are to be heard, and get relieved of the injustice they suffer in society. Therefore, Young concurs with Mouffe on the danger of eliminating antagonisms in political democratic discourse, which especially can be the exclusion of the voice of the less-advantaged. This is why she tries to bridge the gap with her postulation of modes of political communication which would make room for more inclusion.

Rawls and Mouffe differ in their approach on democratic theorizing on the issue of consensus. Rawls understands that with the existence of pluralism, there is bound to be different irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines but he however asserts that consensus is still reachable on principles of justice, in that each comprehensive doctrine supports these principles from its point of view on reasonable grounds. Mouffe on the other hand argues vehemently against this stand. She asserts that difference, which allows for contestations and adversaries, ought to prevail in order to achieve just democracies. To avoid adversaries is to obviate the role of the political in democratic thought.

Rawls and Young are both advocates of the deliberative model of democracy with the view of achieving a rational consensus on political issues from the deliberation process. For Rawls, deliberation and the achievement of consensus can be found in his idea of the "original position" characterized by the "veil of ignorance" (where parties reason among themselves on fair terms, and decide on the principles of

justice that would be binding on all) and “public reason”, which makes for the selection of just principles with best supporting reasons. For Young, deliberation, which creates democratic spaces for more inclusion, can be found in her proposition of the three modes of communication: greeting, rhetoric, and narrative. In other words, views, ideas, contestations, revisions, evaluations, etc, are all part of deliberation, done through communication.

It would seem to me that Young is situated at the centre of an imaginary line that has its start-off point at one end where Mouffe’s direct or radical democratic approach is located, and at the other end is Rawls’ liberal deliberative democratic approach. Young’s theory tries to get the scope of polity adjusted to what obtains in society, i.e., extending the normative to the practicalities of the social world. She engages the theoretical or the ideal with the pragmatic in the sense that she states what a just democracy ought to be: a democracy with ideals of inclusion, political equality, reasonableness, and publicity. Then she recognizes that no democracy of today functions in the capacity of those ideals reiterated above because injustices in terms of structural inequalities (especially with its effect on the exclusion of the less privileged) still obtain in our democracies. She then moves on to find a way of bridging the gap between democracy and justice through her postulation of the deliberative model with emphasis on inclusive communication, which would make for better just democracies.

Rawls argues for representation in his theory by emphasizing the importance of the original position in the selection of the principles of justice. Mouffe identifies the danger in doing this as the exclusion of other political views, thus eliminating the

essence of democracy, which is 'the political'. On this point, Rawls would respond to Mouffe by arguing that there is a place for consensus in just democracies. Without it, we may not be able to make quality decisions which would be binding on all because of dissent, and also, achieve just democracies. This causes us to ponder on the question of the extent to which all citizens could participate in political discourse and in the selection of principles of justice, and also in making quality decisions if we were to go only by direct democracy. This would be an illusion, far from reality both in theory and in practice.

I conclude that democratic perfection is yet to be realized. The resort to direct democracy is not totally feasible in pluralist societies (e.g., Canada). Deliberative democracy on the other hand has its limitations surprisingly in its exclusionary tendencies, as identified by Young. An attempt to adopt a more combined form of democracy could even pose more problematic, as we would have to deal more with the applicability of its tenets, thereby exacerbating the matter. We may therefore want to leave room for more suggestions and contestations on the meaning of democracy and justice. It would be that these new drop-ins could serve as eye-openers and give insights into the development of the meaning of more just democracies. Until then, we leave our ears to attend these new suggestions.

The purpose of this chapter has been to understand the meaning of liberal democracy. From what has been discussed, overall, it is seen that liberal deliberative democracies uphold the values of liberty and equality, respect individual human rights, seek to create avenues for the inclusion of all citizens in political decision-

making, and also to protect the interests of citizens by selecting principles that are supported by the best reasons (the principles of justice).

Having discussed the meaning of liberal deliberative democracy, I now move on to the next chapter where I try to gain a theoretical understanding of how homelessness is able to exist in liberal deliberative democracies. If the latter emphasize liberty and equality but still have structural inequalities inherent in them, then, there should be some explanation for the existence of such inequalities. In the following chapter, I engage in a theoretical analysis of how homelessness, as a form of inequality, is made possible in liberal deliberative democracies. This I undertake with the use of Rawls's principles of justice with special attention to his second principle which consists of "the principle of fair equality of opportunity" and "the difference principle".

CHAPTER THREE

RAWLS MEETS THE HOMELESS

In this chapter, I theorize the homeless using and explicating Rawls's principles of justice to know how homelessness is made possible in liberal deliberative democracies. I also answer the following question: "Should homelessness be justifiable in liberal democracies?" I find this question very relevant especially to our world of today in which homelessness explicitly exists, and occurs at an escalating rate. Rawls's principles of justice are reiterated below:

"each person has the same infeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all"; and "social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society" (Rawls, 2001: p.42-43).

Influencing Rawls's difference principle is the idea that 'justice as fairness' recognizes that certain inequalities are produced in the life prospects of individuals due to some factors. Rawls calls these factors "contingencies". He identifies three kinds of contingencies that influence the life prospects of citizens. They are as follow (exactly as he lists them):

- (a) their social class of origin: the class into which they are born and develop before the age of reason;
- (b) their native endowments (as opposed to their realized endowments); and their opportunities to develop these endowments as affected by their social class of origin;

- (c) their good or ill fortune, or good or bad luck, over the course of life (how they are affected by illness and accident; and, say, by periods of involuntary unemployment and regional economic decline) (2001: p.55).

For Rawls, the life chances, in terms of status and achievement of citizens in society can be influenced and determined by these identified three factors. This is to say that people's abilities and talents, ambitions and realized goals, influence or affect their (or can produce differences in) social statuses or positions and achievement in society. Therefore, such eventualities (the three contingencies) play a role in the inequalities experienced by citizens in society.

Rawls is saying here that inequalities can be created through the identified three contingencies. Everyone cannot have the same societal economic and social positioning considering these three factors. There would always be some people placed at a more advantageous position or level in terms of the social and the economic and there would be some placed at lower levels, who are less advantaged. However, Rawls's difference principle indicates that once these inequalities are regulated or arranged in such a way that they are to the benefit (i.e. to the betterment) of the 'least advantaged' in society, then they are permissible. The function of the basic structure would then be to regulate these social and economic advantages for the benefit of all in society for justice to prevail.

Rawls produces reasons for the necessity to regulate 'economic and social inequalities'. He submits that it is not fair for some or many in society (while there are no special eventualities) to have their needs (including the non-pressing ones) met while the urgent needs of others or even a few in the same society remain unmet. Also, the inequalities need regulation in order to avoid the domination of some over

others in society. When some well educated citizens with high economic status have access to power, they may dominate the rest due to the positions they hold in society. This entails a combination of social and economic inequality producing 'political inequality'. Their control "over the machinery of state" may further reinforce their domination in society (Rawls, 2001: p.130-1). Rawls however submits that it is necessary to have inequalities in existence in liberal deliberative democracies. For him, a well-ordered society (i.e., a liberal or decent society) needs to rely on some form of inequality in order for it to be "effectively organized" and to function well. Therefore deciding on those inequalities to be allowed and those which shouldn't be in such society is what we need to address (2001: p.55). This stand reflects in his difference principle, as he recognizes the existence of social and economic inequalities in liberal deliberative democracies.

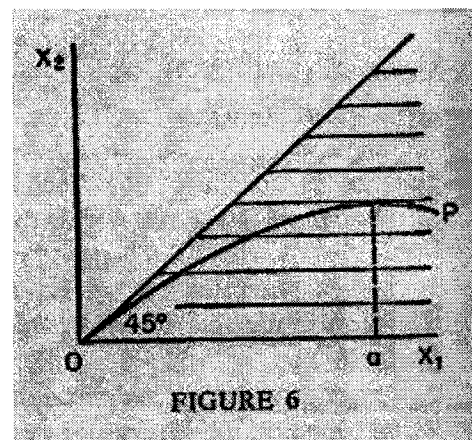
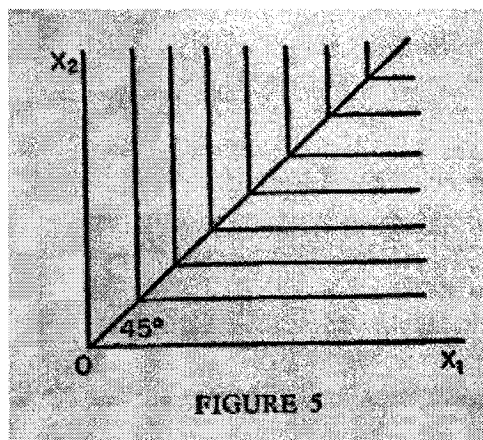
The difference principle implies that structural inequalities are inevitable. However, such inequalities should be arranged, or should obtain in such a way that they exist to the advantage of everyone in society. Opportunities or access to "positions of authority", social and economic positions, should be free for everyone, anyone, to pursue or compete for (Rawls, 1971: p.61).

Here, Rawls is pointing out that the inequalities being mentioned are the "differences in citizens' (reasonable) expectations of primary goods over a complete life". Therefore, in order to realize a just system of distribution, there is the need to identify "the best scheme of cooperation" among citizens in which the inequalities that exist in wealth and income can be organized and distributed to the best advantage of the least well-off. In other words, the scheme of cooperation, out of different

possible schemes, which yields the greatest benefit for the least fortunate, is selected as the best scheme of cooperation (Rawls, 2001: p 59-60). I interpret this to mean that Rawls strongly believes and argues that structural inequality can exist and be healthy for liberal deliberative democracies as long as the “principle of fair equal opportunity” is in place and everyone benefits from such inequalities, taking into consideration. This situation, to him, is just and fair. Rawls’ theorizing on just democracies therefore speaks of equality with a difference (i.e., difference in outcomes or expectations of persons in different social stations or positions), having inequality as a positive significant constitutive element in the conception of justice.

Rawls (1971) elucidates his difference principle by explaining how inequality should benefit the least well-off in society by the use of economic analysis. Here, indifference curves are used to illustrate what equal just distribution of expectations or outcomes should be. This distribution is viewed to be equal and just because parties (the most well-off and the ‘least-advantaged’) gain from realized expectations. Also, both parties work within a scheme that makes for improvement in the expectations of the least well-off in society. The first illustration below (figure 5) is at its simplest form; it is on a two-individual level basis: the most well-off representative individual and the ‘least advantaged representative’. In the figure 5, we have indifference curves which are vertical and horizontal straight lines that meet at intersections that divide the 90° angle into 45° each on either side. X1 represents “the most favored representative man” at the basic structure; X2 represents the ‘least advantaged’ representative. An increase on the horizontal lines produces also an increase on the vertical lines. This is to say that an increase in the expectation of the

best-off individual will cause there to be an increase in the (prospects) expectation or outcome of the least well-off. In other words, the increase realized, the marginal expectation of the representative of the most favored in the basic structure, gives a corresponding marginal benefit to the least favored, so that as one gains, the other party too gains, causing there to be an improvement in the situation of both parties. This is why this system of distribution is viewed as equal and just regardless of the inequalities inherent in it. The one must gain from the other's benefit (p.76).

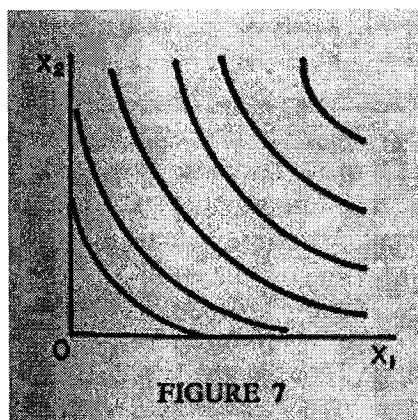


Source: Rawls (1971), A Theory of Justice, p.76

In the second diagram (figure 6), the OP curve represents the contribution of X_1 's (the most advantaged) expectation to the expectation of X_2 (the least well-off). It signifies that everybody, whether the best-off or the 'least advantaged', benefits from the scheme of cooperation spelled out or determined by the basic structure. The origin is at point O which denotes that "all social primary goods are distributed equally". The OP curve (which is the contribution curve) "is always below the 45° line" because X_1 is the most –favored, and therefore better placed than X_2 (since it contributes to the expectation of X_2); X_2 benefits from X_1 . For this reason, parts of

the indifference curves of concern to us consist of the area below the 45° line (the right part - the portion with lines). “The difference principle is perfectly satisfied only when the OP curve is just tangent to the highest indifference curve that it touches”. This point is marked ‘a’ in Figure 6. Here, the expectations of the least fortunate are perfectly maximized (Rawls, 1971: p.76-7).

Rawls submits that a “less egalitarian” view than the difference principle is that which has indifference lines lying convex to the point of origin (point O) (see figure 7). Here, the shape the curves take signifies that further benefits from the contribution of the expectation of a party to the expectation of the other becomes of less value to the latter (i.e., the other receiving the contribution) from a social stand point (1971: p.77).



Source: Rawls (1971), A Theory of Justice, p.77

Rawls views this as less egalitarian because he wants inequalities to be to the most advantage of the least well-off such that contributions in expectations are valuable to persons; this requires the best-off and the least advantaged having the best scheme of cooperation, as defined by the basic structure. Figure 7 indicates that no matter the

increase or gain in expectation experienced by either the rich or the poor, benefits become less valuable. This means that no matter the (increase in) outcome or expectation of the most well-off, the least advantaged still derives the same value from the benefits, at any point on the curves. For Rawls, this is not the best situation for the best 'scheme of cooperation' that would make for equal just distribution of primary goods, therefore it is less egalitarian. For Rawls, the best scheme of cooperation should be that which situates inequalities at the best advantage of the least well-off, where each marginal expectation contributed is of value to everyone, in which the benefit makes a difference for everyone, especially the least well-off. Therefore, the situation in Figure 6 still remains the best arrangement (a perfectly just scheme) for just distribution of primary goods, where the difference principle is perfectly satisfied.

To further illustrate the difference principle, Rawls makes use of income distribution among social classes, in which we have income groups whose representative individuals reflect the expectations of such income-class groups [note that primary goods or social goods (i.e., rights and liberties, opportunities, powers, income and wealth, social bases of self-respect) are the basis of expectations]. Entrepreneurs in a liberal deliberative democratic regime with the capitalist economic system in place may have better prospects than the class of unskilled laborers. It follows that inequality in these prospects therefore can only be permissible if the "difference in expectation" is to the advantage of the "representative unskilled worker". With the principle of fair equality of opportunities with open positions and principle of liberty in place, entrepreneurs are allowed greater opportunities, and with

these opportunities, they are able to engage in activities that lead to the betterment of the prospects or welfare of the laboring class. It is assumed that the outcomes which result from these activities benefit not only the 'least-advantaged', but also the whole system (Rawls, 1971: p.78). To this end, Rawls notes that the contributions of the more favored are not just confined as benefit to the least favored, rather these contribution are widespread over the society so that those found or who fall in between the most well-off and the 'least advantaged' also benefit from such contributions (1971: p.82). Even if other injustices inherent in some democracies were to be wiped out, the "initial inequality" already created in individuals' life prospects (by the contingencies) still prevails. This (for Rawls) calls for the necessity to find a means of justifying this difference in individuals' expectations ('life prospects') in liberal deliberative democracies, hence, the importance of the difference principle. The difference principle justifies inequalities in the life prospects of citizens when "difference in expectation" favors the least well-off in society (p.78).

From the fore-going discussion on Rawls' difference principle, it can be seen that Rawls seeks to justify structural inequalities, some of which might have been created by contingencies in life prospects of people. His assertion that inequalities (or difference in expectations) be regulated or arranged to the benefit of the least-advantaged speaks of permissiveness and justification of such inequalities. For Rawls, inequalities being to the greatest advantage of the least well-off are in the sense that outcomes and expectations are effectively distributed.

A Rawlsian Approach to Homelessness

The homeless are generally regarded, as found and already discussed in the literature, as poor people. The homeless fit into Rawls' definition of the least advantaged. The latter according to Rawls are those who have equal basic rights and liberties but have the least income and wealth in society. Homeless people can be argued and viewed to fall into the category of the least-advantaged since they are usually regarded as poor people (or very poor, depending on the level or degree of poverty) who cannot afford decent housing, or even sometimes, proper feeding.

Homelessness itself speaks of *inequality* be it in power (political inequality), position or status (socio-political inequality), or income (economic inequality), etc. Here, homelessness is viewed as a form of inequality emanating from the workings of capitalism and the three contingencies informing or determining life prospects of people as identified by Rawls. It follows that if these contingencies can produce inequalities, then they are also capable of producing homelessness (as a form of inequality). Inequality found on the basis of individuals' expectation (e.g., income and wealth) is explicit; as the distinction between the least well-off and the more fortunate is clear, at the least, in the affordability of decent housing.

Liberal deliberative democracy emphasizes individual rights and freedom for every citizen and promotes a capitalist-based society whereby individuals have freedom of property ownership. This speaks of the free market system characterized by competition inherent in liberal democracies. Prices of commodities, goods and services are determined by the market forces of demand and supply, thereby vesting the power to fix market prices in individuals. This system is competitive. The

homeless suffer from it because landlords fix cost of rents. It now depends “on who earns how much” in order to be tenants. Inaffordability of housing lies in the problem that results from or accompanies capitalism. Inequality is produced by the workings of free economy having in place, the motive of profit maximization by property owners or entrepreneurs. As Rawls identified earlier, entrepreneurs for example, in this case, would be placed better off than unskilled workers in a capitalist system. Such inequality created here may manifest as homelessness (i.e. inequality as a result of structure of the economy).

The second principle recognizes the inequalities produced in the competitive market system and allows such inequalities to exist. It further justifies such inequalities if outcomes of the well advantaged are to the benefit of the least well-off. In the light of the foregoing, Rawls would argue that homelessness, as a form of inequality, is justifiable in modern democracies if expectations of the better off benefit the homeless in society. This argument can be summed up in this manner: Rawls’s theory permits inequality in liberal deliberative democracies as long as they are to the benefit of the least favored. Homelessness therefore, Rawls would argue, is justifiable if the homeless benefit from the wealth of the society. In this way, homelessness is made possible in liberal democracies - through the very principles of justice with capitalism in place and the permissiveness of homelessness itself (which can also lead to the reinforcement of the problem).

Homelessness is justifiable and permissible in a liberal deliberative democracy so far as the expectations of the more fortunate benefit the homeless, and such benefits are acceptable to the latter. Rawls would argue that the existence of the

homeless in modern democracies characterized by property-ownership does not call for our judging such systems to be unjust. Instead, if the materials, benefits, or expectations of the labor of the best-off are channeled to the advantage of the least fortunate, then, such systems can be argued to be just, because they realize just distribution of primary goods.

I find this argument relevant to what obtains in liberal democratic societies of today. In the case of Canada, I note that the homeless benefit from the welfare system. The homeless are among many others who benefit from the welfare plan in Québec, Canada. Part of the money for welfare comes from revenue realized from taxation. Every worker in Québec pays both the Federal income tax and Québec income tax. It follows therefore that the financial assistance the homeless on welfare receive also comes from the taxes other citizens (including the best-off) pay. This is to say that the more fortunate are contributing to the welfare of the least advantaged. Therefore, here, just distribution of goods is realized through taxation. In other words, through financial assistance rendered to the homeless, just distribution of primary goods (income and wealth in this case) is in play; the least advantaged are benefiting from the contribution of the more fortunate.

Rawls' difference principle is also applicable to the benefit gained by the homeless from the health care system. Every citizen, including the homeless, benefit from the health care system, which is maintained partly from the revenue realized from taxation. Rawls, in his theory, submits that not only the least advantaged benefit from the contribution of the more fortunate, but everyone. This includes those who fall in-between the most well-off and the least advantaged. In other words, the whole

system benefits from such contribution, even the more favored. In Canada, health care is free for every citizen. The health care system is however each province's responsibility. The province gets health care allocation from the federal government. Part of this allocation also results from the revenue the federal government gets from taxation. Therefore, when people get free health services, it can be argued that they are benefiting from their own contribution. In this way, everybody benefits from his or her own contribution and also, from that of the more fortunate, since Canada operates the progressive taxation system: the higher the income, the higher the taxes paid. All citizens benefit from the health care system; whether the rich, average income earners or low income earners; all benefit from it, including the homeless.

Another way of explaining how the homeless benefit from the most advantaged is through the input or contribution of families, local business men, private firms, religious bodies/groups, philanthropic organizations, and wealthy entrepreneurs to the homeless' wellbeing. Some groups take time out at different periods in the year to render voluntary service to the homeless. They participate in serving the homeless breakfast or supper at shelters. In this case, the homeless can be said to be benefiting from the more advantaged, in terms of the service the latter renders to them, and also in terms of the acknowledgement and respect the more advantaged show them. By creating time for service to the homeless, these groups pass the message that they respect and also acknowledge the homeless as fellow citizens with equal basic rights and liberties in society. Here, Rawls would see the homeless as benefiting from the outcome of the primary good of social bases of self-respect, coming from the more advantaged to the homeless.

In addition to the service identified above, private firms, philanthropic groups, religious groups, and wealthy individuals give donations and monetary rewards to homeless shelters. Some sponsor meals that homeless people have in these shelters. For example, Jean Coutu pays for supper for every homeless person at the Old Brewery Mission (OBM) every Sunday. Sunday supper there is always special. Other groups too donate from time to time. By this gesture, the homeless are benefiting from the expectation (primary goods: in this case, income and wealth) of the more fortunate thus facilitating (as Rawls would argue) a just system of distribution of primary goods.

In a nutshell, what I have done so far has been to apply Rawls's justice as fairness to the case of the homeless in relation to justice in liberal democracies. It was to answer my question of knowing how homelessness is able to exist in liberal deliberative democratic societies. It was also to discuss if homelessness should be justifiable in these democratic societies. I have tried to explain that Rawls would concur with the stand that homelessness be permissible and therefore justified in a liberal democratic society. This, he would maintain, by arguing that the problem of homelessness exists in society due to the free market system in place and the workings of certain contingencies that inform its existence. However, as long as the homeless benefit from the expectations or outcomes of the most advantaged in society, then homelessness is permissible and justifiable. However, if the most well-off's expectations do not contribute to the welfare of the homeless, then, for homelessness to exist in such a regime speaks of injustice, as this is an indication of unjust distribution of social goods in such a democratic society.

Rawls's theory, I would say, is a unique one. His postulation especially on "Justice as Fairness" has raised discourse on the meaning of true and just democracy to another and higher level. I wish to identify two areas where I think it is worth giving Rawls credit on his principles of justice, which for him defines liberal deliberative democracy. The first point lies in his prioritizing the first principle of justice over the other one; the second point borders on his recognition of the existence of inequalities in liberal democracies.

Rawls' prioritization of the first principle over the second shows that he recognizes and understands the necessity for all citizens to have the same rights and liberties, as documented and guaranteed in the constitution of such democratic societies. Here, Rawls understands that no iota of inequality should set in as regards peoples' claim to such rights and liberties. Like other liberals, for Rawls, it is and remains fundamental for all citizens to have equal basic rights and liberties.

The other point on the acknowledgement of Rawls' theory concerns not only his identification of the existence of inequalities in liberal deliberative democracies, but also presenting the reason for such inequalities coming into play. Rawls's theory suggests three contingencies that produce inequalities in citizens' life prospects. It also notes the inevitability of inequalities being produced in liberal deliberative democracies as a result of the free market system.

Indeed, the above gives credit to Rawls's theorizing. However, there is an aspect of his theory that I consider to be in need of remodification to make for better theorizing (for better ways of achieving just democracies). My drawing attention to

this aspect is not to tear down Rawls' theory; care must be taken not to denigrate his theorizing, as I recognize its good aspects, which are relevant and beneficial to society in both theory and practice. Rather, my critique of his theory is for the purpose of improvement. This aspect, as I view it, calls for re-visitation, discussion, and remodification for better theorizing and applicability. It concerns Rawls' permissiveness and therefore, justification of inequalities in liberal deliberative democracies.

I argue that the permissiveness and justification of inequalities in liberal democracies can create an *indifference attitude* in citizens to view societal inequalities as "normal", and even needful (as Rawls indicates in his theory) for a smooth running and organized society, thus reinforcing such inequalities. It follows that homelessness too may start to be regarded as a normal thing in society, to the extent that it is no longer treated as a social problem, thus making members of society become indifferent to the problem. This attitude will cause homelessness not to be treated any longer as a societal problem that needs urgent and adequate attention. The problem then becomes more reinforced.

Still on the issue of justifying homelessness in liberal democracies, my second thought is that the difference principle makes for, or creates a situation whereby the best-off gets more well-off; while the least advantaged consequently continues to be on the same level of being less fortunate. In simple terms, this means that the rich becomes richer while the poor remains poor or becomes poorer. I make this point because in Rawls' theory, the higher expectations of the better situated members of society are just; so also are their greater prospects instituted and secured by the social

order if these expectations work within a scheme that contributes positively to the situation of the least favored. Therefore as long as their expectations benefit the least advantaged, their prospects are allowed to keep increasing. Through reinvestment, in a free market system characterized by profit maximization, the most well-off's prospects therefore can continue to increase as long as their contributions benefit the least favored. In this way, the rich get richer.

The homeless on the other hand benefit from the expectations of the most well-off e.g. through welfare. However, in the real sense, it can be argued that they remain on the same level of poverty. In truth, they receive financial aid but this is not a long-lasting solution to their problem of being homeless. The financial aid that they receive more or less caters to their day-to-day survival. It does not bring about a permanent marked change that can make them stand independent, so as not to depend on outcomes or expectations of others for survival (e.g., they still do not have quality jobs that can make them to be able to fend for themselves and not rely on welfare). Following this line of reasoning, it would be that the rich become richer while the poor remain poor.

The difference principle may bring about this situation since it being perfectly satisfied indicates that the contribution or expectations of the most well-off are maximized by the least fortunate. This would further widen the gap between the rich and the poor, since the latter relies on the growth of the rich for their maintenance. This would not make for long-term improvement on the status of the least advantaged. The difference principle keeps the poor alive but at poverty level (they

just keep surviving; their burdens are just alleviated but not thoroughly dealt with) while the rich keep getting richer.

I conclude this chapter with the following discussion. I understand that inequalities may exist in our liberal democracies due to the way societies might be structured. I also understand that the three contingencies (as pointed out by Rawls) that inform citizens' life prospects may contribute to inequality in societies. However, I argue against the permissiveness of such inequality, and also the tendency to justify it. I argue that the existence of inequality does not call for its justification in society. Accepting and viewing inequality as that which is needed in society speaks of our being short-sighted in our perception of what a true just democracy should do. For me, a true and just democracy should look for ways of, and work towards achieving the elimination of inequalities. We need not set out and call some inequalities just and some unjust by the conditions of their existence or functionality. This, indeed, is a high task, I dispute in no regard, considering the contradiction in the meaning of liberal deliberative democracy itself (as explained in the previous chapter), and in addition, the problem of inequalities being created in such democracies with the capitalist system; for elements of free market and property ownership already establish inequalities in the socio-economic and even, the political statuses of citizens.

I therefore argue that homelessness should not be justified in liberal deliberative democracies. Justifying it would make it become more permissible. This is detrimental to the society as a whole, and the homeless themselves, considering its repercussion. Permitting and justifying homelessness may lead to increase in the

homeless population. This in turn may lead to the eventual reinterpretation of the meaning of homelessness such that it is no longer viewed as a social problem but considered as a thing or situation that is normal to exist in societies. This opinion is certainly not healthy for the society. The homeless on the other hand may indulge in their state of being homeless, and may not be motivated to strive to come off the situation. Moreover, they may prefer to remain in that state, as they are assured of financial assistance (welfare) from the government and provision of other free services needed for living. These are possible repercussions of taking and maintaining the stand on permitting and justifying inequalities in liberal democracies. To this end, I propose that it is not sufficient for all citizens to have equal basic or fundamental rights and liberties. It is also important for them to have (even in a competitive society) fair access to opportunities in such a way that everyone works towards minimizing, eliminating and preventing inequalities, thus avoiding the creation and sustenance of wide gaps in inequalities. It would seem to me that Rawls himself envisaged a negative response from the public on his postulation of the difference principle. In his concluding remarks on the 'justice as fairness' argument, he writes the following:

“We should recognize, though, that the difference principle is not often expressly endorsed; indeed, it may prove to have little support in our public political culture at the present time. Nevertheless, I believe it worth studying: it has many desirable features and formulates in a simple way an idea of reciprocity for a political conception of justice. I think that in some form this idea is essential to democratic equality once we view society as a fair system of social cooperation between free and equal citizens from one generation to the next (Rawls, 2001: p.132-133).

The fact that we recognize the existence of inequalities, and attempt ways of distributing societal resources justly does not mean that such inequalities need be justified or viewed as necessary for the smooth functioning of society. Moreover the least well-off, the homeless in this case, need to move from the state of benefiting solely from others to the state of fending for themselves. This should be our preoccupation, not just the distribution of income and wealth to support the homeless. A democracy free of injustice does not make for exclusion of elements in society; rather, it makes for the inclusion of all. Capitalism however, through its creation of inequalities excludes certain elements (most of the time, the least well-off) from the system (e.g., the exclusion of the homeless from housing, a basic right that every citizen ought to enjoy). This is injustice. Therefore inequalities or homelessness should not be justified.

In this chapter, I have engaged in a theoretical argument that homelessness is made possible in liberal deliberative democracies through the operation of the very principles of justice of such democracies. The three contingencies identified by Rawls also influence the creation of inequalities, and thus, homelessness. Liberal deliberative democracies assert that every citizen should have equal basic rights and liberties. With the free market system (characterized by profit maximization) in place at the basic structure, citizens have the right to private property. This in turn creates inequalities at the basic structure, a result of which is homelessness. It has also been argued that the tolerance or permissiveness of social and economic inequalities as far as they are used to the benefit of the least advantaged in liberal democracies as presented in Rawls's 'difference principle' makes for the justification of such

inequalities, and even their reinforcement thus making homelessness to be possible in such democracies. I have further argued that inequalities or homelessness should not be permissible or justified in liberal deliberative democracies as this can create an indifference attitude in citizens to view homelessness as ‘normal’ or ‘needful’ in society.

I note a relationship existing between normative theory and practice in this analysis. An aspect where this occurs is in how the logic in Rawls’s ‘difference principle’ is seen operating in the social world. This principle calls for “social and economic inequalities to be arranged” in such a way that they are to the benefit of the least well-off. This can be achieved through a just distribution of society’s resources. The homeless, being the least advantaged in this case, benefit from the expectation of the best-off through the financial assistance (part of which is derived from taxation) they get from the government through welfare. They also benefit from society’s resources through the contribution of wealthy individuals, religious groups, charity organizations, etc, to their wellbeing in society, e.g. the provision of supper for the homeless at the O.B.M. by Jean Coutu every Sunday. This way, Rawls’s principle of difference is seen to be manifesting in our social world. This is where the relationship between theory and practice lies in this analysis.

I now move to the next chapter where I address ways by which inequalities (especially social and economic) in liberal democracies manifest. This part identifies and discusses ways by which the homeless suffer certain injustices (inequalities) in society. Here, inequalities in homelessness are particularly discussed in terms of social exclusion. This part of my work therefore concerns gaining knowledge of ways

by which the homeless experience inequalities in society, particularly, ways by which they suffer exclusion from society. It answers the following questions: “Do the homeless feel excluded in society?” and “How are the homeless excluded from society?” It is hoped that these questions elicit information regarding the perception of the homeless themselves on exclusion from society. To this end, I have conducted a field research with the homeless in Montréal. However, before I go on to present the voice of the homeless on the issue of exclusion, I first discuss the concept (of social exclusion) for better understanding. This, I begin with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Somerville (1998) submits that the meaning of social exclusion lies in social isolation and segregation. Social exclusion is made up of different combination of economic, social, and political processes. Two dominant theoretical approaches in the literature that have been adopted for the explanation of the concept of social exclusion for sometime now are the *structural* and *cultural* perspectives. Somerville however, moves beyond the structural and cultural perspectives, and adopts “a holistic approach” to the understanding of social exclusion, which considers the labour market “alongside systems of education, welfare, citizenship rights and the ascription of gender roles”, in the production of social exclusion (p.4).

The structural perspective relates to exclusion from “the labor markets of advanced capitalist countries”. The argument here is that many citizens have been given over to the state of perpetual unemployment as a result of economic restructuring in these advanced-market driven societies. Participation in the labour market characterized by division of tasks is very crucial for inclusion in society. Non-participation therefore is exclusionary. This is to say that access to positions in the labour market is important in being included in a free market-driven society. Those who are not securely employed are those who stand at risk of losing their jobs. Taking note of people who fall into this category as Morris (1995) points out, social exclusion would mean being excluded altogether from the labour market by being unemployed or excluded from secure paid employment. This definition of social

exclusion in other words, takes into consideration as excluded from the labour market, two categories of people: the long-term unemployed or the temporary unemployed and those whose employment are not secure.

The cultural perspective relates to the citizenship approach to social exclusion. It is about the “social division of welfare”. This concerns the denial of social citizenship rights which may be as a result of “institutional discrimination” taking different forms. All citizens should have equal rights to opportunities in life irrespective of their class, ethnicity, sex, etc. If some members of the society do not have equal access to like others in society because of one or more of the identified factors above (e.g. class), then, they are being excluded or isolated from accessing such opportunities.

Exclusion can take place on different grounds: people may be legitimately excluded and some might not (Somerville, 1998: p.2). For example, a case where a citizen does not make use of the opportunities available to him due to laziness or lack of competence, or a person who commits illegal acts thus warranting the loss of certain social benefits or privileges as a citizen, with his citizenship rights curtailed, is said not to be legitimately excluded. However a citizen, who is ejected from his apartment due to sudden and genuine reason of inaffordability of rent as a result of conversion of apartment units to condominiums, can be argued to be legitimately excluded from housing rights. Somerville, in line with Corrigan’s (1978) view, therefore submits that “what lies at the heart of all processes of social exclusion, is a sense of social isolation and segregation from the formal structures and institutions of the economy, society, and the state” (p.2).

The discourse on social exclusion usually depicts a situation of two-group categories: the ‘underclass’ or the outside group (which is excluded) on one side, and the main social classes on the other side. Morris (1994, p.80) points out two ideological positions in relation to an underclass: the ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ schools of thought. The cultural ideological thought places explanation of social exclusion of the underclass in the attitudes and behavior of the disadvantaged themselves, e.g. welfare dependency and the lack of zeal to work (“decline in work ethic”). The structural ideological thought places explanation of exclusion of the underclass in structural inequalities, which are disadvantageous for particular groups in society e.g., lack of quality employment. Murray (1984) has argued that the dependency on welfare has contributed to decline in work ethic and nuclear family breakups. Morris however argues that the cultural theoretical explanation of social exclusion is ‘incorrect’ and ‘unscientific’ (going against Murray’s view). She avers that there has not been much proven evidence for the cultural oriented argument, that is, a link between family break-ups and decline in work ethic has not been adequately established, hence her argument against proposals of some writers (e.g. Wilson, 1987) on the integration of both structural and cultural perspectives in addressing social exclusion. For Morris, the ‘labour market’ and the ‘state’ stand as the main structural factors informing social exclusion.

Somerville (1998) submits how housing relates to social exclusion. He submits that “social exclusion through housing happens if the effect of housing processes is to deny certain social groups control over their daily lives or to impair enjoyment of wider citizenship rights” (p.8). Social exclusion through housing can

manifest in different ways at both 'production' and 'distribution' levels e.g., organizing production of housing in such a way that shortage of housing is realized; the form in which houses are built; having low and poor housing; escalation of housing costs to the extent that certain households can no longer cope with or afford the cost (escalation of rents can be very excluding for households with lower incomes). Some parts of the population are affected by these conditions.

Somerville (1998) provides 'nimbyism' as a phenomenal example of how people or a group of people can be socially excluded from housing at the local level distribution of housing. Powerful and influential residents may make effort in altering plans for building houses for lower income households in their areas; their reason may probably be to maintain the cozy and sophisticated distinct look of their areas. This action has a consequence of reinforcing housing shortage in the areas. Here, the lower income households are being "socially segregated" and "isolated" from housing, therefore they suffer social exclusion through housing.

This 'nimbyism' syndrome ("Not in My Backyard") affects the homeless. For example, in 1999, the residents of a Scarborough neighborhood avoided the opening of a shelter for the homeless which was located nearby a public school by a 'last minute' sought court injunction (Benzie in National Post, 1999). Sometimes, people do not want homeless shelters to be built in their neighborhoods. This is not to say that they mind these shelters being built; in fact they may support the idea of building the shelters to help the homeless. However, what makes it difficult to carry out such a project is the question of where to build. The nimbyism phenomenon therefore creates a barrier in the implementation of new housing development programs.

Randall Amster (2003) carried out a research bordering on spatial exclusion of the homeless and the criminalization of homelessness through the creation of anti-homeless ordinances. Utilizing both theoretical and empirical approaches for the study, he writes that “homeless street people have been frequent subjects of demonization and criminalization, and that contemporary trends reflect even further “advancements” in patterns of regulatory fervor and casual brutality” (p.195). In the course of sanitizing space, homeless people are excluded and criminalized.

As Amster reports Gowan’s (2000:98) submission, people have come to perceive the homeless with depiction of ‘dirt’, ‘filth’, ‘decay’, ‘disease’ and disgust; the media also depicting street people as ‘vile’, ‘malodorous’, and ‘dangerous’ (Talmadge Wright, 1997:209), their bodies (i.e. the homeless’) viewed as ‘sick’ and ‘smelly’, constantly being rejected by the public, for fear of ‘contamination’, thus creating a “social distant relation” between the defiled (street people) and the undefiled (the rest of society), with the latter rejecting ‘the other’ (Wright, 1997:69; 2000:27).

The image attributed to the homeless as “diseased” has empowered officials and community representatives in voicing out their desire for space cleansing, creating and developing schemes to remove such ‘disease’ (perceived threat of the homeless) for the realization of a healthy society. This has informed the justification of anti-homeless legislation – flushing out street people from public spaces (Amster, p.199). Justification for making these anti-homeless laws (“civility ordinances”) includes “public health and safety, economics, and aesthetic” reasons. The homeless are viewed as unkempt, disease carriers, and are likely to jeopardize the health of

other citizens, hence the logic in the establishment of such laws (Foscarinis, 1996: p.57). This action speaks of or takes the form of some sort of purification of space. The unwanted (the homeless) are eliminated (excluded) from the system by the use of legislation - the flushing out of undesirables by anti-homeless laws for the realization and maintenance of 'social hygiene' (Ferrell, 2001: p.175). Cleansing and sanitizing public spaces has therefore led to the (the move to) criminalization of homelessness (through) apparent in the promulgation of ordinances or laws against activities of the homeless, thereby regulating activities of homeless people (Amster, 2003:199). The criminalization of homelessness is now occurring and evidenced in towns and cities with laws targeted at preventing activities of the homeless (Foscarinis, Cunningham-Bowers, and Brown, 1999) (see thesis, p.20-21 for examples in Canada).

As Amster writes, passing out laws forbidding certain conducts in public will affect those who practice those specified conducts. In this case, laws passed that are against activities such as sidewalk sitting, 'urban camping', loitering, panhandling, sleeping in public with punitive measures more or less target the homeless, as these are apparent activities they are involved in. This action criminalizes homelessness (2003: p.201). This action also shows governments' detestation of the ever permanent public presence of the homeless. A better approach toward eliminating homelessness rather than criminalize the problem is however required.

People experience social and economic exclusion due to inaccess to services necessary for a decent and comfortable living. In other words, they are cut off from certain elements of society which include employment, good education, health care, decent and affordable housing, etc, needed to be able to "participate in society and to

feel that they are valued and respected members of their community”. The homeless is one of the groups excluded in society. To avoid the exclusion of groups will therefore involve including them in policies developed for the betterment of society; policies which would offer the excluded the opportunities, resources and support they need to participate in society (Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health: <http://www.acewh.dal.ca/eng/reports/Overhead-e.pdf>).

From what has been discussed thus far in this chapter, social exclusion is seen to consist of social, economic and political processes, that is, it manifests in these identified dimensions. There are two dominant explanations for social exclusion: the ‘structural’ ideology and the ‘cultural’ ideology. The structural explanation is often in terms of exclusion from the labour market of societies that operate the free market system. The cultural explanation often goes with the cutting off of groups or elements of society from enjoying their citizenship rights, e.g. right to housing, which the homeless lack. Exclusion can be legitimately or illegitimately experienced. It depends on the causal factor of such exclusion. For example, a person who experiences “periods of involuntary unemployment” (an example cited in one of Rawls’s contingencies informing inequalities) legitimately suffers exclusion: he wants to gain employment but he has not found one. A form of exclusion that is being recognized now is spatial exclusion. This occurs through the criminalization of some activities of the homeless that leads to their surveillance or their elimination from public spaces thus causing homeless persons to suffer exclusion from society.

Having explained the concept of social exclusion, I now move to present what the homeless themselves say about the issue. It should be recollected that the purpose

of this part of my work is to get to know the ways by which the homeless experience inequalities, i.e., how they are excluded from society. Carrying out a quantitative research may suffice to gain information on the perception of the homeless on exclusion. However, describing ways by which homeless persons feel excluded calls for more than just a quantitative approach. It requires an in-depth study, hence, my resorting to a qualitative approach. In the following section, I present the methodology of the study, the sample and its characteristics, the sampling technique, and the data collection techniques.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

METHODS

I use three methods to study the homeless: *Participant observation*, *Interviews* with the homeless and with a worker (assistant supervisor) at the OBM, and *life histories* of the homeless. These, I refer to (as a whole) as “triangulation method”.

Participant observation took place mostly at the OBM shelter while volunteering and sometimes in parks while relaxing and interacting with the homeless. This was in the bid of getting to know their lived experiences. The life histories were useful especially in gaining information on the cause of their being homeless. The interviews helped a lot in understanding homeless person’s assessment of homelessness and its problems. Gaining the above mentioned, the triangulation method gives the research some depth, I believe, from multiple perspectives.

STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sample was made up of *fifteen* persons who usually sleep at the Old Brewery Mission (O. B. M) homeless shelter for men, at Clark Street, Montréal (although there are times that they slept on streets at nights), selected for interviews. The O.B.M., which was chosen as the shelter in which respondents would be selected from, was picked from a sample frame of a list of homeless shelters in Montréal, contained in the Directory of Community Services of Greater Montréal (2002), obtained from YMCA at Stanley Street.

Because shelters in Montréal are gender-classified (there are separate shelters for men and women), I only interviewed people at the O.B.M. men's shelter. I chose this shelter for my study due to its largeness (the OBM is the largest homeless shelter in the province of Québec). I reasoned that it was a place that could get me exposed to and interact with as many homeless persons as possible, thereby getting to know more about their experiences in just one setting.

Due to the nature of the study, *purposive non-probability sampling technique* was used, as strategic selection of units (i.e. respondents) was involved. It was important for me to have knowledge of participants' mental state for selection for interviews because not all homeless persons are in the right frame of mind to conduct interviews bordering on the topic of exclusion with. Some homeless are mentally and emotionally unstable and may not be capable of providing information, particularly on their opinion on exclusion; therefore, the selection of respondents was made with the assistance of the supervisor in charge.

All respondents fall within the age range of 30 and 60. They are all Canadians but for one whom, at the time of the interview, was awaiting his confirmation as a Canadian (he gave up his US citizenship for Canadian citizenship) which was to take place in September 2004 (a few months from the time of the interview). Most of the participants are from Québec, two are from New Brunswick; one is from Nova Scotia, one from Ontario, and one was from the United States. All were bilingual. Most had high school level education, only a few got to the college level while some had only elementary education. Names of participants in the study are fictitious. They are as follow: Nicholas, Richard, Joe, Gerald, Alfred, Denis, Johnson, Dick, Jacques, Henry, Larry, Ryan, Éric, Antoine, Bob.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Interviews were conducted from middle June to late July, 2004. I had intended to carry out the interviews within the OBM; however, there were times I had to do them outside the premise. The interviews took place within OBM (in the cafeteria and supervisor's office) and sometimes in parks (very near the OBM) when it was very busy inside the OBM. For those taken in parks, the supervisor saw to it that the subjects were suitable for the interviews. The interviews were in English. They were held at convenient times specified by participants, mostly in the evenings, after supper.

All respondents signed consent forms (see Appendix A) in agreement to participate in the study, as required by ethics on research with human subjects. At the beginning of each interview, subjects were informed of the general aim for conducting the interviews. They were also told that their participation in the study

was confidential (in that their identities would not be disclosed to others, but would only be known by me), voluntary, and that they could terminate the interview at any time they chose without the action being used against them. Also, they were told that they were free not to answer questions they did not want to or feel like answering, considering the sensitivity of some questions.

Interviews lasted between 40 minutes to one and half hours (most lasted for more than an hour). All my respondents exercised and maintained a high level of willingness for participation in the interviews. They responded to my questions till the end of interviews; none quit. Some even indicated their willingness for more sessions if there need be.

I also conducted an interview with a worker at the OBM to see how management views the problem. Initially, I intended interviewing the supervisor, however, he was very busy, so he referred me to his assistant, as he had the confidence in him to answer all my questions. The interview was held on June 24, 2004 and lasted for one hour fifteen minutes.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with both semi-structured and open-ended questions. Subjects were interviewed separately, one by one. All interviews were face-to-face interviews. Interviews were audio-taped while I also took notes. In addition, I observed gestures of subjects as they responded during the interviews.

The interview questions are divided into two sections: sections A and B. Section A comprises of questions that elicit information on the socio-demographic

characteristics of respondents (except age, which was placed in Section B, towards the end of the interview; a strategy used to have respondents tell their ages after some rapport had been gained), causal factors of homelessness, and the experience of the homeless on the street. Section B consists of questions aimed at gaining knowledge on the experience of the homeless, particularly channeled toward exploring different ways in which the homeless feel excluded in society (if they do), covering areas of health, economy, politics, housing, public space, family relations, and other social areas. Words such as 'neglected', 'isolated', 'left out', 'ignored', 'treated as an outcast', 'kept out', 'shut out', 'cut off from society', etc, were used as descriptive words for exclusion. The interviews did not rigidly follow the order of questions, as life histories were involved. Responses to questions came in different ways varying from subject to subject.

The questions were modified during the interview period. There were times in which I added or deleted words. There were also cases in which I reorganized the order of questions within the two sections. This I did as it deemed fit, all in an attempt to produce better interviews. The final version can be found in Appendix B. The questions in the interview I had with the assistant supervisor cover areas of causes of homelessness, information on OBM and its functions, and problems with homelessness (see Appendix C). The life histories of the 15 participants are briefly related in Appendix D.

A limitation to this study is the gender classification of shelters in Montréal. This prevented me from gaining information from the perspectives of the rest of the homeless population, as I conducted interviews with only men. The next chapter that

I move to now is the analysis of data collected from the field. It presents the experiences of the homeless in society. It presents ways by which homeless persons experience inequalities in society, especially exclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Personal Observations

I have been volunteering at the Old Brewery Missions since August 2003, and this has given me the opportunity to get familiar with the homeless men there. I have observed that poverty truly exists. I reckon that there are levels of poverty. There are some homeless that are very poor to the extent that they cannot even afford to buy themselves something small to eat when very hungry. One can see the level of hunger that manifests, and one could tell if a poor homeless has not eaten in a day. The level of poverty among the homeless may be identified through their eating mannerisms and appearance (dressing and physical looks, especially facial). Some eat hungrily and even take the left-overs of others while some eat “assortishly”. Here is an example of what I mean. I was clearing up tables and packing away leftover food for garbage, when a man (1st man), who was eating hungrily shouted, “No, I want it, don’t throw it away”. I quickly responded, and gave him what he wanted. Another man (2nd man) sitting opposite him said to him,

2nd man: “Hey man, you’re eating garbage”.

1st man: “I know (*looking quite angry and continuing to eat hungrily with head lowered*).

This short conversation took place between two homeless persons during supper. Because I also eat with them sometimes, I have been able to identify that the degree of poverty varies amongst homeless persons, with the same persons often

falling into the same levels of poverty in which I classify them into through their actions and speech. They talk about how starved they are, about the hunger they feel inside of them; some complain of not having eaten a proper meal during the day. Although the homeless are nice people; they could be grumpy when frustrated with life or when very hungry.

I classify the appearance of the homeless into three categories: low, medium and high. The 'low' category includes people with bad clothing (dirty and sometimes torn), hard facial looks (tired faces with more wrinkles indicating stress), with usually unkempt hair. The 'medium' class includes people with average appearance – relatively 'ok' clothes – not dirty but not really clean, clothes which were torn but have been sewn up (one could see the stitches sometimes). In short, people in this category look just a bit unkempt. The 'high' category includes people that wear normal clothes and do not even look poor at all – nice haircut, clean and good clothes; good physical appearance in general. One might wonder what these people are doing in a homeless shelter. Some however, experience temporary homelessness (e.g. sudden eviction from apartment).

Homeless people try to make themselves happy even in their state of homelessness. They sing, listen to music, talk with one another, crack jokes, and share cigarettes with one another. This is part of their daily life coping mechanisms. Some homeless have developed habits of feeding birds. They have also been able to understand (probably through their life experiences) that birds too need help. In parks, homeless persons are sometimes found feeding birds. A friend of mine (homeless) feeds birds after supper. He takes some of the left over and off he goes to feed his

birds in the park. Apart from the enjoyment derived from it (as it is now a habit for him), he understands that he has eaten, the birds will also be hungry, and they too must eat.

After supper, I often sit to chat with the homeless. We talk about different things. Sometimes, they tell me of their personal problems, how they became homeless, etc. Sometimes it's bad news, sometimes great news. An example of great news is when they happily and proudly tell me about the progress they have made in getting apartments. The sentence is usually "I got my own apartment".

The homeless are friendly; they love, and want to be loved. I have had outings with some of them. One was the tour of Old Montreal which a homeless gave me. Sometimes, the homeless miss being given affection and also, having sex. Sometimes, this can be detected through their speech and when they talk a lot about sex over a particular period of time. Examples of statements that reflect this point include "kiss me baby", "kiss me please", "I love you baby", "I want you", etc.

Many homeless persons are mentally ill. There is no doubt they need help. Being homeless aggravates the matter, as this does not make for their proper follow up. Medication without adequate housing for example is bound to fail. Taking medication is not all that matters; rest too is needful, being in a proper environment is important. There is a point I would like to note however; mental illness for some homeless seems to be a "now-you-see-it, now-you-don't" phenomenon (term borrowed from anthropologist Liebow, 1993). In as much as there are many mentally ill homeless people around, I would say that the view held by many about the manifestation of the illness as permanently displayed is exaggerated. There have been

times I have chatted for quite a long time with homeless people that I know are mentally ill and conversation was normal throughout. Another point to note is that one might be quick to judge some homeless people that they are mentally ill due to their rough appearance while in fact they are not. As one carries out conversation with them regularly, one is able to detect that it is not the case. Sometimes the hard life they live causes them to look rough.

Loneliness affects the homeless. They feel lonely sometimes and a way to detect this is when they soliloquize. Some talk to themselves sometimes because there is nobody to talk to them. I do not dispute the fact that some homeless soliloquize as a result of their mental incapacity; however, my point is that there are still some mentally capable and alright homeless who soliloquize due to loneliness. What they need is someone to talk with. Many of those that I interact with have told me about this point, and they just enjoy my talking with them.

Finally I note that the homeless have no privacy. Sometimes, they do private things in the public. I once saw a homeless person change into another pair of trousers right in the open. He probably couldn't wait till night time for a change. There are still more things to relate as regards the homeless experience. I go more deeply into this in the next few sections that follow, especially on the exclusion of the homeless from society.

Causes of Homelessness

I find it important and relevant to know what lead people to the state of homelessness. It is necessary to address this from time to time in order to discover

new emerging factors of homelessness and also to check with results of new research if already identified ones still exist. To this end, I asked subjects the question, “Why did you start living at the Old Brewery Mission?”

Responses include conversion of rental apartment units to condominiums, avoiding family, unemployment, gambling, inaffordability of housing, personal decisions resulting from unique individual principles or philosophies of life, change in location, family influence on drug and alcohol use, loss of job, drinking problems, financial difficulty, free access to borrowing loans resulting in great debts, family problems/bad family relationships, eviction due to bad family relationships, discord with landlord, etc. The list goes on. This indicates that there are many determining factors of homelessness whether major or minor, initial or subsequent, many of which are tied to poverty and inaffordability of housing.

Sometimes people are unable to afford high rents of apartment units (with the minimum wage-based salary they receive) upon their exit out of the units converted to condominiums. They cannot afford to pay the monthly bills for condominiums either and so end up on the streets. One of those affected by this action is Nicholas, who at the age of 38 finds himself homeless in Montréal. Inaffordability of housing can make one become homeless within a very short space of time.

“I had an apartment for about 4 years here, but it was taken down to build condominiums, and most people know how the, what the amm, what the house cost of Montréal right now is; it’s hard to find decent rents that most people can pay for. So when I heard of the room and board here (referring to the OBM), I moved here right away. It’s not always easy but at least; I don’t have to stay on the streets all day long”.

- Nicholas

"I feel life is not fair all the time, you know what I mean. Lots of things should be changed, but it's government thing. Like for example, they tell people they're on welfare, they don't have the skill to go to work or they don't have the certificate to get them to work, so they are on welfare, but they don't rent a place. If I wanna rent a place, and I pay \$600 and they give me \$500 on welfare, I don't need that. So why do I challenge? Ok, you build 300 million condos a year for people; they don't give a shit about poor people. Life in Montréal, anywhere, is money. Money talks bullshit. That's what I believe. They should build something for poor people. Give a chance to the people there to have a low rent, something decent; you're not going to see them on the streets anymore... This is a fact of life. You gatta go there (the OBM) because you cannot pay the rent, if you pay the rent, you don't eat, and if you don't eat, you die".

- Jean

"From the government, I receive welfare, \$546 a month, but it's not enough money for the rents because over the last 3 years, the rents have gone very high and see, before, we got \$649; they put the welfare down, and they put the rent up, so the money is now low and the rent is now high. So we're stuck. That's why so many people are on the street".

- Jean

A shift in base or change in location may cause people to become homeless temporarily. However, there are some cases in which temporary homelessness aggravates to an almost permanent one when people moving cannot cope again altogether despite the efforts they make to come off it. Some just get adjusted to the homeless life.

"... I just came back from Sherbrooke and I was hoping for work, and I didn't have any employment, so I needed a place to stay until I've found work".

- Jacques

Gambling is a problem that is fast becoming one of the important causes of homelessness. Many people lose their money to gambling. They cannot explain it.

They say they just get a rush in them to play. Some have even tried stopping to no avail. Some have been for Gambling Anonymous (GA) but still find it difficult to stop. Gerald lost his money and family due to gambling. It has been a bad experience but he still does it even though he wants to quit.

"I couldn't afford rents anymore because I had a gambling problem, got ejected from my apartment, and I had no place to go, so I'm here... When I started, I started out small and it became so big, I was spending my pay cheque on these machines".

- Gerald

Sometimes, homelessness results due to personal decisions made as a result of individual unique principle or philosophy of life. For Alfred, the good life or quality life was to engage more in humanity service (service to community), rather than engage all through in work which rigidly controls one's life, leading people to be extremely materialistic, rationalistic, and mechanical in their approach to things of life, be it in reasoning or acting. For him, this is not the essence of living.

"Well, you're gonna think I'm stupid but I gave up my material life...I got fed up of working to make other people rich. I just gave up ... and I just came down here. I was fed up of running after money. ...I was working very very hard and I never took time out for myself, and I always had things to worry about like having enough money for this, having enough money for that, you know, rents, car, this that, and I realized that I wasn't living. I was working but I was not breathing. You know, I had no life other than work and rest during the weekends. ...I see men in general, not just men, but men and women, you know, humans, as intelligent animals, very, very intelligent animals. However, we use that intelligence to appropriate ourselves more than we need. That's what everybody does with his intelligence; he tries to make the most money, get the most beautiful house, the most beautiful car, and that for me, with my principle, I think it's stupid. I think it's ridiculous to go through life, running after money and possessions when you can actually do something else. I do volunteer work about 10 to 12 hrs everyday, and I'd rather help someone for free than work for money. I think that with everything we have, it's ridiculous to go through life only working, and making money. I

think there's more to life than work. You know people think that in society, the normal thing to do is work for money and save for things but that's not the way that I think. I think the normal way to live is to experience things, help people... I was not happy with the life I was living. That's number one reason (for becoming homeless). My life, to me was useless, I felt useless, now I feel useful, I help a lot of people. I am very happy living at the OBM, more than I've been before. I feel useful as opposed to being useless".

- Alfred

From the fore-going, it would mean that getting fed up with the rigors of modern life that produce mechanical tendencies in people can cause them to cut off totally from the typical routine of modern life, and decide to become homeless, thus giving them the liberty or freedom for humane living. This could have another meaning. The action could indicate frustration experienced in having to work extremely hard in order to pay bills, and provide for other necessary needs which could lead to the decision of becoming homeless, resorting to living in shelters. Reasoning from this perspective places the blame for homelessness on the economic structure of society.

Causal factors of homelessness may be overlapping. Health problems coupled with unemployment could lead to homelessness, e.g., a person can become homeless as a result of job loss (unemployment and therefore insufficient income) brought about by drug and alcohol abuse. Denis (who suffers rheumatism) left Alberta for Québec with not much money and did not have any place to stay on his arrival, moved into the OBM. However, he still sleeps on streets and in parks. This is homelessness as a result of a shift in base. A shift in base coupled with lack of employment in the new location can also result in homelessness.

Addiction - drug, alcohol and gambling problems caused Jean's homelessness.

"I went to OBM because in the past, I got drug problems, alcohol problems, and gambling problems. Now I'm not so bad, I'm a good boy, I'm better than before. These problems affected my job, it affected my life, it affected my family, it affected everything and destroyed everything that was good about me. ... Gambling, I started young, it started from my family. My father always played big big gambling money on cards you know, like blackjack. So I learnt that young. I learnt a lot of gambling and I grew up with that problem, so that problem was a gift from my father, at least, he left me something before he died".

- Jean

Probe – How did drugs and alcohol affect your job?

"It affected my job because I don't sleep enough, so if I'm on drugs, I sleep sometimes for only an hour, sometimes I don't sleep at all. So, drugs and alcohol together, you sleep an hour and you know sometimes you've passed out, so you don't go to work, you're late, so I lose my job, so I gotta come back to my feet, so that's why I go to OBM because I got no more money and I'm stuck".

- Jean

"I started living on the streets about a year ago when the mother of my last child started screaming at me and blah, blah, blah; I couldn't stand it, so I left, so I didn't have a place to stay, so I just figure I'm gonna go sleep there after using drugs for one night, I didn't know what to do, so I went to sleep there at the Old Brewery Mission.... but the real, real factor is drugs, lack of responsibilities, you know, just not knowing how to you know, deal with life on its own terms alone, you know, always having to depend on another person, you know".

- Éric

From Eric's submission, a combination of factors of bad family relationship, drugs, and lack of responsibility led to his state of homelessness. What affected Henry is a combination of inability to cope with family finance and a bad relationship with his spouse that led to a divorce, and inaffordability of housing. Family financial incapability is particularly a reason why we have homeless families today. Families

(especially mother and children), are seen lodging in shelters, trying to still be parents to their children. In Henry's case, the problem was the great difficulty he had with raising three children and providing for their needs. There was an imbalance in sharing the burden of finance at home. Being the sole provider for the family was stressful. This was big stress for him. This coupled with consequences of divorce led to his moving into the OBM. Many homeless have complained that having several divorces coupled with observing government conditions attached to such divorces has been a major factor leading to their homelessness.

"The reason why I ended quitting work is that my economic system was getting more stressed because when I left my last daughter with her mother, I wasn't making alimony payment, and what happened is while I was working, the government came and cut 50% of my gross income, and when that happened, even where I was staying to pay my rents, I wasn't expecting that, and when that happened, at the time where I was living there, the guy said well, if you've got no money, you can't stay here. So, that kind of helped me come towards here ... Because the government came and sliced 50% of my gross income; that was the thing that kind of spear-headed my way into OBM".

- Henry

Some tenants fall apart with their landlords over different issues concerning housing. Homelessness of this kind is often temporary as seen in Antoine's case.

"I had a problem with a landlord and I'm living at the Old Brewery Mission. I paid my landlord a deposit of my rent, but he denied it, and rented the apartment to someone else, but I have the receipt. I'm in the procedure with the 'La Régie de loyer'. I was supposed to move into his apartment with a lease of 1 year but he rented it to someone else and denied I paid \$50 already as deposit".

- Antoine

The management representative that I interviewed identified alcohol and drug related problems, gambling, bad family relationships, mental disease and inadequate pension plan for retirees (which leads to inaffordability of housing and incapability to take care of their special needs e.g. medication), as causal factors of homelessness. One important point to note from what has been recounted above is that most of the causes of homelessness eventually tie to the inability to afford housing. No matter how complementary the causal factors could be; most boil down to inaffordability of housing.

I now move to address more issues on the experiences of the homeless in society. In the sections that follow, I address the experiences of the homeless first in shelters, and second, on the street.

Experience of the Homeless

I wish to make a point. The homeless are still street people, whether they sleep at night on the street, or they sleep in shelters. This is because when they are out of shelters during the day; they are on the street, having no place to go to most of the time.

Life at O.B.M

The experiences of the homeless at the OBM that I share here can be said to be also the same in other shelters in general. I have briefly included this in my analysis just to bring out or identify the things homeless people experience or might sometimes have to cope with while living in shelters.

At the OBM, there are two categories of the homeless: residents and non-residents (also called “on-the-line” or clients). Residents are on room and board. They pay a certain amount for rent and feeding every month (usually cheaper than that outside). Clients however sleep over and eat breakfast at no cost. However, they pay for supper at the cost of \$1 (it used to be free; the charge started applying on Oct 1, 2004). They have to check in every night (on a daily basis) to be able to maintain or secure their bed space for the following night. Experiences of the homeless at shelters are as follow:

1. No privacy. One does not have one’s own privacy because it is a resource that is being shared with others.

“It has its ups and downs, sometimes it’s easy, it’s good, and other times it’s more difficult because you don’t live privately; you know, I have to put up with all sorts of different situations with people. You have to be tolerant, you have to have good tolerance, and good social skills help a lot too”.

- Nicholas

2. Panic attacks. Some people who have panic attacks cannot stay where too many people are. The presence of many people in a place may seem to have a disturbing effect on them. For homeless people in this category, living at the shelter may not be an easy task, but they have to live with it, and probably learn how to overcome it.
3. Relationships among residents and clients are generally good. Although at times, there could be some struggling, shouting at one another, they are usually friendly to one another. They have a bond of friendship. They have a common thing binding

them together – lack of home.

Solidarity among the homeless -

“If somebody on the street tries to steal from an elderly man who lives at the OBM, the entire OBM is gonna be up against him. If somebody tries to hurt somebody there, the entire building is gonna go running after him. We protect each other, we respect each other”.

- Alfred

4. Following rules. All residents and clients must go by the rules of the organization.

As with any other organization, this is needed to maintain order and peaceful existence. However, from a homeless person’s perspective, part of what he has to cope with is the ever present rules that make him feel he has almost or totally lost any form of control over himself, thus having another rule over his life or dictate things to him.

5. Lots of line-ups. Having to line up for showers, food, etc, is what the homeless seem to be used to. However, sometimes, it is very tiring for them. Also, those who desire to eat many times a day know where to get it and how to go about it but having to walk to those places to do line ups in order to eat is also a task (as many do not have bus passes). Also, having to take part in the routine of lining up might create a ‘prisoner feeling’ in people thus viewing shelters as incarceration places, a form of institutional system of control.

“Everyday, line up for breakfast, you line up to go to bed, you line up to go to shower, you line up to eat. It makes you feel like you’re in jail”.

- Denis

Life on the Streets

This section about street life includes rough sleeping and other activities carried out by the homeless while on the street during the day or in the night. It entails their experiences while on street. These experiences are both good and bad. However, most of the time, the homeless experience is a bad one.

Sometimes, street-living creates an avenue for self-oriented therapy for some people. They may want to be alone, free from any disturbance from relatives or people, and think things through for themselves, in order to make life decisions. Living on the street for a month served to be a good experience for Nicholas who was passing through a difficult time (having lost his wife) and needed to be free from family influence or contact.

“I thought it was very easy. It was in the summer first of all, and I wasn’t really used to big cities. I spent all my life in small towns. (Talking about being in the city now) Anything goes, you know..., nobody cares ...For me it was ok because I needed to let out some things, I needed to be alone for a while”.

- Nicholas

Another point to note is that some homeless people derive temporary pleasure in living on the streets. Care must be taken not to assume that all homeless people dislike their situation of homelessness. Some actually enjoy it because it gives them freedom to be on their own, do what ever they want for themselves without anybody or family monitoring their lives. Homelessness, in this context thus frees them from worries about family. However, this is often temporary pleasure, boredom plus the hardship involved often sets in, and the desire to have one’s place continuously runs through their minds.

“You know, I slept in Montréal on the streets and I had never done it before, and it was ok just to have fun. After that I said no, no, no, I need a home...I got bored not working and just running around the streets. With an ID, it's new, it's fun for a while but after, you realize that you can't go on forever if you have a little bit of common sense”.

- Nicholas

This is not the case however with most homeless that I have interacted with. Most of those I have had contact with so far have never enjoyed street-living, only a few do. It would be interesting to carry out further research to know why some homeless enjoy street living, and prefer to sleep at night outside instead of shelters sometimes even during winter, knowing what the risks or unpleasant conditions of street-living might be. Some might not like to stay in shelters because of the regimentation and strict rule observation. However, there might be some deeper reasons.

Richard, who lived on the streets for 6 months, has the following to say about life on the streets. His experience as regards street living is about the danger the homeless are exposed to e.g. health risks and physical violence.

“Life on the streets is not pleasant. It's dangerous. It's very easy to get addicted to drugs, drinking. It's cold; don't get lots of sleep, and you walk around all day and walk around all night. We used to go to Central station, where the train station is, we go to McDonalds, we hang out there, they usually let you sleep there...then the food buses would come and we'll eat, and then go sit in the lobby; this is how we spend the nights (if we don't sleep in the parks); and then the days, we spend walking through the malls, hanging out at the central station, and taking couple of McDonalds coffee... I got punched in the face once when I was sleeping in the park; someone probably had mistaken me for another person”.

"It's always cold (during winter); nobody wants anyone sleeping on their property. Keeping clean is not easy, sometimes the cops come pick you up, they charge you with loitering. Also, separation, emotional, psychological separation from everything else; you know I'm invisible... Physical violence (meted against you?) oh yeah, I mean, I've had people like grab me, like wake me up, hold me".

- Johnson

Exposure to danger is a point that can be drawn from the account given above. This is common for homeless persons on the street. Both within and outside my research, many homeless have raised this point about street living.

Denis and Henry consider making and having good friends as a good experience of street life:

"...In the streets, I got good experience because I met lots of very good friends. You know, it's a big family, it's like my family is here now, it's in the streets, coz my (biological brother and sisters) family, they don't even wanna talk to me, so my real family is here".

- Denis

"...And where you call the street is a little bit like a social clubbing, because we get to make friends on the street".

- Henry

Bad experiences of the homeless on street living Denis notes, are drugs and heavy drinking, and are still very much present on the streets today. These are like influential factors; hanging around people who do drugs, and drink heavily is like tempting those who do not do these things to start. In other words, life on the streets creates an avenue for introducing bad habits to people. This is a very important reason why effort geared toward fighting homelessness should be made; it will make for a better society.

Other accounts of street living are as follow.

"I've lived on the streets in Montréal for about 18 months, and around 10 years ago, I was also on the street for 4 months in Montreal; I've got street experience a lot. The 1st month, it's very rough because you don't know nothing. Very rough because of the cold, the rain, and you don't know how things work, and it's scary when you're starting, but after a month, you know where to live, and it's a life style after... What I mean by 'it's rough' is that you gatta find the way to live, you gatta find the way to eat, wash your clothes, take your shower... someday you don't eat, some day you eat, someday you like it, someday you don't like the food. (Probe – why don't you eat some days?) Because at sometime, we'll be with the drugs problem, so we don't eat much. Sometimes, when it's time to eat, we'll be too sick, and some other time, we just don't like the food they gave at pops' 'give-a-hot dog', missions, like Old Brewery Missions, Maison du père, we go different places, each different section of town, you got places for free. So, we learnt all that trick, mouth to mouth, so they became a living. It's like you, if you go home, you get food, you go to your aunty, you get food, but it's like a family for us; unfortunately, we come on that will, and we love it".

- Jean

"It's very tiring, and you don't really rest, you get an hour here, an hour there. It's very hard on the feet because you have to run everywhere for food, and you have to run everywhere for shower. It's a lot of running, and it's very hard on you physically and mentally. In the summers, it's beautiful, the winters are cold though. I slept in bank entrance, I slept in parks, I slept in the metro, Westmount, Cote Des Neiges, out of the city".

- Jacques

"To survive, you go and eat at different places. You have to be careful with the people because most of them have alcohol problem, drug problem, or gambling problem, so I have to be careful who I speak with. People trade to take clothes, they wanna trade it for cigarettes, they wanna trade it for drugs, you know, they have their medications, they wanna trade their medications for money or they can buy something else, you know, am, it's like an extension of jail. I've never been to jail, but I think from reports on jail, it's like an extension on the streets of the jail, the same thing. You have to be careful with your stuff. You put everything in your locker, so you don't get them steal your stuff; people will steal your stuff to make money out of it to take drugs or do gambling, you know... You can eat 5 to 6 times a day in places and it's free. There's the Welcome Hall mission, there's the Old Brewery mission, Maison

du père – those are the places to eat and sleep. And then places to eat, we have Accueil Bonneau, Red roof (this is a place you can go for breakfast and dinner, they also give you clothing and you can take shower here), Open door, Pops (they go to different corners everyday, they go downtown), Lanonyme (that's another place they give sandwich), Sun Youth, and Salvation Army”.

- Laurent

It's scary at nights. It's scary because you're always afraid that someone will show up and hurt you, or, you know, you're not sleeping very well. You can't sleep, you wake up everyone hour because it's too cold and because you cannot really sleep very deep”.

- Ryan

Ryan's response brings out a point: it is not just that the homeless experience violence especially at nights, it is important to note that they also fear being attacked; they sleep with a sense of insecurity. Therefore, fear of being attacked coupled with violence being meted out to homeless street people is not a pleasant experience for them.

I asked Bob where he sleeps, the following was his response:

“Mission Old Brewery, Maison Dupere, Welcome Hall, in banks, where we have the bank machines, or just on the streets sometimes, you know, in the parks, at the base of the mountain (I don't usually go to the tops) sometimes when I don't want to be disturbed, out of the view of people on the streets so that they can't see you easily”.

This is what Bob says about life on the streets:

“It's rough in a way especially if you don't know people are gonna come up to you, you know they might try to rob you, you wanna make sure you don't have that much on you so if you do get robbed, you don't have that much to lose. But needless to say, sometimes, the streets are better than the missions, you know, because at the missions, one thing that they're known for that is notorious is lots of snoring. You know, I could put up with rock concerts, people talking, people yelling, but snoring, just the vibration, you know, even if you wear ear plugs , you know, you could still hear it, and even if you're

totally deaf, you know you can't hear anything, you could still feel the vibrations of people snoring; everything starts rattling".

Some homeless feel that the street life offers some good life lessons. It helps people to care and become more sensitive to others' needs. Here is what Éric says.

"One thing I do realize since I've been on the street is that I'm becoming a better person. I'm becoming a better human being coz I didn't care about homeless people, I didn't care about people on drugs before, and now, I'm like more sensitive to the suffering of other people you know, and that's a good thing for me right now. That's what the street brings for me today".

Snoring, as insignificant as it might be for some people is a crucial factor for Bob. This of course results in having insufficient sleep. Doing drugs and alcohol remain the fastest things the homeless learn when on the street. Therefore being on the street further reinforces the problems. A good aspect of street experience identified by some subjects is making friends who care about one another's wellbeing. Developing friendship with fellow street people; being friends with one another seems to be a coping mechanism utilized for compensating for lost family intimacy and connectedness. The care and love shown to one another makes up for that which might have been lost with families and relatives. However, the level of stress the homeless experience can be appreciated in an extract from Hope and Young (1986):

"The stresses of living on the streets exacerbate emotional disturbance. In some cases disorientation may be the result rather than the cause of homelessness. The day-to-day search for a toilet, for food, for refuge from the police, for an empty heating grate or bus station seat causes a state of perpetual exhaustion. Sleep deprivation can disorient and confuse even the healthiest human beings. When it is combined with poor nutrition, lack of shelter, constant exposure to the elements, physical and mental infirmities, and little or no medical care, the results can be total breakdown of the body and spirit" (p.166).

Having realized a general view of homeless street experience, I now move on to the issue of exclusion. Social exclusion itself is part of what street people experience. The next segment of analysis dissects the issue of exclusion, covering different areas which include health, politics, economy, housing, etc. It explores ways in which the homeless feel excluded in society, if they do.

Exclusion of the Homeless

Questions asked here were for eliciting information as regards how the homeless are isolated or cut off from society. These questions show two things: one, if the homeless perceive to be excluded, and two, how they are excluded in society.

There are a few things to note that will aid our understanding of the matter in the course of analysis. From the study, it is realized that exclusion manifests in two forms, these I submit to be *self-exclusion* and *societal exclusion*. The former speaks of the homeless cutting off themselves from society. Societal exclusion is in the sense that the rest of society (society itself) cuts the homeless off. However, for most part, the homeless express their feelings of being cut off by society and also identify and provide examples of ways in which this occurs. I start with the area of health.

Health

Some homeless are unable to access health services and this makes them feel excluded in society. All Canadians have access to medical care once they can provide their Identity (ID). However, some homeless do not have their IDs and they complain of not having (enough) access to medical care because without the ID, it is more stressful to get care and it takes longer to get attended to at health centres. In this

regard, some homeless perceive themselves as kept out of enjoying health services rendered to citizens. Nicholas, who though has access to health services because he has his ID, knows the condition of his other homeless friends who do not have their IDs, and says the following.

“Anytime I do need it (talking about health care service), yeah, I can make use of it. But that’s not the same situation for everyone. Some people amm, who live on the streets don’t have their IDs; a lot of people actually don’t have them... to see a doctor anywhere in a civilized world nowadays, you need a proper ID”.

- Nicholas

Éric too does not feel cut off from the health system but maintains that some do. I probed for why some street homeless do not have their IDs, he responded thus:

“I don’t feel neglected in accessing health services, but I see may people around me that do... A lot of them lose their medicare; a lot of them lose their papers. They lose their papers because they sleep on the street and their papers get stolen. They sleep in the park, and people steal from them. So when they need health care, it takes longer to get, and you know, there’s only certain areas, certain places that would take care of them”.

- Éric

The government is working on making health services available for all. The Centre Local de Santé Communauté (CLSC) on rue SanGuinet for example, dedicates a section for treating the homeless on the 2nd floor, where they get attended to. However, there is still room for more improvement, especially ensuring or making it easier for the homeless to access these services.

Some homeless cut off themselves from the health care system. They actually do not want to have anything to do with medical health services, whether available to

them or not. They are simply not interested in them. Their reasons for taking this stand vary. One reason however that they complain of is not being provided with the right type of medical care that is actually needed, and when suggestions are made by patients on the treatment they feel they need sometimes to health workers, such suggestions are ignored, waved down with an “I know what’s better” attitude.

Richard, who suffers from panic attacks, but now recovering, is one of those who do not make use of these health services.

“I don’t believe in those services that they offer in downtown for one...I had a psychiatrist who I was seeing 50 minutes, once a month, and then be on medication for the rest of the month. That’s not what I want, you know, I want to see my psychiatrist for once a week, and that’s it. (But downtown, that’s not it...)... I know better ...because it’s better for me to sit and talk to somebody instead of being on medication 24 hrs a day. Here in downtown Montréal, they only wanna medicate you. They don’t have the time to sit down and talk with you....If they could only cut down on the medication and sit down and talk, that would cause less problems”.

- Richard

From Richard’s account, all that was needed to complete the medication process was to be listened to, to go for check up more often and discuss effect of medication and the progress in his state of health; that itself is a form of therapy which was missing or absent in his treatment. In the case of Richard, there was a need to strike a balance between medication taking and talking with the care giver. This point indicates the need for more well trained health care givers capable of caring for the need of patients, providing them with thorough treatment and follow-ups.

Another way of viewing exclusion from Richard’s submission is to argue that he suffers societal exclusion even though he is provided with medication. He is excluded in the sense that he is cut off from access to needed aspects of health care

services – these being thorough check-ups and regular follow-ups. Even though, willfully he now engages in self exclusion from health care services, he resorted to that decision because of his inaccess to needed health service. Therefore, in this regard, he can be considered to be cut off from society, thus experiencing exclusion.

Another reason why some homeless people choose to be self-excluded from health services is because they do not want to quit some of the health problems they have, e.g., heavy smoking, heavy drinking, etc. For them, these health issues, while they may pose to be harmful, make them happy. Using health services will therefore mean killing the only source of happiness left for them. The homeless who fall into this category would not make use of available health services such as medications or therapeutical meetings or sessions. Denis is a heavy smoker and considers smoking to be fun. For him, it is a source of happiness in a ruthless world of pain and sorrow.

“Yes, I have access to health services... I’ve never made use of the health services... for smoking, never did. (I asked why), coz I don’t wanna quit, the only pleasure that I have left in my life, c’mon”.

- Denis

Still on exclusion from the health care system, an important point to note is red tapism and protocol observation involved in receiving treatment at hospitals. Sometimes, observing this process is tiring for the sick homeless, and the individual might decide altogether not to make use of such services. In this way the homeless experiences exclusion from health care.

“I just find going to the hospital takes too long. I was sick once, very very sick, and I waited four hours at the hospital, I couldn’t wait anymore. The next day, I waited four hours at the CLSC, I couldn’t wait any more; I went to the drug store to get myself a pain relief. I didn’t know what was the problem, I just wanted to talk to a doctor, it was impossible. The way you have to wait there is ridiculous”.

- Denis

This is not to say however that health care workers are not trying to make the administration of services work effectively, insufficient personnel (as identified already) coupled with numerous clients to attend to, tight and busy schedules, etc, may cause setback in their operating effectively.

Housing

Most homeless persons I have interacted with feel discriminated against and extremely excluded from housing in society, after all, this is part of what makes them homeless. It is realized that sometimes, when the homeless try to move out of homelessness, their treatment by people in society seems to exert a force that pushes them back to the state. Landlords do not want to rent out their apartments to the homeless on the presentation of address of shelters during preliminary rental procedure. With this in place, the homeless find it difficult in getting apartments. It follows that their state of homelessness is further reinforced even as they attempt to quit being in that condition. However, it is important to note that inaffordability of housing makes the homeless excluded from society. I asked Nicholas if he feels neglected in society. He says the following.

“...Only in one way, and it’s a very strong thing for me: not being able to find it that easy to find a home that I can pay for. In that part of society, I feel very neglected”.

- Nicholas

On the other hand, it might be difficult to blame landlords for refusing to rent out their apartments to the homeless because of their fear that homeless persons might not be able to maintain regular payment of rents.

Participation in Politics

In times past, the homeless were not allowed to vote. They were denied political rights. The policy concerning non-participation of those without fixed or permanent address in voting was only recently abolished. The homeless used to be totally excluded from voting during elections. In order to know if the homeless take part in political activities in society, I asked them if they vote during elections. Some of the subjects responded that they do vote while most declared that they do not. All subjects who stated that they do not vote in elections maintain that they do not feel excluded from political participation in society. It is their choice; they are simply not interested in participating in politics. Here, the homeless can be seen to engage in self-exclusion from politics.

Some homeless express their disinterest in voting or taking part in politics. Many of them express disgust in politics, arguing that politicians do not represent citizens’ interests but their own selfish interests. They argue that when political candidates for government portfolios win elections and resume office, they do not

care about the interest of the masses or people in general. Some respondents feel politicians hold public offices in order to improve their financial state/status, and not to truly represent citizens' interest or truly care about achieving a good government hence their disinterest in taking part in elections or other aspects of politics. The following reflect this view.

"I haven't voted for 30 years coz the day I vote, I vote for the guy who puts money in my pocket, not the guy who takes it... Because they're all there to take all the money out of my pocket even if I'm in the streets; the provincial, or federal, or municipal, they all want taxes, money, money, money, money; we shouldn't have any government. I choose not to vote; I don't want to".

- Denis

"I never vote. Because a few years ago, I was in a therapy and we were 80 inmates from inside, only people from the prison, and the Parti Quebecois, Liberal, and Conservateur came to that place to campaign. So we were to ask them some questions. That was may be 8, 9 years ago, and I was amazed and surprised about how the inmates were so informed about all kinds of things, they knew so much, asking questions from these people that represent us, and these people would flee the questions, you know, and could not answer at all what we were talking about. They wouldn't know, they wouldn't know nothing. The only thing they wanted to do is be elected. They have no knowledge absolutely nothing about politics. So when I saw that, never again did I vote".

- Éric

"No I don't vote. It's my decision. I don't believe in government whatsoever, I have no faith in government... For myself, I'm finding out that the more detached I get, to me, that's fine. They don't need to know anything, or where I am".

- Henry

Henry prefers to exclude himself, if possible, totally detached from participating in politics. One may seem to wonder why he takes this stand. His experience with the

government slashing 50% of his income is a hard blow on him; he would therefore prefer to stay clear of family, having kids, wife, and government especially, so as to avoid further disaster.

The Social: the family

In this study, I also wanted to know about the relationship of homeless persons with their families, so as to determine if they experience exclusion in this area. I wanted to know if there was any interaction amongst them, and also know if it was a cordial one (with close ties). While some interact with their families and maintain close ties, some do not. All subjects who indicate no ties with families submit that have intentionally chosen to keep off from their families except one subject who has not given up trying to win back their love. In other words, some homeless engage in self-exclusion, cutting off from their own families, not wanting to have anything doing with them; no ties what so ever. However, what might have led to their making this decision could be frustration from their families' constant turn down of their effort to relate with them. They might have got fed up and decided to cut off all ties. In other words, the self exclusion some homeless engage in now could have emerged initially from family exclusion. This is to say that their cutting off from their families now might be a result of their families' first cutting them off. One participant however suffers family exclusion, the case in which his family is rejecting and cutting him off. Cases in which the homeless engage in self-exclusion include the following.

"I've never lived with my mother since I was 8 yrs old, and I don't speak with my sisters. I prefer not to see them. I decided not to relate with them".

- Richard

Johnson engages in self-exclusion from his family (divorced parents). He didn't suffer family exclusion initially though. The following is his response to my question,

"Do you relate with your parents?"

"Nope, I have zero relations with them. I got tired of playing a lawyer between my parents. My dad complains about my mum not to talk to me but just to make me listen, and then my mum complains about my dad not to talk but also to make me listen. I mean, now I don't care, I don't want to talk to anyone".

- Johnson

Denis says that it is the fear of getting back into family problems (fights with his wife) that has made him keep off from his nuclear family.

"When we left each other, we had a big argument, and there was no reason for an argument. She wanted to take control of my life, and there was lots of yelling and screaming. I didn't like that life. I don't want to relate with my wife because of fear of getting back into fighting... I didn't relate with my children because at a certain point in time she was telling them not to talk to me. So I said to myself, later, when they're older they'll probably want to see me and then they'll find me, then they'll come and ask me why? And then I can answer them without their mother telling them 'why?'. I decided not to get in touch with them".

- Denis

Laurent does not relate with his family because they judge him, and he'll rather not interact with them than endure words of discomfort.

"I don't relate with my family. They judge me too much. I put them on a side. I don't talk to them, it's my choice... I decided to cut the connection".

- Laurent

Jean made several attempts to interact with and be connected to his family but finally decided to cut them off. He relates what led him to take such a decision.

“I’ve never in my life been close to my family. I saw my family last, Christmas 1981. So, I’m not in touch with my family... because I did jail, they don’t talk to me anymore. So we’re not a very close family. I tried for many years to go close to them, but they always remind me that you did jail, you did drugs, you’re a thief, a criminal, so I told them to fuck off and I never came back. So I can stay all my life, happy, alone you know what I mean”.

- Jean

Éric also decided to stay away from his family. His reason though is strikingly different from what others have said. The following is his response for why he decided to stay away from his family.

“Because I feel that I’m no good for them, and I was a criminal, and I’m still a drug addict; and you know, I don’t want them to see their dad like that (talking about his children now), and you know, I think they deserve a lot better”.

The major reason given for engaging in self-exclusion is to avoid being judged; hearing words of contempt from family members which further tears down rather pull up. A unique point however is given by one subject – cutting off from family so as to prevent them from further being hurt (the last quote).

Bob’s account shows he is experiencing family exclusion. His family does not want to relate with him.

“I tried relating with my family, but I get hang ups... nobody really wants to have anything to do with me, and I’m lonely here as well”.

- Bob

Unlike some respondents who have stopped trying to get their families to relate with them and have self-excluded themselves from their families, Bob has not given up on his family. He is still making effort to gain their friendship and have ties with them.

Public spaces and society in general

The street homeless feel treated as outcasts or cut off from society when they are escorted out of shopping malls, parks, etc, by the police (police surveillance). Sometimes the homeless are easily identified because of their dressing and general appearance, carrying their sleeping bags and other personal belongings. Therefore, in no time, the police are able to identify them and tell them to leave public spaces. If they disobey orders, they stand at risk of being charged for loitering.

The homeless also experience being treated as lesser human beings – seen as less important in society. This occurs sometimes when they go out shopping in stores, and as soon as they are identified as homeless people, store keepers and people in general (even buyers) keep an eye on them because it is assumed that they will steal; “the look”, sending an obvious message to them that they are being closely watched. This derogatory form of treatment received by homeless persons makes them feel discriminated against.

“They always watch you because they think you’re gonna steal something; they do. You have to leave your bag at the cash... you could see young college kids walking through the shopping centre with their bags”.

- Richard

While discussing Johnson’s life as a homeless, I asked the question, “Did you ever feel like an outcast?” This is his response:

“Yes, absolutely, well, you know, you walk into a store, you have money in your pocket, you go into a store, and they look at you, and they still follow around. You know, you can’t get services quick as another, you know, me go to McDonalds, and another person goes to McDonalds, they’re gonna walk right over, they’re gonna help that other person even though I may have more money in my pocket than that person; they don’t know”.

- Johnson

However, it is equally important to note that store keepers might have resorted to this action due to the experience they might have had before with their goods being stolen and their suspicion of the street homeless being responsible for it. They simply do not want to take any chances, so they might keep close watch and make sure that all grounds are covered.

The following are ways in which the homeless feel cut off, left out, isolated, or treated as less important in society. In some quotes, one can notice the feeling of invisibility experienced by these people.

“Yeah, sometimes when I walk on the street, people look at you as if you’re, you’re you know (head moves backwards with a look of disgust); people judge you a lot. If you wanna go to the wash room in McDonalds, if you come with the sleeping bag in your hands, trust me, they’ll try to stop you from going to the bathroom. If you were just a young kid with nice Nikki shoes, and nice Nikki all-outfit, coming to buy food, they’ll welcome him... people don’t wanna see us, you know. Like you go in the park, you know the police will come in and harass you because you’re in the park. (Have you ever experienced that?) O yeah, they will come and harass you, you cannot be there, but at the same time, there’s other people laying there on the blanket; they’re just getting a fun-time just like you, they don’t even ask them questions. I feel like we’re kind of, you know, discarded from society; they don’t want us, they don’t wanna see us. They do look at you like a homeless, yeah, in parks, malls, and even in government buildings”.

- Jean

"There's a way I feel sometimes, you know what I mean, because they realize we're on the street, we're poor people, we're homeless. I think they think they're better, and they don't wanna be involved with us. For example, some people on the street, they pass, some, they're very nice, some, they pass and they look at you, they just give you the look like "hey! you're shit" you know what I mean, that's the way we feel... there should be more love and comprehension from people, more sympathy and respect from people".

- Denis

"... once you tell people you're homeless, they treat you differently suddenly. You know, they're sort of critical. I'm not treated as human being anymore. I don't know, homeless people have germs or homeless people are violent????"

- Bob

"I do feel cut off from the society because it's like a separation. I'm not part of society... it's like a real separation from what's going on in society, I've lost relationships, people do not want to relate with me".

- Johnson

"People look at you and turn away as if you don't really exist".

- Jacques

Bob expresses his feeling of being cut-off from society which he often experiences when he makes effort to develop relationships with people and make friends. The account he gives is one that reminds us that human beings are social beings who cannot live in isolation. However, Bob expresses that he is faced with the hard reality of having to live in isolation due to a non-welcoming society.

"I have a hard time making friends with people. I do everything all by myself. I go to the movie all by myself... I want to love, and to be loved, but it doesn't happen; people just don't want to interact with you once they hear you're homeless".

- Bob

The following is an expression of frustration of seeming invisible (in this sense, to be treated as unseen and therefore not reckoned with) to people, especially at times when the motive of speaking to another is actually for the benefit of the person passing by. This is an-everyday experience for some homeless, and it creates in them a negative feeling of belongingness to the society.

“I feel invisible. It’s left-out, it’s excluded, it’s invisible, it’s down-trodden, pushed down, oppressed. You can either be one of two things: you’re either outcast or invisible; either they see you and they don’t like you, or, they don’t see you and ignore you, that’s it, that’s all, black and white. For example, “excuse me sir, do you have a quarter?”, “hey, excuse me, do you have a cigarette?”, or excuse me sir, you dropped your something, and he just keeps on walking by coz I don’t look like the kind of person he wants to talk to. It’s invisible, it’s invisible because I speak, but he doesn’t even look at me”.

- Johnson

The Economic

Many homeless experience exclusion from the job market. Sometimes, employers do not want to hire people once they know they are homeless. They do not want to recruit persons who either do not have contact address or use the address of homeless shelters. It is equally important to note that it is difficult for potential employers to contact the homeless at shelters (even if they are willing to hire them) during normal office hours (usually 9am-4/5pm) because the homeless might not be permitted to be around at such official time. Most evening shelters for example are closed from 9am. to 4pm. It is therefore difficult contacting clients for job interviews. Joe, who has been having a hard time getting a quality job, notes that this problem does not get a homeless person’s economic state improved.

“The problem with living on the streets is we do not have a phone number where people can call, like you can’t have somebody call the mission, an employer call the mission... and, if you were an employer and you found out the person is living in a mission, would you hire the guy? Not too likely”.

- Joe

“The type of work that I’m going after is, it’s you’ve got to be trustworthy, stable, and the problem is that I don’t have an address, ok, this is for me, that is the big problem, I don’t have an address or a telephone number as well. Like here on the paper, even today’s gazette, there’s about 7 jobs that I could apply for and probably of those 7, I would probably get 4 interviews. I would probably get a job there, but the problem is I can fax them my resume but who do they call back (you know), and if they do call back - well come this afternoon, I may not get the message passed on to me”.

- Joe

Homeless adults who still want to fight homelessness and get out of the situation sometimes find themselves excluded from the labor market. Job offers are usually not that many for older people (e.g. people in their 50s). This further reinforces the economic challenges faced by older homeless persons.

“All the ads in the paper (emploi Québec) is from the 18 to 35 age group, where they’re offering job training; there is nothing for the older people...anybody over 50, forget it”.

- Joe

Another way in which the homeless experience economic exclusion is through the way they are judged, either by appearance or by past life records during their search for jobs.

“Because I got tattoo in jail, people judge me at first slot. They don’t try to learn or find out who I am. I’m a nice guy but they don’t know that; oh, he’s got tattoo, he’s probably a bad guy. It’s not because you’ve got a tie you’re not an asshole (laughs). I know lots of guys in ties that are more than assholes. Giving an example, if I go for a job and apply for a job, the guy that takes my interview, soon he’ll realize that I did jail and I got tattoos,- ‘no

problem Sir, we'll give you a phone call', you'll never receive that phone call, you know it. They're judging the looks; you have the bad look, you cannot walk with the public, so that's why I work in construction... When I tried to get back to my feet years ago, I wanted to come back to the society, and I tried so hard to come back, find a job and everything, and nobody gave me a chance, you know what I mean. That's when I realized and I felt so judged; what's wrong with them, I've got the heart to work, I wanna work, nobody wanna give me a chance to start, so I feel they don't want me there, you know what I mean. So, that's when I started to do crime again, and I was in jail again. You know, I gave up, and when you give up, that's when you're wrong. Never give up, and I believe that now".

- Jean

From the above submission, it is observed that the conditioning of the society may reinforce homelessness instead of curbing it. Jean is not the only homeless with this experience, some others do. The homeless express that it takes strong will and determination to still keep fighting to get back into society after experiencing joblessness, poverty and homelessness. Judging people on the basis of appearance can lead to the economic exclusion of the homeless as experienced by Jean, who ended up with construction job; he would have preferred an office job.

This is an issue that the government needs to address. A reason why employers might not want to hire a person with bad past records might be based on the inability to determine the certainty of change in behavior of such a person, as there might be little or no evidence to determine such change. Some employers just don't want to get involved at all with persons with past bad records. If this obtains in society, then, it might be that the government might want to take up the responsibility of holding special recruitment for people in this category.

An observation made in the course of this study is that most of the homeless who do not have jobs and do not work feel excluded from society more than those

with jobs. They suffer especially, spatial exclusion. Those with jobs are relatively busy with their jobs, especially during the day, so that they hardly experience being treated as less important or cut off from society through different forms of surveillance. Therefore, the degree of exclusion for the homeless varies; while it is greater for some, it is less intense for some. However, it is important to know that they still express their being excluded from the society, whatever degree it might be.

Homelessness, by Choice or Not by Choice?

Respondents feel that to be homeless is both 'by choice' and 'not by choice'. All respondents say that it is not by choice at the beginning, but later, it is by choice except one subject who expresses the opposite (i.e. by choice at first, not by choice afterwards). Here are statements that reflect their viewpoints.

"When it'll be a choice is when I got out of jail, when I passed some months on the streets, that would be my choice, because I felt freedom at that time in my head – I'm not in jail anymore, I can live anyhow I want, I'm as free as a bird. But now, it's not a choice, it's a fact of life, you know, they cut the welfare, and now it's hard to pay rents because they're not jobs, good jobs for a guy like me with criminal records. It was a choice then, now, it not a choice, it's a fact of life, I gatta live with it".

- Jean

For Jean, homelessness was by choice at the beginning, now, it is not because he is trying to quit homelessness and he is finding it hard to come off the problem. Getting a quality job is a barrier for Jean to be able to totally quit homelessness. He is the only subject who expresses 'choice' at the beginning (when one becomes homeless), and 'not by choice' later.

“For me, it was not a choice at the beginning but now it is a choice. It was not a choice at that time because I ran out of money and I needed a place to stay at that time. You know, I was really looking for a place to sleep at night. But now it is a choice because since I ran out of money since last year, there’s been enough time for me to find a job, but because I knew about all those services, I decided to use them. I decided to take advantage of those services, to take my time and to relax, and to enjoy my life, so you know, I didn’t make any extra effort to go back to a normal life”.

- Ryan

“Well, look, it is true, nobody is supposed to be homeless, it’s a choice in a way, you know, we all make choices. Unfortunately, life sometimes makes us, you know, it’s just that you know, let’s say you’re raised not being able to communicate, and you’re raised not being able to take responsibility, and you’re raised not to having love in your family and around you; so society tells you, ok, you gotta be nice, you gotta be responsible, you gotta follow the rules, but then again in your childhood, from where you are today, you never did that. It’s still running, so you start your life with all these problems, and you know, you can’t deal with that, and you grow up, you grow up, and the more you grow up, you can’t take your responsibility, you end up homeless. And that’s the easy way because then, you have a place to stay, you have a place to live without responsibility, and your back is being taken care of just like when you were a child. At the beginning, it’s not a choice, at the end, it is”.

- Éric

Éric’s account shows the need for good parental relation with children. There might be a contradiction in what the family has to offer, and what the society at large has to offer. If an individual’s upbringing is faulty, then there is the likelihood it bounces back in the future. Some homeless that have smoking, drinking and drug problems did not just pick these habits up all of a sudden. Some were learned, starting right from childhood through the process of family socialization. The child is watching what the parents do. Whether consciously or unconsciously, he picks up these habits, and before he knows it, he might get addicted and heaps of problems start to manifest.

Considering his childhood background, Éric expresses that at the beginning, homelessness is not by choice but afterwards, it could be.

For Antoine also, it's both ways. He explains when it is by choice and when it's not.

“Yeah, it's a choice for some, but usually, it's not a choice. When you arrive there, it's because you've got gambling problems, drug problems or alcohol problems or personal problems. It becomes a choice when a homeless says I'm gonna put my hands forward and ask money from the people, squat in plywood buildings for the rest of my life, and I'll pay no tax; I'm happy that way. This is when it's by choice”.

What subjects are trying to say here is that being homeless can be by both ways – ‘by choice’ and ‘not by choice’. If it is not by choice at the beginning, there is the likelihood for it to be by choice later. Homeless persons can get caught in the trap of permanent homelessness if care is not taken. Most respondents indicate that after enjoying and using certain benefits and services attached to the state of homelessness, homelessness might be difficult to quit, and then, it becomes a choice to be homeless.

The worker I interviewed does not believe that street people become homeless by choice. He is of the opinion that nobody would truly want to be in that state. He argues that those who spend their income on gambling, drugs and alcohol cannot be said to be homeless by choice because some actually want to quit but cannot. These people need special professional help to quit homelessness. I now proceed to determine if subjects have plans in quitting homelessness.

Are the homeless making an effort to quit homelessness?

I consider it important and pertinent to know the stand of the homeless themselves about their coming off the problem irrespective of public beliefs or opinions about the disposition of the homeless toward the problem in society. Knowing if they are concerned about coming off the problem can better aid policy makers especially in formulating policies that offer best strategies of how to address or handle the problem. I targeted a major question that would source out information on street people's disposition to quitting homelessness to their way of handling money. Since many of them depend on welfare as their source of income, I asked them of what they do with the money they get from welfare program. Responses to this question fall into two main categories. One, some save up mainly to be able to afford decent relatively low housing in the (near) future (so as to quit homelessness); two, others spend their income mainly on cigarettes, alcohol and gambling, and have accepted the lifestyle of homelessness. Most of those whose responses fall into the second category are those who have attempted getting back on their feet but have found it very difficult and frustrating to get back. Feeling disappointed and rejected by society, they now take each day as it comes, one at a time. They try to ensure they enjoy life to the best of their capability, some being involved in gambling and heaving drinking. Some in this category however, being used to the free services and benefits they get, have resorted to continue benefiting from the system.

The second category of responses implicitly informs us on why people may not want to give money to homeless people who beg on the street. They might feel that the street homeless would end up squandering the money. Here, it is easy to

blame the homeless for their state of homelessness. One might argue that homeless people do not want to be responsible or that they just want to have things easy all through. This could be the case for some. However, the problem extends far beyond it seems. It is one thing for homeless persons to have an uncorrected weakness in them that worsens their state of homelessness; it is another thing for society to have reinforcing elements of homelessness in place. I use the act of gambling as an illustration for this point.

Many homeless persons engage in gambling. Many enjoy it. Some however, want to quit but find it difficult to do so. This is especially a hard task (i.e. quitting gambling) considering the vast availability of venues to gamble. The Montréal casino is the first that comes to mind. It is a place that a gambling addict can spend all his savings. Also bars that have video lottery do encourage gambling. There are all sorts one can play: black jack, 649, super 7, etc. I must note that the government also has a part of the blame. The government, by investing in these machines in the casino, promotes gambling and reinforces homelessness. It is true that the casino is a place of fun for everybody. However, it should be noted that it takes peoples' money away at a very fast rate if care is not taken, and gambling addicts especially stand to be the most affected. If the casino for example, is a place that makes the poor poorer, I assert then that it is a place that makes more people become homeless.

Many homeless people who gamble want to quit but find it difficult to do so. Some have gone for gambling anonymous and other helpful programs to no avail. They still need help. The government needs to address this situation. Gerald is one who has made efforts to stop gambling (the main cause of his homelessness) but finds

it difficult to resist the urge since gambling places are easily available. His pay cheque goes mainly into gambling. I asked Gerald for the reason for his gambling, he replies thus:

“I don’t know. I just do it”.

Gerald (who once got an apartment and moved out of the OBM, only to move back in after a few weeks complaining that housing costs was too much than he could bear) expresses unhappiness about his state of being homeless.

“It’s just a bed (referring to the OBM), a place to come and sleep in. I miss my apartment. I miss the freedom to come and go as I want to do anything each time I want to. Everyday, things are getting harder and harder; gambling is one problem, and then the rent is just going higher and higher...I don’t know (what to do to quit). I tried already. I went to gambling anonymous. I went to a few meetings”.

Gambling addicts need the help of the government as well as help themselves too. Service providers in this area should think of and develop practical ways of helping those in need. Homeless persons who gamble have to keep trying to stop and make use of the helpful available services toward quitting.

Some homeless are not geared to work anymore because of the hard-life experiences they have been through, so that now, they just live each day as it is without any drive to do anything or come out of homelessness. Some have worked very hard and still have nothing to show for it. Denis is one of such who is not really interested in looking for jobs any longer.

“I worked in several companies, then I had my own company (a small set up) and some people didn’t pay me. I did contracts, and they didn’t pay me \$15,000, so I closed the door, paid all the employees, paid everything and then I closed - another hit in my life (the first was two divorces). I’m not looking for a job because I am too old, too sore, and too tired to do jobs. But

it depends, if the job is not too physical, I can do it, because I'm getting rheumatism now. I'm tired, I'm getting older, I'm tired... That's the abusing of your body when you're very young, I worked very hard when I was young, I mean, hard, I worked 20 hrs a day, 7 days a week, bringing in big rolls of cables, it was an abuse of my body".

- Denis

Denis' state of being homeless can be seen to be a combination of factors including family break-up (loss of asset to divorce proceedings), being swindled of money by business partners, and lack of employment.

Some homeless use their welfare to pay rents (if they're residents in the shelter) and for clothing. This shows responsibility and the desire to want to quit homelessness. Antoine collects \$800 every month as welfare (many homeless do not collect as much as this though). He collects this amount due to his health condition – lung and heart problems even though he receives free medical care. The following is what he does with the money he receives from the Québec government every month:

"I go to the museum, take a nice restaurant drink, pay my rents at the OBM, and save \$200".

I asked Antoine for the plans he had towards moving out of the OBM. His response is as follows:

"I'm searching a lot for an apartment, and I'll use part of the money that I saved from the welfare to pay for the apartment".

I conducted the interview with Antoine on Wednesday, June 16, 2004. Today, Antoine resides in his own apartment.

I asked Richard if he wanted to quit being homeless and leave OBM, he replied ‘yes’. In order to know if he was making effort to quit homelessness, I asked for what would do about it. He replied thus:

“I am working, trying to put out many hours as I am, looking for a second job”.

When Richard was on welfare initially, he spent it on drugs and alcohol but he quit, and started saving towards moving out. He is no longer on welfare because he now works. He does two jobs because the wage from one job is not enough to meet his essential needs if he is to quit homelessness. This is what a few homeless people have a problem with – having to work one’s life out to the extent that one has no life again, all in an effort to make ends meet because of the incapability of the minimum wage to cater for their basic needs. Richard, like Antoine, now resides in his own apartment.

Joe will be working hard at getting a job in order to be able to afford housing.

“At the end of this month, I’ll be getting my cell phone. Next month, I’ll probably be moving into my buddy’s apartment because he’s going to Vancouver for a month, and that’s a start because that’s how I’ll have an address. Because then I can honestly say I have an address and I have a phone where they can reach me, so I’m not actually lying”.

- Joe

Laurent, who was suddenly kicked out of his apartment because of default in rent payment, has the following as his plan.

“I’m looking for a place so I can get out of the streets; that’s first step. Second step, go back to school with a program, or get a work, that’s it”.

Here is an account of someone who doesn't only want to quit homelessness but also expresses his need for help in becoming a better person. Éric says he is unhappy with being on the street. He provides the following as the reason for his unhappiness.

"This is why I am unhappy; I have nobody really to talk to, nobody that I can really be honest with, you know, and I do a lot of meetings, NA, AA, and CA, I do a lot of meetings. I'm unhappy because I'm on the street. I'm unhappy because I'm irresponsible, I don't know how to manage money, and I admitted. I have a problem, you know, taking care of money, you know, and I was telling somebody recently, a social worker, I was telling her that you know what? I just have to relearn how to live, just like a kid, that somebody's gotta hold my hands, you know, it's just like a new mother, a new father, you know, I need this, and I'm 40. This is what I need. I need to be followed step by step into learning, reprogramming a lot of things in my life".

- Éric

While many are working towards quitting homelessness, some do not have concrete plans of quitting. Those that want to quit are saving money toward their apartments mainly from what they get as welfare, and also trying to do more jobs to realize this goal. Others however have accepted their state of being homeless and have adjusted to the benefit they get from the system.

In this chapter, I have explored the experiences of the homeless in society. This entails their experiences either in the shelter or on the street. One aspect of the experiences of the homeless in which homeless persons suffer inequalities that I have discussed here is exclusion. Different areas of exclusion discussed include health, housing, the economic, family, spatial and the social. It is seen that exclusion manifests in two forms: self exclusion and societal exclusion. The respondents I interviewed engage in self exclusion from family and politics while societal exclusion prevails in regard to the economic, spatial and the social. It is seen that the homeless

are excluded from housing, labor market, and the public space. Also, causes of homelessness, though found to be numerous e.g., drug and alcohol problems, gambling, family break ups, etc, most of the time come down to a major cause - inaffordability of housing, a factor that recalls the exclusion of the homeless from housing in society.

In concluding this chapter, I find Fallis and Murray's (1990) submission of the meaning of "home life", which Layton (2000) presents in his book, Homelessness: The Making and Unmaking Of A Crisis useful, as a way that can help us better understand how the homeless might feel cut off from or left out of society, and appreciate and grasp the seriousness of the problem of homelessness. Fallis and Murray present home life to entail "centrality, rootedness and place attachments"; "continuity, unity and order", in the sense that the home serves as an avenue for creating and bringing up the next generation, which would also nurture the generation that comes after it (on and on, it goes); "privacy, refuge, security and ownership" - having one's place which is comfortable, where one can do private things; "self-identity"; "social and family relations", facilitating family connectivity and intimacy; and lastly "community". A homeless person lacks most, if not all of the factors identified here; he or she lacks a home.

CONCLUSION

It is important to address what the stand of the homeless on inequality or injustice - social exclusion - that they experience, would be. The homeless would agree with Rawls that inequality exists in liberal democracies (they experience it). Also, depending on the causal factor of their homelessness, some might agree with the three contingencies Rawls lists as producing inequalities in liberal democratic societies, e.g., a person who is homeless due to lack of employment would agree with Rawls here on the existence of inequalities in such democracies.

The homeless would support the distribution argument from the perspective of welfare increase rather than cutbacks recently experienced by some. However, some homeless would argue for a long-lasting permanent solution to their state which is not addressed by the distribution of society's wealth that is proposed by Rawls (the difference principle). Some homeless would therefore argue that more concrete plans, which would make for the elimination of homelessness altogether is needed much more than being on welfare. On the other hand, those homeless who have adjusted to the lifestyle of homelessness and are now used to the free benefits of the system would not argue against Rawls's difference principle in this regard. This is because Rawls' difference principle emphasizes the distribution of society's resources to be to the benefit of the least advantaged. Therefore, as long as the homeless in this category continue to benefit from welfare and other services, they are likely to support his difference principle.

Another aspect to consider on the homeless' response to Rawls is Rawls's postulation of the "original position" characterized by "the veil of ignorance" in relation to political participation of citizens. The homeless I interviewed would argue that government leaders do not represent their views and opinions; neither do they represent citizens' interests. Moreover, the leaders cannot know what the homeless deem as reasonable since the former do not know the views or comprehensive doctrines of those they represent, and so the principles they select as 'just' might not be just to the homeless. An example of this is the panhandling laws or anti-homeless laws that are passed, which the homeless do not have any prior knowledge of sometimes, and are therefore suddenly forced to face and cope with. The homeless might view this action taken by law makers as unjust.

At this juncture, Mouffe would argue against representation (which is strong in Rawls's submission), averring that representation of citizens eliminates differential interests and opinions, such as those of the homeless. Mouffe would argue that due to representation, the voice of the homeless has been cut off. This would be the elimination of antagonisms which constitutes the political. Thus the homeless would be considered as excluded from politics. Here, Young would also recognize the exclusion of the homeless, and she would propose for more inclusion of the homeless in deliberative spaces. Young would identify the exclusion of the homeless in society as inequalities or injustices that prevail in liberal deliberative democracies, which ought not to be. All views and opinions should be heard and be involved in deliberation process. Therefore, if certain groups, particularly the least advantaged (who often have to struggle to be heard), in this case, the homeless, experience

exclusion, Young would identify such exclusion as an inequality existing in a liberal deliberative democracy, however, she would not justify its existence. Young would argue that homelessness should not be justified in liberal democracies. She would propose the inclusion of all citizens, the homeless too, in deliberation processes; this would free liberal deliberative democracies of inequalities.

This leads me to note homeless persons' detest for voting, in regard to their participation in the decision-making process. As reported by them, the homeless strongly believe that once political candidates for governmental positions assume their portfolios, they do not represent the interest of the people. If the interests of the homeless are not represented, neither do their opinions count or recognized in a democracy, to the extent that they detest participation in elections, then it can be argued that the homeless are not included in decision-making on issues. As Young would opine, such a democracy violates "the norm of inclusion" because it excludes one of its elements, in this case, the homeless.

I assert that not only including the less privileged in decision making process as Young suggests is sufficient. There is the need for elected government representatives to truly represent the interests of their fellow citizens while in office. In other words it is not sufficient for government officials to ask for opinions of citizens or engaging them in political participation. More importantly, public officials need to truly represent citizens, and carry out the views arrived at by all. Without this in place, inclusion has not taken its full course. However, I wish to note that the argument I briefly present here on Rawls, Mouffe and Young and how the homeless

might respond to these theorists is beyond the scope of my research; a deeper engagement into aspects of the argument is required.

I have been able to explain that homelessness is made possible in liberal deliberative democracies through the principles of justice that are applied at the basic structure of such societies. Liberal democracies assert that every citizen should have equal basic rights and liberties. With the free market system (characterized by profit maximization) in place at the basic structure, citizens have the right to private property. This in turn creates inequalities at the basic structure, a result of which is homelessness. It has also been argued that the tolerance or permissiveness of social and economic inequalities, as long as they are to the benefit of the least advantaged in liberal democracies as presented in Rawls's 'difference principle', makes for the justification of such inequalities and even their reinforcement, thus making homelessness to be possible in such democracies. I have further argued that inequalities or homelessness should not be permissible or justified in liberal deliberative democracies as this can create an indifference attitude in citizens to view homelessness as 'normal' or 'needful' in society.

There is still consistency between the causes of homelessness identified in my research and those in the literature. These include drug, alcohol and gambling problems, family break-ups, lack of affordable housing, conversion of apartment units into condominiums, unemployment, divorce, etc. In times past, drug and alcohol problems used to be the major contributing factors to homelessness, however, now, gambling is becoming a serious problem, an additive to the other causes identified above.

Exclusion of the homeless manifests in two ways: self exclusion and societal exclusion. More of self-exclusion of the homeless from family and politics manifests. However, most cases of self-exclusion from family by the homeless originate from families first cutting them (the homeless) off. Self-exclusion from politics is in the sense that the homeless do not participate in political activities such as voting; they are not interested. Both self exclusion and societal exclusion occur in the aspect of health. Sometimes, homeless persons intentionally do not make use of health care services. On the other hand, the homeless get cut off or neglected from accessing these health services. Societal exclusion prevails in other areas such as public space (spatial exclusion), housing, economic, and other aspects of the social. I wish to say that the homeless experience exclusion in society even if they do not concur with this view. The areas covered in the discussion of social exclusion of the homeless points to this fact. At the least, systemic forces play a part in their exclusion. However, the homeless themselves assert their being excluded and have provided descriptive explanations regarding ways in which they experience such exclusion.

I note a relationship existing between normative theory and practice in this analysis. This can be found in how Rawls' proposition of just distribution of society's wealth manifests in practice. I have discussed how the homeless in Canada/Québec benefit from the welfare system and other contributions of the government, wealthy individuals and charity groups. In addition, this relationship between theory and practice is seen in the field study conducted on getting to know ways by which the inequality (homelessness through workings of the free market system) already identified in the theoretical analysis manifests in the practical. Factors such as

unemployment or exclusion of the homeless from the labor market (in a capitalist advanced economic system), conversion of apartment units to condominiums, inaffordability of housing due to wage that cannot cater for all basic needs, etc, are given as causes of homelessness. These are factors that are all influenced (or produced) by the workings of a competitive system, the latter, being already identified in the theoretical analysis as a means through which inequalities are created.

In recapitulating information on the homeless experience that has been gained from this exploratory research, I have prepared a list summing up these experiences. Here is the homeless experience at a glance.

- 1) Being treated as an inferior being
- 2) Feeling insecure (e.g., fear of being attacked during the night)
- 3) Daily struggle to survive (e.g., in feeding)
- 4) No privacy
- 5) Exclusion (in the areas of health, housing and economic, space, social, etc)
- 6) Freedom from personal commitments and taxes.
- 7) Insufficient sleep
- 8) Lounging/Boredom/Loneliness
- 9) Problems with storage of personal belongings (carrying bags about because of no storage)
- 10) Health jeopardized

- 11) Underutilization of services due to protocols and complexities involved in receiving such services
- 12) Unemployment
- 13) Reinforcement of homelessness (difficulty experienced in quitting homelessness)
- 14) Adherence to shelter rules (sometimes burdensome for some homeless)
- 15) Dealing with hostilities from people
- 16) Feeling real hunger
- 17) Developing friendships with other homeless persons
- 18) Solidarity among the homeless
- 19) Being victims of violence (especially physical violence)
- 20) Surveillance (especially from the police)
- 21) Exposure to harsh weather
- 22) Keeping clean – a struggle
- 23) Feeling one's life is controlled by another
- 24) Learning bad habits/development of more problems on the street (introduction to drugs, heavy drinking and heavy smoking; and aggravation of problems for those involved already)

For future direction of research on homelessness, I recommend that more research be carried out on Aborigines. They are a part of the homeless population that little has been written on. Researchers on homelessness should conduct more studies on Aboriginal homelessness that would provide information and guide policy makers

while making policies regarding Aboriginal peoples. Second, more research on homelessness should be carried out in rural areas. Homelessness is beginning to grow in rural areas. However, most research on homelessness is conducted in urban areas; and as such, little has been written on rural homelessness. Finally, research geared toward counting the homeless is needed in Canada. There is no data yet on the number of homeless in Canada. Conducting this research can help us better understand the seriousness of the problem of homelessness; at least, it can help us understand its upsurge and therefore make for better policy formulation.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Oluwafunmilola Omole as part of her Masters thesis in the department of Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: to know the experiences of the homeless in society.

B. PROCEDURES

The study will be conducted at the Old Brewery Missions (OBM) at Clark Street. The participant, in conjunction with the supervisor will determine the appointment and duration of the interview.

All interviews will be audio taped.

Confidentiality will be maintained, the name of the participant will be changed.

Confidentiality of all information acquired will be protected, except as required by law.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is **CONFIDENTIAL** (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)
- I understand that the study may be published and that the thesis will be presented at the Sociology and Anthropology department, Concordia University.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

SECTION A

1. Are you a Canadian?
2. What province are you from?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. Are you married?
Do you have any children? Where are they?
5. Where do you sleep every night?
6. For how long have you been homeless?
7. Why did you start living at the Old Brewery Mission?
8. How is life in the shelter? (Tell me about your experience there; what you have to cope with, relationship with one another, etc.)
9. Have you ever slept on the street at night?
How is life on the street? (Tell me about how you lived/live on the street.)

SECTION B

10. (a) Do you relate with your wife and children?
(b) Do you have any ties with them?
 - How often do you get in touch with them?
 - If no ties, is it your choice?
 - Have you cut yourself off from your wife and children or they have cut you off?
11. (a) Do you have parents, brothers, sisters? Specify.
(b) Do you relate with them?
 - How often do you get in touch with them?
 - If no ties, is this your choice?

12. (a) Do you presently have a job? Specify.
 (b) Did you have one before? Specify job.
 (c) When did you quit the job? Why?
 (d) Are you presently looking for one?
 (e) Any hopes of getting one?
13. (a) Do you have any health problems? Specify.
 (b) Do you have access to health services?
 - If yes/no, how?
 (c) Do you make use of the services regularly?
 - If No, why?
 (d) When last did you have a check-up?
 (e) Do you feel neglected in society in accessing health services?
 - If yes, how?
14. Do you feel cut off from society?
 - If yes, in what ways?
 - If no, provide reasons.

 (By saying “cut off”, I mean —→ isolated, ignored, neglected, treated as an outcast, left out, shut out, kept out, etc, of society.)
15. (a) Do you get kept out of public space? [*e.g., gardens and parks, shops, stores, and places in general for public use or relaxation*]
 - If yes, how?
 (b) Do you get monitored by the police?
 - If yes, how?
16. Do you vote during elections?
 - If no, why?
17. In what other ways do you think you are neglected in society?
18. Do you receive any form of financial assistance from the government?
 - If yes, what do you do with the money?
19. Are people homeless by choice, or not by choice? What is your opinion?
20. In what year were you born?
21. Are you making any plans in moving out of here (i.e. the OBM)? What plans?
22. What would you say if you were to give the government suggestions on what to do to put an end to homelessness?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE

1. Why do people become homeless?
2. Who are the residents? Who are the “on-the line”?
3. What is the daily operation (morning to night) of the OBM?
4. Do the homeless receive financial aid from the government? (Welfare?)
 - If yes, is it for all or for some?
 - What category of homeless persons receives this financial aid?
 - Is it difficult getting enrolled in the welfare plan?
 - Has there been cutbacks on welfare for homeless persons in recent years?
5. Are the homeless ignored or cut off from society?
 - If yes/no, in what ways?
6. Is homelessness by choice or not by choice?
7. What are the needs of the shelter for better efficiency and effectiveness?
8. What recommendation can you give the Canadian government for the elimination of homelessness?

APPENDIX D

LIFE HISTORIES

Nicholas

Nicholas is 38 years old. Widowed in 1998 with no children, Nicholas decided to move into Montréal. In his fourth year in Montréal, Nicholas' apartment was converted into a condominium. He had to move out because he could not afford the rents for the condo. Nicholas could not get another apartment that his income could afford; as such, he was on the streets of Montréal for a month. At first, life on the street was interesting and adventurous for Nicholas who was brought up in Val d'Or ("valley of gold" in English), and had never been exposed to city life. He was used to having family around and decisions being made in conjunction with people. His living on the street made him adjust to being on his own and also gave him the opportunity to clear his mind on many disturbing issues, and make personal life decisions. He heard about the room and board at the OBM and decided to move in. He has been living at the OBM as a resident for about 16 months now. He is on welfare and saving towards his new home.

Richard

Richard is 34 years old. He has a mum, 2 brothers and 3 sisters. He is divorced with two children who live with their mother in Montréal; however, he keeps in touch with his children. Richard suffers from panic attacks. The presence of many people gives him panic attacks. He was a supervisor at a textile company before he quit his job due to these attacks. Richard then moved into the OBM. His moving into the OBM was also a way of hiding from his family which he says is full of criminals. They commit crimes and he does not want to be involved with them. Before moving into the OBM, Richard stayed at the Welcome hall. From there, he was in jail for a month. After his release, he was on the street for sometime before finally moving into the OBM. Life on the street for Richard was not pleasant; he once got punched. Before, Richard spent his welfare cheques on drugs and alcohol, however, he stopped, and started

saving so as to “put my life back in order”, as he put it. Richard lived at the OBM for 6 months. He moved out into his own apartment in late June.

Joe

Joe is 58 years old (the oldest of all the participants). He is a widower with three children who live in Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto. He keeps in touch with his children. Joe has 2 brothers and 4 sisters. After living alone for sometime after his wife’s death, Joe moved into the OBM and has been living there since January, 2004. He is a non-resident at the OBM. Joe moved into the OBM because he did not get the type of employment he wanted, and so could not afford to pay rents. He wants a job that is not stressful, one that does not involve much use of physical strength, as he says he is getting older. Joe was a building supervisor till October 2003. He traveled to visit his child in Vancouver in December and was supposed to resume a job as a building supervisor in January 2004. However the employer died in an accident. He has not been able to get that type of job. Joe receives pension but he says it is not sufficient to pay his rents.

Gerald

Gerald is 48 years old. He is divorced with 2 children who live with their mother. After high school, he started work and soon got married. He soon developed the gambling habit which became a serious problem for him that first of all, led to the break-up of his family and second, to his inability to pay rent. When he got evicted from his apartment at South Shore, he moved into the OBM as a non-resident. Gerald still works in a book packaging company. However, most of his income goes into gambling which he finds difficult to quit even after making several attempts.

Alfred

Alfred is 35 years old. He is not married and has no children. Alfred grew up in a family of parents, a brother and a sister. After graduating from high school, Alfred started work. He worked as a truck driver before he moved into the OBM. Alfred quit work because he wanted to gain fulfillment in engaging in service to humanity and community. He had spent his life working very hard, running after possessions, which for him was not a quality life. He would rather volunteer and help needy people than work to get others rich. He felt his life was being wasted and therefore quit his job. He now volunteers for 10 to 12 hours every week. However, now he works for income. The work is in the community service sector. Alfred is still in close touch with his parents who find his decision rather strange but would not make any complaint about it.

Denis

Denis is 47 years old, divorced, and has two children who he has no touch with. Denis has two brothers and three sisters. He relates with his brothers and just one of his sisters. He is not on speaking terms with his other sisters. His reason being that they never took good care of their mother while she was alive, but were eager to inherit her property after her death. He calls them “money picking sisters”. Denis started work on his graduation from high school. He sometimes worked for about 20 hours a day in factories where the nature of his job included cable pulling. In 1982, Denis left Québec for Alberta to visit some friends. He went on this trip out of frustration –his mother had just died, he had just divorced, and he was depressed. Arriving at Alberta, he decided to settle there. He lived in Alberta for 20 years, worked as a telecommunication assistant in a company for sometime, and then set up his own company. However, the company folded up due to his clients’ incompetence. He decided to relocate back to Québec because his life was threatened by a murder cycle gang and also because he desired to see his two children who he had not seen in 20 years. On getting to Québec however, he could not afford rent and had no where to live. He stayed in Maison du père for 15 days after which he moved into the OBM.

Denis is a heavy smoker and presently suffers from rheumatism. He recently moved (October) into an apartment with a friend of his. He lived for two years and four months at the OBM, sleeping at times in parks, on the street, within this period.

Johnson

Johnson is a 30 year-old American who is processing his papers for Canadian citizenship. He is the only child of his parents. His parents are divorced, and he grew up from a broken home. He is not married but has two children from two different women. During his childhood, while still in the US, he lived sometimes on the street with friends and also did drugs. After some years, Johnson set up a small company (a condom company) in the before deciding to move to Canada. Johnson, who had been visiting Canada right from his youth, prefers Canadian policies to those of the US. In his view, there is more freedom of expression here in Canada than in the US. Moreover, in his view, people are friendlier here. He stopped communicating with his parents because he got fed up with having to listen to both disagree and quarrel over issues. Johnson lived on the street for sometime before moving into the OBM in August 2003; he ran out of money and had no place to live.

Jean

Jean is 46 years old, divorced and has a daughter with no knowledge of her whereabouts. Drug, alcohol, and gambling problems led to Jean's state of homelessness. He got these problems from what he learned from his father as he grew. As a child, he watched his father gamble, drink and do drugs. He learned these and eventually ended up the same way. He started committing crimes, and went to jail twice. After his release from jail the first time, he tried getting employment but was not successful in getting one due to past criminal records. He ended up on the street in Montréal for 18 months. He started doing crimes again which led him to jail the second time. After his release, he lived on the street for about a month before moving into the OBM. Jean no longer does drugs nor gamble. However, he still has alcohol

problem. He eventually saved up for his apartment from his welfare cheques. He now has his own apartment.

Jacques

Jacques is 32 years old, single, with no children. Jacques has both parents alive with a brother and a sister. He is in touch with his family. Jacques dropped out of college in the first year of his studies. He soon developed alcohol and drug problems. He ended up on the street for two years (2000 and 2001). While living on the street, he started gambling. He would work during the day then in the evenings drink till late into the night and sleep on the street. He eventually lost his job, moved to Sherbrooke for a rehabilitation program and after a while, decided to move back to Montréal because there were no jobs in Sherbrooke. On getting to Montréal, Jacques found it difficult getting a job and also needed a place to stay, he then moved into the OBM. Jacques has quit heavy drinking, drugs, and gambling. He is presently working, and saving up for his apartment. He has been living at the OBM now for about 5 months.

Henry

Henry is 56 years old, divorced, and has two daughters and one son who reside in Toronto and Montréal. Henry has two brothers and three sisters who he does not relate with. Henry's highest level of education was elementary school. He worked several years as a system machinist, and had a comfortable life until he got a huge amount of loan. He got the loan to start off his company. However, he had problems with establishing the company. He soon found himself struggling with his plan. His financial situation started getting bad and he could not cope with the demand placed on him as the breadwinner of the family. The situation in the family got tense and finally led to a divorce. However, he was not paying alimony. The government then slashed his gross income by 50%. Even though he was working, Henry soon realized that he could no longer pay his debt; he could no longer afford paying rents. He filed bankruptcy, stopped work and moved into the OBM. Henry has taken what happened

to him to be his destiny. His mission, as he puts it is, “total detachment from being a householder”.

Laurent

Laurent is 36 years old, single and does not have any children. Laurent’s parents are both alive, and he has a brother and a sister. After high school, Laurent started working. He was a security agent in his last job. He quit as a result of depression; he was under family pressure and other personal problems. On May 1, 2004, Laurent was kicked out of his apartment by his landlord because of an outstanding three month-rent. His room mate had not paid his own part of the rent, and this affected him. He was on the streets for some time before moving into the OBM. Laurent does not relate with his family because they judge and criticize him a lot. He is on welfare, presently looking for an apartment, and still intends going back to school.

Ryan

Ryan is 41 years old, single and has no children. He has a father and a brother who live within the province of Québec. Ryan has a college degree in computer programming. For a long time, he worked in South Africa as a computer programmer. The job became boring for him, and he decided to come back home. On his arrival, he lived with his brother for sometime, and then decided to move into Montréal. In July 2003, Ryan moved into Montréal and started a job search. He was living on credit cards. He soon ran out of money and could not afford to pay rents. He slept on the street for some nights and then moved into the OBM in October 2003. Ryan has the drug problem. He is presently on welfare, and he uses part of the money to pay his debt on credit cards and sometimes on drugs.

Éric

Éric is 40 years old. He grew up in a family of father, mother and five sisters. He is divorced and has three children. Éric grew up an unhappy child. His father was a busy reverend who traveled a lot. His mother was a house wife who took care of the children at home. Éric says his mother tried her best for him but that his father did not really show him love. Anytime his father arrived from a trip, he never got him nice gifts like he did for his sisters. He also never carried him or hugged him like he did to his other children. This made Éric believe he was not wanted in the family. He therefore grew up seeking love but never found. Éric also grew up with being used to be commanded by his father and being told what to do every time. He was often not given the opportunity to do things independently. He was hardly commended for anything he did. When he grew up, it therefore became difficult for him to take responsibilities. Éric's father soon started seeing another woman, and eventually left his wife and children. This made Éric stop going to church. He felt his mother did not deserve what she was getting from his father. He presently does not relate with his father. Éric went only to elementary school, and when he was old enough, he started work. He worked in different companies, and then finally in a construction company. He got good pay and was even promoted. While working, he got into drugs and alcohol. He also got married and continued making money from his place of work. He soon started making money also from illegal drug deals. He started cheating on his wife. His marriage began to crumble, especially when his wife discovered he was involved in bad deals. He later got himself a girlfriend, divorced his wife, and moved to his girl friend's place. He lost his job, and started another job – stripping, but continued doing drugs till he ran out of money. He and his girlfriend started having quarrels; he finally left her and took to the streets. Éric still does drugs. He is sad in life. He still does not relate with his wife and children. He is not willing to show up to them unless he becomes a fully changed person lest he hurts them again. He does not want his children to be like him and he feels they are too good for him. He realizes that he made a terrible mistake of divorcing his wife who cared about him. However, he feels that his up-bringing is the source of his troubles. He still does not relate with

his parents, neither does he with his sisters. He is now learning how to be a responsible person; how to deal with life alone rather than being dependent on others.

Antoine

Antoine is 49 years old. After high school, he proceeded to get his baccalauréat. After graduating, he started work. He has worked as a bus driver. He has also served in the army at three different times. Antoine got married 8 times to eight different women. He is presently divorced. He has 16 children, who are all over Canada and Europe. Antoine relates with his ex-wives and calls his children once a month and sees them every Christmas. Antoine still has both parents with two brothers. Over the years, he developed some health problems. He has heart and lung problems, and also suffers from manic depression. Antoine had made a deposit payment and was supposed to move into a new apartment when the landlord rented the apartment to someone else. Having no where to stay, he moved into the OBM. The issue is now a court case. Presently, Antoine has no job but wants to join the anti terrorist squad.

Bob

Bob is 32 years old. He is not married. He has no children. He has parents, five brothers and one sister. After high school, Bob proceeded to college to study Religion. He worked while he studied and soon found out that he could not combine the two. Moreover, he did not have good grades, and he had debt from student loan to pay. Bob's family was of no help. They told him to sort himself out. He dropped out of college and moved to Montréal to work, so as to save up and pay his debt. He started work; however, he could not save much. For sometime, he was on the streets, and then eventually moved into the OBM. He still sleeps on the street sometimes. When Bob's family heard that he had become homeless, they cut off from him and would want nothing to do with him despite the effort he has made to get close to them. Bob has been homeless over the past 3 years now. He presently works as a telemarketer and says he is saving up.