THE RELATIONSHIP OF HOMELESSNESS-
DISENFRANCHISEMENT AND CRIMINALITY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Being homeless in the "Land of Opportunity" is tantamount to having committed a crime. Homelessness offends the public conscience. It strikes at the very heart of the American value system of individualism and independence. To require welfare assistance for survival threatens the basic American ideology that all who want to succeed can succeed and all others must have done something wrong.

Homelessness is a very prominent social issue in society. It is a global problem, but the scope of this paper deals only with a national problem which effects from three to four million people directly and the rest of the population indirectly (Kozol, 1988). Personal observations while working with the homeless seemed to indicate that criminal behavior may be another social ill which somehow intertwines with the state of being homeless. In order to effectively research the possible link of these two social ills, it must be understood that not all criminals are homeless and, conversely, not all homeless are criminals.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout history there have been people labeled as "gypsies," "hobos," and "wanderers" (Woodrooffe, 1974). Today the labels have been changed to "street people" and "homeless" (Hope & Young, 1986). As with most social problems, there is a peak interest period during which much research and emphasis is focused on the social outcasts. This focus period on homelessness came in the latter half of the 1980s. The field research endeavor of living with the homeless and crusading for them was done by such advocates as Mitch Snyder and Mary Ellen Hombs (Hombs & Snyder, 1986). Such notable books as Falling From Grace (Newman, 1988) and Rachel and Her Children (Kozol, 1988) attempted to bring the plight of the homeless to the conscious level of the American public. It was hoped that heightened public awareness would bring about solutions to the problem. Pictorial books, such as Homeless In America (1988), which graphically portrayed the despair, desperation, and degradation of the homeless, were offered as testimony to the hopeless plight of so many Americans. Many reports, such as the Report of the Governor's Task Force on the Homeless in 1988 and Homelessness in the States (Walker, 1989), were
submitted to government bodies with recommendations to help alleviate a growing national concern.

Literature is very limited on the possible relationship between crime and homelessness. It is much easier to study one or the other. However, there are some indications that a link does exist. Hombs and Snyder (1986) point out that interaction with the law is inevitable, since it is nearly impossible to be destitute and to live within the confines of the law. Drinking, urinating, defecating or even changing clothes on the street are all illegal. If homelessness and criminal behavior often cross paths and unite, then it should be possible to identify the link through qualitative research. Because it is such a sensitive, intimate decision to reveal criminal involvement, trust and confidentiality are essential and can be accomplished only through the personal contact approach of qualitative field research (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). Introduction to Criminology (Fox, 1976) and Introduction to Criminology Theories and Methods, and Criminal Behavior (Hagan, 1986) were consulted for background understanding and possible theoretical insights.
CHAPTER III

HOMELESSNESS-DISENFRANCHISEMENT AND CRIMINALITY AS SOCIAL ILLS

Homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality are strange bedfellows, but appear to feed on one another in a frenzy which destroys human dignity and degrades people to virtual non-existence. It is the purpose of this research to focus on a possible connection between the two. Observations made by this author while working for the states of Oklahoma and Missouri as a social worker and as a volunteer assistant in several private organizations, brought about speculation as to a tie between these two human conditions. Although such an endeavor may not seem significant, what is significant is the increasing numbers of persons who are being identified as homeless/criminal (perhaps erroneously).

The rapidly expanding number of persons identified as homeless, as well as those being labeled criminal, continually leads to one thing: ballooning expenditure of public monies (Rodgers, 1982; Walker, 1989). But beyond this, there tends to emerge from these two labels a strong statement that a dramatic social evolution is taking place with great force and creating by-product subcultural waste (Ropers, 1988). Unfortunately
"getting at" a possible linkage between these two groups is not simple or obvious. Criminality is identified and determined through the courts while homelessness is vaguely interpreted to be one of many definitions according to multiple authors (Hombs & Snyder, 1986; Ropers, 1988; Kozol, 1988; Governor's Task Force Report, 1988; and Hope & Young, 1986). But none of these definitions identifies or even indicates the true dilemma of homelessness, that is, being disenfranchised.

Identifying subject material for research in each of these categories for the purposes of finding some possible links will clearly rely upon being able to define each category suitably. A further complication exists in that the homeless-disenfranchised issue is primarily dealt with by those in the social sciences, while criminality is regarded as one of the duties of the judicial system.

The crossing of paths between the disciplines of sociological/psychological/physiological interests and jurisprudence concerns is rocky and sometimes uncrossable, because of differences in goals as well as mechanisms by which they deal with these two areas.

It is essential that the terminologies "crime" and "homelessness" be brought from an opaque review to a translucent one as seen by this author for the purposes of making appropriate conclusions based upon interview material.
If homelessness was truly indicative of its label, this social problem would be easily solved; it would merely be a housing problem (Hombs & Snyder, 1986). For the purpose of this study, homelessness is seen as a status of being virtually non-existent in society (i.e., disenfranchised). This means the individual does not have a mailing address or any place of residence for more than two to three weeks at a time. Furthermore, these individuals have neither the external nor internal resources to terminate their homeless state. Their homeless dilemma has greatly impaired any individual attempt to exercise inalienable rights in an effort to achieve even the simplest of civil rights. The criteria of necessary dependency must be evident. That is to say, that immediately and foremost in their existence is the need for outside intervention for their survival, specifically pertaining to shelter (chiefly in inclement weather), food, medicine and legal assistance. This definition is so contrived for the purposes of very bluntly getting at the basic question, "Is homelessness an individual or social problem regarding the individual?"
CHAPTER IV
HISTORICAL REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS

Because historical records are vague concerning the homeless and cultural attitudes vary about the characteristics of homelessness in historical time and place (Zeitgeist), one can only make assumptions about this social phenomenon. One quickly jumps at the obvious in ancient history to assumptions about hunting and gathering tribes, as well as nomadic tribes. These societies frequently relocated themselves, but were not void of social dynamics and individual internal dependencies. There is no mention of disenfranchised individuals. The poor were seen as the focus of benevolence and care for them was a part of religious and cultural responsibilities (Woodrofe, 1974; Komisor, 1973).

It is reasonable to assume that there were those who were either expelled or became separated from their clans who experienced a type of homelessness. Their abilities to survive without the group were severely hampered, if for no other reason but to ward off predators and possible assailants. Recorded history reveals, by way of the Babylonian King Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.), that Hammurabi's code (which is preceded by Sumerian Period
records with similar codes) is the most complete and best preserved legal code from Mesopotamia (Kagan et. al., 1983). Additionally, it is the best indicator of its time that depicts the strict social fiber and characteristics of its people. As indicated in this document, which deals with the division of class including the disenfranchised, there did exist at the time those who could be labeled as homeless. The disenfranchised are clearly documented from this period on with respect to beggars, thieves, and despots (Kagan, et. al., 1983).

At different times from ancient history to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the concept of being disenfranchised or homeless (with the exception of war induced disenfranchisement and homelessness) was most generally connected with one's social and economic status. The poor became disenfranchised, but very seldom did the rich. If the rich did become disenfranchised, it was for a short time and was an individual situation, not a group one (Hombs & Snyder, 1986). With the transition from a Gemeinshaft to a Gesellschaft society, dependency for one's subsistence transferred from the individual to the company. Regardless of class or status, any one person or group could be quickly disenfranchised by the failure of the company. The maturity of the fiber of society was such (due by and large to an increased media capability) that an
individual could lose his status and thereby become disenfranchised and stigmatized much quicker than before. From this period to the technological revolution of today, disenfranchisement and homelessness have been only exacerbated. From the time that social fiber was first formed, it appeared that caring for those who were disenfranchised and homeless was a duty. Whether this was a self-appointed or self-manipulated duty, religious concerns felt it was not only advantageous, but also important to their religious cause. This attitude was not all-pervasive or continuous throughout the course of time being reviewed. But there is clear evidence that the intent and the attitude of such a benevolent endeavor did clearly exist (Woodroofe, 1974, Komisar, 1973). Those who needed help received it from individual almsgivers or from the Church. The Churches' right to collect tithes made the Church itself a public institution. Canon law required that the clergy be hospitable and merciful to the poor, and one third of the income of the parish church was earmarked for charity. In addition, monasteries gave food and lodging to anyone who asked for it. A request by a person for aid was enough to make him eligible. Aid was a right to those who needed it.

Additionally, many cultures, nations, states and countries similarly demonstrated within their laws and financial appropriations, the efforts to address the
needs of the disenfranchised and homeless (Hombs & Snyder, 1986; Woodrofe, 1974). It is interesting to note that the issues of disenfranchisement and homelessness, mixed with the stench of poverty, led to the overthrow of governments that refused to address such social issues. The refuse of society desperately sought refuge in the feelings and kindness of their fellow man to thwart the pains of fear and being forgotten. Marx paints this picture throughout his writings as well as does Dickens in his novels. A good many paintings throughout the aesthetic period vividly portray these thoughts and suffering.
CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CRIMINITY

Understanding the difficulty of achieving and maintaining individual and social harmony makes it easy to comprehend and accept that chaos and anomie were initially pervasive at the beginning of the formation of society (Rossides, 1978). Recorded history and present day world events provide justification for such statements. Maintaining individual discipline, while at the same time cultivating social law and order, is not only difficult but costly in time, money, and even lives.

As individuals began to group for the purposes of protection, subsistence, and perpetuating their clans, some structure was necessary to safeguard the cohesiveness of that clan. According to Weber (Rossides, 1978), the major universal organizations were the household, clan, and neighborhood. All were "unequivocally endowed with an intense person-oriented, or communal, aspect" (ed. Antonio & Glassman, 1985, pg. 52). In Weber's analysis, the most important universal organization was the household. In the household organization the intense bond of intimacy and perpetual interaction between family members resulted in distinct values. The sense of loyalty thus gained toward the in-
group formed the basis for a strong household solidarity in dealing with the outside world.

The clan served as a protective organization when outsiders threatened the households. The organization of the clan with clear boundaries and a head operated only if necessary in order to protect social concerns.

Under normal situations, unlike the household, the clan stayed an amorphous collection of people without a clear hierarchy and required only intermittent and irregular social action (Ibid., 53). The clan, according to Weber, was the original locus for faithfulness.

The next level of universal organization was the neighborhood (Ibid., 53). The circle of participants of a neighborhood varied far more than either the household or clan. Due to residing in close proximity, the social interaction was much less intensive or continuous than in a household. Weber believed that, as a result of the dependence of neighbors upon one another in times of distress, the neighborhood was the original locus for an ethic of mutual assistance. Weber explained neighborliness as being exercised especially when mutual dependence was clear, such as between big landowners and their helpers (Ibid., 54). In understanding the importance of protecting the household, clan, neighborhood, or a highly sophisticated governmental society, one thing remains significant: there must be a means by which social order is maintained.
According to Weber (Rossides, 1978, p. 368-369), "Law exists when there is a probability that an order will be upheld by a specific staff of men who will use physical or psychical compulsion with the intention of obtaining conformity with the order, or of inflicting sanction for infringement of it. The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or a number or men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action (Rossides, 1978, p. 368-369)."

But there must be a distinction made between the type of society that existed when survival was the main goal and one that exists where economics and politics are the driving forces.

As long as there is a common sense approach to collective social issues, harmony prevails. Thomas Reid (Duncan, 1981) defines common sense as being a "sense" about a particular issue that is commonly held by the group or society. He further specifies the word "sense" as dealing with those issues that are empirically qualified. The issues are also self-evident and can be readily accepted as fact. With little or no effort, a common agreement, based upon these senses of perception,
can prevail among a small or large group in any given society as long as the preservation of life and property are considered a rational way of existing. Common sense maintains importance only as long as the goals of the society are for the common good and are void of the need for political gains. Laws should be established and enacted dealing with the simplicities of survival and not the whims of economical gain. Those who are willing to work, or at least give support to the common efforts of the group, cannot be disenfranchised or homeless. A person who deviates from the worth of the common sense of the group (depending upon each group and society's age of responsibility) is not seen as ill or inept, but as an enemy. Either the individual does not have the ability to discern self-evident truths or he truly is intent on the destruction of the group. Either way, he is a liability and it becomes necessary to either destroy him or banish him.

Locke (Bottomore & Nisbet, 1978) takes Reid's thoughts one step further. Instead of discussing common sense, he invokes the image of "commonwealth", thereby introducing economic concerns and elevating the group to a society which now must address political interest. The commonwealth, according to Locke, is the whole of society that can agree to, or at least submit to, rules and regulations that are seen as maintaining the best possible conditions for controlling external and internal
concerns of that society. In dealing with the concept of the commonwealth, individual or sub-group interest is given birth. The ability of that individual or that group to either buy or subversively sway a majority to establish a law becomes problematic. This type of action creates a situation whereby empowerment, either economically or politically, allows the few to rule the many. Subsistence needs become a way of controlling the masses. Amenities of life are those things which now are used for lobbying and thereby distort the concept of the good for all. Eventually there are those who, through their political ambitions, gain vast wealth. The remainder of society loses its wealth rendering in an effort to escape the tyranny of those who have become politically strong. This situation remains until those attempting to escape austere political control have no more to render. At this point they become disenfranchised (i.e. either you pay your property tax or you lose your property). As Marx points out, this oftentimes can end up in a "haves and haves-nots" situation (Rossides, 1978). As long as the "haves" can control the "have-nots", those who are disenfranchised and homeless continue to be left unnoticed and suffering until their numbers grow substantially to the point by which they create a common sense and develop their own commonwealth. Locke (Bottomore & Nisbet, 1978) identified those who do not protect and guard the
commonwealth as enemies of the state. And, although they may be benevolently referred to as homeless-disenfranchised, they are nevertheless harmful to the commonwealth and enemies of the state. The homeless-disenfranchised thus become identified as being criminals.

Criminality is a status of being identified as having committed a crime. One cannot be a criminal until one has been duly processed and labeled as a criminal. There are other ways by which such labeling takes place other than in the courtroom. Society in its effort to achieve the dreams of prosperity maintains within itself a protective measure. By disassociating itself from the less fortunate, it provides itself with an unobstructed avenue toward self-actualization. It is this portion of society that separates itself from the undesirable part of society and not the undesirable part of society that separates itself from the self-indulged achievers. The homeless-disenfranchised are the responsibility of the "haves" as much as the "have-nots". The affluent of society (middle class and above) desensitize themselves to the ills of the less fortunate by creating myths which become labels. Their myths consist of such beliefs as that the homeless-disenfranchised must be lazy, drunkards, druggies or dummies. A kinder scenario is that they are illiterate, illicit or illegitimate. When
they break society's rules, they are categorized as criminals.
A cursory review of the literature alludes to the fact that many who are identified as homeless-disenfranchised have had some involvement with the judicial system. In their book *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere*, Hombs and Snyder (1986, p. 106) state that "Interaction with the court is inevitable, since it is nearly impossible to be destitute and live within the confines of the law. Drinking, urinating, defecating, or changing clothes on the street: all are illegal." Police take action against street people for camping in public places, panhandling, trespassing on private property, or violating other local ordinances. And sometimes street people shoplift, break into buildings, enter into fights, drink or do drugs in order to survive, or ease the pain of survival-level existence, according to Baxter and Hopper (1981) in their book, *Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York City.*

There are further indications that either by choice in an effort to survive, or by mistake because of laws that prohibit homelessness, a good many of these
individuals have transgressed the law without prosecution. Literature reveals that there are people, who have been or are presently incarcerated in federal or state institutions, who were at one time homeless-disenfranchised (Gelberg, 1988; Fischer, 1988). Yet there is no conclusive research to substantiate this fact, and there is limited formalized theory to explain why such a phenomenon would or could exist. What, if any, criminal behavior comes about due to a homeless-disenfranchised state is the scope of this research.

Does such possible criminal involvement create propensities toward future criminality? Could "criminal" merely be a label for misunderstood behavior by an individual who is attempting to survive at a basic level? It is imperative to distinguish between one's social plight and one's legal status. Perhaps the legal system is being used as a processing agent to deal with a misunderstood and complicated social illness.

It seems many who are homeless-disenfranchised and destitute are at best corralled and driven until they can be charged with a notable crime and then incarcerated. It would be interesting to be able to identify the number that presently are in our penal institutions, who would not be incarcerated if they would not have been homeless-disenfranchised. Although it is established that to officially classify an individual as criminal necessitates that the individual be convicted of a crime,
this research foregoes the legality of conviction and identifies only actions that could be legally prosecuted.
CHAPTER VII

METHODS

In this research two major terms must be operationalized: homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality. As there are no textbook definitions that are unilaterally adhered to (in or out of sociology), for the purposes of clarity and to meet the requirements of research, it is necessary to formulate the following definitions.

Homelessness-Disenfranchisement

It is initially easier to identify what homelessness-disenfranchisement is not. Homelessness-disenfranchisement is not appropriately addressed when considering individuals who are merely without housing arrangements. It cannot be assumed that because a person or persons, male or female, are roaming the streets foraging for food they are homeless-disenfranchised. This term does not delineate sex, ethnicity, religiosity, age, class, or economic status. Nor does it preclude an understanding of a pre- or post-relationship to an individual's state of homelessness. It is safe to conclude only that homelessness-disenfranchisement is a
product of particular circumstances that lead to a
desperate and difficult set of circumstances effecting an
individual's immediate reality. Homelessness-
disenfranchisement does not accentuate poverty. Although
poverty is a part of this status, it is only a part. The
individuals studied for this research were required to be
experiencing all of the following criteria, without
exception.

---The individual must be experiencing a state of
anomie. The person is suffering from a lack of self-
worth which is expressed by an inability to identify
personal purpose and direction. He has become socially
disconnected. He is undergoing personal unrest and
verbalizes a feeling of expulsion from society expressed
in words that would indicate alienation. In a number of
personal encounters the individual uses such terms that
would lead the observer to draw the conclusion there is
much uncertainty in his expectations for the next 24
hours.

---The individual is devoid of any assistance from
immediate or extended family or friends. All such
assistance must have been exhausted. Whether the
individual did or did not previously receive assistance
is not important. What is important is that an attempt
was made and there is no longer, or perhaps never has
been, any assistance given. The individual must be
totally unable to feed, clothe, and house himself and any
---The individual must be in some shelter service, regardless of whether it is provided by public or private benevolent concerns. If an individual is not receiving shelter services, then there is still some state of mind on his part of autonomy and self-reliance.

Criminality

In order to maintain the integrity of this research, the meaning of criminality, as it pertains to this study, has little to do with the judicial process. This is a judgment call on the part of the researcher in determining whether responses to particular questions reveal possible prosecutable actions. It is not criminal that a 21-year-old takes a record from a local store. It is wrong, inappropriate and illegal, but, if this illegal action is not identified and he is not prosecuted, it is not a criminal action. The owners of the store from which the record was stolen could press charges (if they were aware of the fact) and, with appropriate legal action, find this individual guilty of theft. Then he would be identified as a criminal. The researcher, at the time of the interview, determined whether or not illegal actions had been taken by the respondent. Furthermore, these illegal actions must have taken place in direct response to being homeless-disenfranchised. This research is not focused on illegal or criminal
actions that were responsible for the homelessness-disenfranchisement of the individuals interviewed.

Certain questions in the interview were designed to determine whether criminal activity preceded homelessness-disenfranchisement or was a response to it. Illegal actions for the purposes of final conclusions in this study are concerned only with efforts to meet survival needs, i.e., by stealing food, breaking and entering for a place to spend the night, or committing fraud, etc.

A research attempt at this level can only produce initial observations. Of the two possible types of research, quantitative and qualitative, it appears that the qualitative direction is the best and the most effective one in this endeavor. There are many trust issues, along with confidentiality concerns, that are based upon the rapport that can or cannot be cultivated in an already sensitive situation. Once respondents were assured of confidentiality, they generally became relaxed and gave in-depth information. Additionally, the qualitative research method was adopted so that a narrow observation of a respondent's attitudinal adjustments could be observed. It was important to make very general conclusions concerning the appropriateness of questions that make reference to illegal actions (Babbie, 1983). For instance, Question 17 requires an explanation concerning an element of justification regarding the
respondent’s action that is directly linked to a law or set of laws. It would be difficult to ascertain validity to these particular types of questions without spending a longer period of time with the respondent in order to observe his understanding of the present social reality. It quickly became obvious that the reality of the respondents was not society’s reality or the researcher’s. Interviews made clear the fact that the researcher was dealing with two realities: that of society versus that of the homeless-disenfranchised. In order to maintain the focus of the research a comprehensive understanding of these two realities was paramount. Positioning this survey in the reality of the sample population had great importance on the validity. The surveyed population apparently experiences an altering of what is real and what is necessary as compared to the norms set by society. Continuous efforts had to be made to identify the sample population’s reality. This was done to ensure that the possible connection between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality was in fact identified. For example, those surveyed typically did not see theft of food for survivability as theft. Reality in this situation had so greatly been altered, based upon survivability needs, that a new reality emerged: Whatever is necessary to survive is normal behavior. Furthermore, it is very important to this research that reliability be
maintained. In order to assure this, the reality within which the respondents operated was accepted. In matters of validity and reliability, qualitative research seemed to offer a better approach.

In an effort to maintain the integrity of the relationship between the researcher and those being researched, confidentiality was paramount.

Data analysis was accomplished by way of inductive logic. Because this research pertains to an attempt to identify a possible link between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality, efforts were made to identify similarities and dissimilarities in attitudes and actions existing regarding why those surveyed do or do not involve themselves in illegal actions. The reality of the sample population dealt with such truths as the basic needs for food, shelter, love, happiness, and connectivity with the group. Criminality is measurable in this interview instrument based upon the following definition. Having already discussed the legal definition of criminality, it has been determined that not only a crime must be committed, but a judgment too must be rendered of guilt. It is not important to this research whether or not guilt is established or confirmed, but simply that an infraction against established laws has occurred. Although those who are being interviewed are acting as a filter inasmuch as they determine what actions are or are not criminal, it is
acceptable for the purpose of this research to assume such a determination on the part of the respondents to be credible by the mere fact that they are capable of revealing such a legal discretion. Therefore, criminality is simply that the respondent relays an infraction to the established laws, whether they be local, state, or federal, excluding any such illegal activity prior to their homeless-disenfranchised status.

Snowball sampling was used for this research because of its ability to find invisible populations (Babbie, 1989). Two additional purposes exist: for additional interview opportunities and to identify those who are system abusers. Whether or not the responses from the interviewed population were truthful, directly relates to the amount of trust the interviewer had with the one being interviewed. If a reference for further interview opportunities was given, the likelihood of maintaining the trust already established was much greater. Additionally pre-testing identified that within the homeless-disenfranchised population there existed those who were phonies. That is to say, they did not need to be homeless if they chose on any given day not to be. According to this researcher’s definition of homeless-disenfranchised, they were not part of the sample population. Those who are of this population can best identify those of their own subgroup. In any given geographic location and, oftentimes from city to city
across three state lines, the homeless-disenfranchised continually have contact with one another over periods of months and sometimes years. This is so much so that the true "workers of the system" (those who know how to get the most out of the system) are identified with nicknames that represent a certain amount of esteem or respect by other homeless-disenfranchised persons. During pre-testing in one Oklahoma community and again while doing final interviewing in Missouri, an individual with the nickname "Minnie-the-Moocher" was encountered. His name, derived from an old blues/jazz artist, was given to him by his peers because of his ability in knowing how to survive off the system. In many cases he was sought for advice. He knew by name many county and local constables, down to particular social workers, and just what you could expect from them. These individuals have been researched and labeled as "professional homeless". In Hope and Young (1986) these individuals are highlighted. State and local agencies maintain lists, and sometimes even photographs, to identify these "system abusers". The locations of the sample population were basically chosen because of accessibility. The number of interviews done in each geographical location was equal.

Sample Population

The sample population was identified by a snowball method based upon pre-established existing circumstances
as previously identified in this section. No attempt was made to control for gender, race, age or any other personal characteristic that would identify grouping. Individuals interviewed participated voluntarily. No rewards of any kind were given. Anonymity was guaranteed and it was explained why the survey was being done and for what the information would and would not be used. All courtesies of confidentiality were assured and a mailing address was provided in the event the sample population wanted information about the outcome of the research or desired to be removed from the study.

It was necessary to discard some interviews in the survey. If a person had obvious physical disabilities, they had access to federal and state programs of assistance. This would have violated the definition of having exhausted all possible avenues for assistance. Those who obviously demonstrated any psychotic behavior, overwhelming paranoia, etc., were also excluded. None of those sampled were related either by blood or by marriage as far as the researcher knew. None of those interviewed were children; that is, all were over legal age.

Place, Time, Posture

Place

Most interviews were filled out in a shelter-type environment in a private area.
Time

Every effort was made to conduct interviews after mealtime, when the individuals were less argumentative or preoccupied with hunger.

Posture

Necessary efforts were made to create a rapport with the targeted population that had the characteristics of the interviewer being sympathetic to their situation. This posture was taken for two reasons. First, it was the fastest means by which to establish trust and, secondly, it increased the possibility of a referral to other sample population members. It is quite possible that this in some way could have affected the responses given, but the alternative was the possibility of no responses at all, which did happen in pre-testing until a sympathetic posture was adopted. Confidentiality was discussed and the questionnaire was shown to the respondents in its entirety. Interview questions were read to the respondents and all responses were written down by the interviewer to alleviate possible intimidation due to poor reading and writing skills. The respondents were encouraged to ask questions for clarification and were allowed to change their answers at any time. Respondents received no compensation for participation in the interview. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were given an address where they could make requests for information
concerning the questionnaire and its findings.

The interviewer was moderately dressed, wearing no jewelry other than a wedding ring and watch. No legitimating references were made other than that this was to be part of a study about homelessness. All interviews were conducted by the same individual, who was a middle-aged, white female.

Pre-testing

Originally, a few people were pre-tested. This data are not a part of the sample, because the questionnaire was later altered. The necessity for comparative before-and-after questions became apparent and the reality issue previously discussed had not yet been dealt with. Pre-testing consisted of the interview and the respondent's critiquing of the questions. It is during this time that the issue of how to be dressed in order not to be offensive, but at the same time effective, was discussed with those pre-tested. They relayed that those in their position were not at all offended by those who were neatly and moderately dressed, as long as they conveyed an attitude of concern. They especially pointed out a dislike for those with condescending attitudes regardless of how much help or assistance they gave. Pre-testing also identified the necessity for the interviewer to read and write down answers on the questionnaire for the respondents. The questionnaire (see Appendix) was
additionally given to two colleagues in an effort to ensure clarity and logic. As a result of this, questions which dealt with law-breaking and convictions were refined under the guidance of Dr. Harjit Sandhu, Oklahoma State University.

Instrument

When considering what importance the interview plays in the overall orchestration of the research, the words out of the classic musical, "Yankee Doodle Dandy," starring James Cagney, a story about George M. Cohan, are brought to mind. Being praised for his song, Yankee Doodle Dandy, he says, "It's not the song I wrote. It's all in the instrument, for without it my ditty would be nothing."

The achievement of a good research instrument can be determined only by the information it gathers. A primitive but effective triangulation (Emerson, 1983) was possible in determining truthfulness of responses in the survey. It was possible to legally check prior records of traffic tickets and warrants, and imprisonments arrests of shelter residents. The third check for congruency factored in with the brief but substantive shelter questionnaire. In addition to the external checks, there are several internal checks regarding tabulation of information given. Certain questions were used as cross-checks, i.e. the
number of times the respondent was married versus the number of times he was divorced. In other instances he was asked to show a prescription or filled prescription when he indicated he was taking medication.

Gender issues were avoided with one exception. Previous studies on this issue indicate there is a feminization of homelessness taking place and a greater volume of females than males are shelter residents (Sawhill, 1988; Bassuk, 1987). This study finds no concern in gender populations regarding homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality beyond simply attempting to identify that both genders are involved. There is a larger number of males surveyed because male respondents were less paranoid about divulging the critical information being studied. Age was tabulated along with dependent responsibility in an effort to try to identify possible links with like-respondents and socially-linked cohorts.

The remainder of the questions served to open a line of dialogue in an attempt to ascertain not only what those who met the sample population criteria were willing to say about their plight, but also to take a social look at what they thought ought to be done about the problem.

Biases

There are a few. Having grown up in a middle class, upwardly mobile family, and now being a middle class,
upwardly mobile parent, the author brings to this study all the characteristics of a middle class, white female. Every possible effort was made to guard against personal biases entering in to the study. Personal comments and statements were kept to a minimum. Only those attitudes that were deemed necessary to create trust (i.e., empathy) were allowed to be a part of the study. No matter how much effort and care was given, some personal biases were transmitted to the study. Halfway through the study, the demeanor of the interviewer seemed to undergo a change. Moments before the survey, the author would throw on this facade. And after the interview was over, it was removed just as quickly and with the same ease. Some months later the author met one of the sample population while working as a social worker for the state. By this time this particular individual had successfully rid herself of the problem of being homeless-disenfranchised. She was now seeking assistance for one of her children, and the author had been assigned to her case. She remarked that, based upon earlier interaction she had felt that the author was a warm, caring person who appeared to have suffered homelessness too. And in fact this was the reason the author had been trusted and provided with references. This client felt as though, at the time of the interview, she was doing the author a favor. In fact she admitted her feelings of sorrow in the author's behalf, because the author
appeared so unhappy. For the period of time that the author was her case manager, this attitude prevailed. It is curious to this author that while in an effort to suppress any personal biases, and while at the same time trying to build trust, that this individual would formulate an emotion of sorrow. Whether biases or facades have effected this study, remains to be determined when and if this study is duplicated. If the same results are represented with other individuals doing the work, then and only then will it be known.
As the purpose of this survey focuses on identifying some link between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality, it would be easy to quickly review questions 15 through 20. But, there is much importance to the questions that precede and follow those questions. Some are for the purposes of testing the truthfulness and coherence of the sample population, while others act as a backdrop in order to give some possible leads as to why a link exists between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality.

The majority of the sample population were somewhere between 30 and 45 years of age. The few under the age of 20 or over 61 were by and large taken care of by family, state facilities, or programs, i.e., social security or medicare. This is not to say that they were not living in the shelters, but they did not meet the criteria of being homeless-disenfranchised. For example, children are not homeless-disenfranchised if they are in the care of their homeless-disenfranchised parents. It was in the 30 to 45 age group that homelessness appeared to coincide with what is called "mid-life crisis".

Published data suggest that the homeless have a low
educational level (Sawhill, 1988; Ropers, 1988). But, surprisingly, this sample population ranged all the way from seventh grade to graduate school. Some had bachelor degrees, trade school certificates, and associate degrees. What was interesting was that those who had beyond 12th grade education did not distinguish themselves any differently in vocabulary or mannerisms from those who had lesser education.

The sample group was made up of 12 females and 18 males. The ethnicity of the group was made up of Afro-Americans, Hispanics, whites and one American Indian. Of interest here is not so much who were present, but who were not present. There were no Asians represented in this group, nor could any Asians be found. According to shelter managers, the Asian population very seldom requires such public assistance. Asians tend to take care of their own people who are down on their luck. In addition the shelters encompassed in this research were not geographically located in an area with a large Asian population. There were no family incomes reported above $40,000 per year, and the middle range of incomes was $20,000 to $25,000. It very well may be that low parental income eliminates the possibility of support from parents during crisis. It also may be that the parents are no better off than the children. The sample population’s income prior to homelessness was found to have a slight downturn from the parent’s incomes overall.
The average income takes a downturn closer to the range of $10,000 to $20,000.

When the question was asked about how many times married before being homeless, by and large the greater numbers fell on the side of single and only married once. Responses about how many times divorced prior to homelessness, indicate ten were divorced once and four had experienced divorce twice. Divorce causes downward mobility and often is more of an intense situation for females than males (Newman, 1988). This idea applies in Maria's case, a 24-year-old female with two children. Maria, who is Hispanic, was abandoned by her husband. She had no family support. Unable to find a job and with no one to help take care of the children, she eventually lost her housing. Although she had applied for assistance from the state, she was still without finances because of the delay in processing paperwork. When two jobs were available she was not able to take either one because of her children and the cost of child care. Maria found that shelter life provided her with immediate resolution to the dilemmas of food and shelter for her children. The shelter provided child care while she looked for a job and waited for state assistance. Maria said that the only reason this had happened to her, was that she didn't have a husband. When she had a husband, she could easily get a job, and people left her alone. Maria said that because she was divorced, everyone was
telling her what to do and even tried to take her kids from her. Marriage, at least for females and children, appears to be a very stabilizing situation in our society. The experience of a single female parent in trying to get assistance through any public or private business or organization is a terribly difficult and embarrassing situation of paranoid proportions. Maria was always afraid that someone was trying to take her children and did not trust men.

The interviews revealed that Maria's fear, along with the other mothers' fear of losing children, was very real. Prior to being homeless, 23 of the children were being cared for by their parents. After becoming homeless, only 10 had parental care. Thirteen children were taken away. This sends clear signals as to why Maria and the others had become paranoid about their children. During the interviews countless horror stories were divulged concerning children being taken away from parents. In some cases this created such desperation that it led to the homelessness-disenfranchisement situation. None of the respondents were willing to discuss why the children were taken, but that simply they had been removed from their care. In checking one individual's records, child abuse had been charged against this individual. It is quite possible that the removal of children took place under legitimate circumstances. One individual ("Jeffery") had his
children removed from his care simply because he was in a shelter. This was done under the heading of neglect. Such stories run rampant within shelters and this is by and large one of the reasons why people only go to shelters when their situation is desperate. Since child neglect is a criminal offense, this supports the argument that homeless-disenfranchised people are linked to criminality.

The responses to question numbers 12, 13, and 14 concerning major reasons for becoming homeless, major losses, and major difficulties, respectively, reveal the following.

Major reasons for homelessness included: loss of or inability to find work, divorce, lack of education or training, drug use, or ill health.

Major losses suffered in becoming homeless included: family, home, income, and material possessions (called "stuff").

Major difficulties in being homeless included: finding food, shelter, joblessness, and caring for the children.

The inability to get and keep a job, drug and alcohol use, divorce, sickness, and domestic problems were typical pat answers, but some spoke of abandonment as well. A safety net of aid or help was not available to them. Several females spoke of the shame associated with divorce. Neither ex-spouses nor their own families
were willing to help them.

Most of the responses to the question to identify the three major losses suffered because of homelessness identified materialistic things. Further conversations with the respondents led the author to understand that it was not the actual item or relationship that had been lost, but the meaning that is socially attached to those items. Home was the number one response. One lady said, "If you have a place to stay, you can get help; but once you lose your home, it is very difficult to get help."

Having a home seems to be some social indicator of well-being. Those without a home are labeled "homeless" which also means disenfranchisement. When explaining "home", none of the respondents made references to a building, or property, and in fact many of them, when asked where they thought home was, had difficulty answering the question. One respondent, "Bill", said that his experience in living with the homeless had taught him that "home is not only where you hang your hat, it's a place with a legal address so that people will trust you." Those who are transitory, such as migrant workers and truck drivers are less trusted than those who are apartment dwellers. Yet those who are apartment dwellers are less trusted by those who are renting or leasing homes in a given community. And those who are renting and leasing are less trusted by those who own property and pay taxes in that community (Berger, 1978).
With respect to major difficulties in being homeless, the responses dealt with survival issues as opposed to materialistic answers (i.e., cars) given for losses incurred. Questions 15 and 16 are a major focus of this research:

15. Prior to being homeless did you ever break the law in an effort to provide yourself or your family with personal or general needs (i.e., food, clothing, rent, etc.)? Explain.

16. During or after being homeless did you ever break the law in an effort to provide yourself or your family with personal or general needs (i.e., food, shelter, clothing, rent, etc.)? Explain.

Ninety percent of those interviewed said they had never committed a crime prior to being homeless. Seventy percent said they committed a crime after becoming homeless in an effort to provide either themselves or their families with general needs.

Half of those who denied breaking the law after becoming homeless admitted to either thinking about it or stopping at the last minute before committing a crime. Most of the crimes were minor, such as stealing food, diapers or cigarettes. There were those who wrote hot checks and did extensive shoplifting, and even prostitution. This sample population was not totally void of legitimate survival means. Many of them spoke about selling blood and working odd jobs as best they
Several females indicated prostitution was a quick way to make money. "Lilly" typifies the actions of those who negotiated sexual liaisons for money. She explained that prostitution was not an easy profession, whether it be full-time or part-time. She said, "If you have children and you're caught, you run the risk of having them taken away by the state. Without a place to take your clients and the money for a wardrobe and makeup, the amount of money you make is limited. Working outside of a prostitution organization leads to frequent arrest and more often than not, you don't get paid. And there are chances of being infected with VD or being beaten. Prostitution is not for everyone." Lilly boasted about making $25 to $50 each time she, as she puts it, "Went to bat." When she reported a beating to the local police, they told her that if they took action against the man she said beat her, they would also have to charge her with solicitation and prostitution. Lilly feared for her children and went to the shelter. Even more significant are the explanations given for committing crimes after becoming homeless (question 17).

Valerie, a young, single, white female with an illegitimate child and an off-and-on alcohol problem, entered the homeless world when her mobile home was repossessed after she lost her job. Her disenfranchisement was due to her illegitimate child.
Her parents begrudgingly paid for the delivery of her child with the insistence that she would give up the child. Valerie refused to give the child up once it was born and lost all support from her family and the surrounding community. She left the area because her mother threatened to call child welfare. Finding herself in a new location with no money or help from anyone, she was lonely and depressed. Feeling somewhat like a martyr for saving her child, Valerie's depression turned into rage. She had run out of diapers and she and her baby had not had a bath in three days. Sleeping where she could (park or under a bridge), she scraped the feces from her baby's diaper in order to reuse the diaper. Valerie walked past a convenience store and saw stacks of diapers. She claimed she had no intentions of stealing. Her only thought was for her baby and her ability to be a mother. She had been without food for two days and her baby for one day. She went into the store and, while the checker was busy, she grabbed a bag of diapers and two cans of formula, and quickly left the store. When she returned to where she was staying, she said that she began to sob and was unable to stop. She realized that she had no way to open the cans and that if she didn't feed her baby soon, she would have no need for the diapers. A patrolman was alerted to the theft and followed Valerie. After taking Valerie to the police station, and making sure that her story was legitimate,
the patrolman took her to his parent's house for the night, since the town they were in was too small to have a shelter. The following day she was taken to a Salvation Army shelter. The patrolman, fortunately, understood her dilemma and paid for those things she had taken from the store. After talking to the store owner, it was decided that no charges would be pressed.

The type of crime and consequences varied, but the motivation for criminal acts was the same. Valerie said the thought of theft never entered her mind. She had a need, saw what would solve the need, and capitalized on the situation. This means a crime was committed. Desperation to survive had changed Valerie's reality. Her action was not only realistic, but could be considered justifiable in the eyes of many.

In many cases during the interviews asking questions number 18, 19, and 20 served as a way to bring out many desperate and tearful stories. Once the respondents began revealing themselves, it was not easy to bring that part of the communication to an end. Knowing whether or not any given person had been convicted of a crime prior to homelessness (number 18) served only as verification. Having access through the shelter to check prior convictions and warrants revealed that, with the exception of one individual, truthful answers had been rendered. This is also true with questions 19 and 20. Interestingly enough, the one individual who lied
apparently did so out of shame. He had committed a sexually-oriented crime two years prior to this interview.

There is a marked difference between the amount of crime committed and the number of convictions, based upon questionnaire responses. How could so many crimes be committed and not detected? Hagan (1987, p. 58) states, "An analysis of available data indicates that we have only a limited idea of the proportion of crime that is committed by any category of individuals or groups in a particular society."

Many of the respondents boasted of the ease in shoplifting. After the first incident, the enticement increases to use shoplifting as a solution to their survival needs. The final question concerning criminal action (number 21) deals specifically with the rationalization of such an act. It deals with the issue of homelessness causing a law-breaking action. The respondent was asked to explain his actions. Of the ninety percent who answered affirmatively to committing a crime while homeless, seventy-three percent felt that if they had not been homeless, they would not have had a need to break the law. The remainder of the sample population justified their positions either by blaming someone else or denying they had broken the law.

In answer to questions number 22, 23, and 24, which attempt to determine responsibility for homelessness, many of the respondents felt that homelessness was not
their fault and that they were forced into committing crimes because of being homeless. Very few took personal responsibility for their plight. Ninety-seven percent felt that homelessness is society's responsibility. They made statements such as, "We should help each other" and "I'm part of society too" along with appeals for social and political rights. Individual comments concerning the responsibility of the government (question 24) took on a more materialistic attitude in an effort to address the homeless situation. Better laws, more jobs, and the providing of housing and food were regarded as the state's responsibility. Each person demands goods, protection, and security from the government, while seeking connectedness to society. Although they are not seen as the same, theoretically they are the same.

All respondents regretted their homelessness (question 25). In answering question number 26, which requests an explanation of homelessness, respondents identified an understanding of being "homeless", but did not indicate an understanding of being "disenfranchised." This is somewhat curious since their responses to other questions are sophisticated in identifying the difference between the two. This is evident in their responses as to whom the responsibility belongs and their inability to separate society from governmental concerns. The concept of disenfranchisement is not a part of their mind set. It is only understood in their day-to-day encounters with
survival needs. The majority of the respondents understood that homelessness reaches far beyond not having a home. As several of the sampled population put it, "It's having nothing but yourself."

There was a wide range of explanations in response to question number 27, Do you understand why are you homeless? There were a variety of situations, such as, being black or poor or jobless, which end up being blamed on society at large or on the government.

Most of the responses to question 28 regarding short-term solutions to the dilemma of homelessness were concerned about direct and immediate fulfillment of basic survival needs, i.e., employment, food, and money. More females than males indicated the need to have a job. This desire for a job may be tied into the concept of independence. Maria was adamant about being able to take care of herself and not having to depend upon any person or agency for her well-being. Such a direct and positive position was not displayed by any of the male respondents. Question 29 asked for long-term (at least one year) solutions to the respondents' homelessness problem. Overwhelmingly, employment was seen as the key solution. Beyond this, medical care and affordable housing were cited.

Blaming the victim became evident in the responses to question number 30, What does your family (i.e., father, mother, sister, brother) think about your
homelessness? This question precipitated strong emotional outbursts. Dealing with the hardships of day-to-day life was nothing compared to dealing with rejection. "Bob", a 21-year-old, wept as he described how his grandmother and grandfather threw him out because he had an illegitimate child with his girlfriend. His girlfriend's parents would have nothing to do with them as they did not approve of Bob. Bob had only a seventh grade education, and his girlfriend finished the tenth grade. Being black, having no family support, and being semi-illiterate made their plight difficult. To make matters worse, Bob spoke of an earlier drug habit which lead to an arrest and conviction for possession. They came to the shelter for help. Bob said he probably wouldn't stay long, but he would have to leave his girlfriend and child there until he could make other arrangements. He did say that if he could not find a job, he knew how he could make a lot of money quickly. He believed that, if his grandparents or his girlfriend's parents would have allowed them to stay, none of this would have happened. This feeling of rejection was a very deep hurt. He said, "What's so wrong with me that my own family doesn't want me?"

Interview question number 31 parallels question number 23 in dealing with responsibility and society. This, by and large, was a check for consistency. Most answers were indicative of those in question number 23.
At this point of the survey there seemed to be a greater need on the part of the respondents to make some claim to society's responsibility for their individual problems.

When asked if they would return assistance to other homeless people if they themselves became successful, they said they would be more than willing to take a responsible position (question 32).

A very adamant, almost unanimous "yes" was given to the inquiry whether individuals felt bad about being homeless (number 33). Feelings ranged from being mad to sad; demoralized to ashamed. Failure as well as hatred were mentioned numerous times. Individuals who did not feel bad about being homeless were the one's with the highest education levels. Could this be an indication of the big-fish-in-the-little-pond syndrome or some sense of satisfaction that this dilemma was only temporary? This attitude may be a defense mechanism to hide shame. When questioned about what the respondents felt was the number one thing keeping them homeless (question 34), responses were consistent with responses given in question number 8 which asked the sample population to identify what they felt would be helpful as far as aid to recovery in a short-term program. That, in fact, was the purpose of question 34. The existence of consistency was substantiated here.

The issue of taking prescribed medications was addressed (questions 35 and 36) and checked through
shelter records to determine if there were any shelter occupants who were mentally ill. This was done to dispel or confirm a widely-held belief that the homeless-disenfranchised person is mentally disturbed. Ten percent of respondents were taking psychotropic medications: haldol for paranoid schizophrenia, mellaril for delusions, or lithium for manic-depression.

As to the use of alcohol and illegal drugs (question 37), 13% admitted occasional use of illegal drugs. Only one person admitted he used and abused different forms of ludes (downers). Sixty-seven percent of the individuals said they used alcohol, but only 25% of these considered themselves alcoholics. Responses to questions 38 and 39 revealed that 43% of the sample population had stayed in five or more shelters, and the majority of these were people with children. Shelter hopping is a way of life, according to "Teresa", a 36-year-old paranoid schizophrenic. She explained that shelters limit the length of time that individuals may stay and maintain records about who has stayed there and how long. Residents are allowed to stay the maximum length of time; then they are put back out on the street, and in most cases cannot return to that shelter for six months. In some cases, they are never allowed to return. Some shelters and general service providers exchange resident lists in an effort to keep homeless people from abusing the system. In order to stay out of the weather, during
the winter, some homeless are forced to go from shelter to shelter because there is no long term housing available. This creates instability and makes it difficult to find a job or to receive any kind of long-term assistance. Some of the larger shelters, like the Salvation Army, are better at trying to find enduring help, especially where children are involved. Shelter hopping is a way of life and at the same time retards efforts for rehabilitation.

Concerning question number 40, **What do you think is keeping you from finding a job?** The problems of instability and having to switch shelters were at the top of the list. Other items that were mentioned as possible deterrents to employment included child care, education, having a record, or having no address or phone number. Many of those interviewed commented that there were several jobs they knew they would have been able to get if they had not had to use the shelter as an address. If potential employees are transients with no permanent address, prospective employers shy away from them for fear of theft and other related problems.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Whether this research has successfully demonstrated that there is a link between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality depends largely on whether or not actions of the sample population were indeed criminal. From a functionalist perspective regardless of the situation, a crime is a crime. From a conflict perspective, determination of a crime depends on who is making the determination. An interactionist perspective takes into account how and why the different actions were taken and what they mean. From a purely Weberian perspective, with emphasis on the subjective nature of social life, no judgment of right and wrong is made. This is heightened even more by Mead's perspective where coming to understand what particular encounters really mean is the essence of good sociology.

Beccarria (1963), in his dissertation on the interpretation of the law, identifies the law as an interpreter of action and intent. The importance of that intent is not to ascribe right or wrong, good or evil, but merely, whether or not it conforms to the law. He asserts that in order to do this one must look beyond the action and determine what the action symbolizes. It is
the **intent** of the sender that should be important to the receiver.

In reviewing the results of the collected information from the sample population, it becomes clear that actions which are non-compliant to social codified law, are overwhelmingly symbolic of an inability to deal with homelessness-disenfranchisement. As previously mentioned, Locke (Bottomore & Nisbet, 1978) discusses creating a commonwealth that addresses political agendas that endorse economic concerns. When individuals fail to achieve a certain level of proficiency, social sanctions are imposed, causing disenfranchisement. These individuals are no longer a part of the commonwealth and are pushed to a more archaic commonwealth. Reid (Duncan, 1981) refers to this as the place where common sense is a collective understanding that anything one must do to survive is acceptable, not criminal. The homeless-disenfranchised individuals find themselves existing in one world with its own set of rules, while being held accountable to another world to which they have no access, but whose rules they must follow. (It is ludicrous to expect an individual to act and conduct himself in accordance with Russian law, when he is living in America.) On a more theoretically-based review, Hirschi (Hagan, 1987) perceives that interaction, or the lack thereof (disenfranchise), provides the environment for criminality. While this theory,
originally put forth concerning juveniles, is not an answer in itself, it does provide a possible avenue for greater insight on the possible criminal link. Hirschi's Social Bond Theory implies that when a person's bonds to society are weakened or broken, his personal investments in conformity are reduced. Hirschi asserts that accepted standards of behavior are maintained because individuals fear lack of conformity will disrupt the relationships between themselves and society, family, friends, neighbors, or jobs. It is not the fear of punishment but the social sanctions for breaking mores and the damage to personal image that deters them from such actions. Hirschi compartmentalizes these bonds to society into four components. The first is attachment, which refers to bond among family, peers and important institutions. Poor attachments to these institutions and persons initiate the decline of the ability to interact. The second is commitment, referring to the degree of investment an individual has in the social and economic system. When the individual has much to lose, and even more to gain, he conforms. When there is little to lose and even less to gain, conformity means nothing. The third is involvement. Involvement reinforces the aforementioned and keeps idle time at a minimum, with less time to get into trouble. The final component is belief. If an individual is attached, committed, and involved, he will have faith in the conventional norms.
and value system and will consider law as the thing that bonds society. Without this belief, the law is meaningless to him and there is no social bond for him.

W. C. Reckless's Containment Theory (Fox, 1976) comes one step closer to understanding what lies behind the symbols of symbolic interaction of those interviewed. Unlike Hirschi, Reckless crosses over the boundary of looking at just the interaction between person and society and attempts to go behind the individual's action and deals with his intent. He discusses the pushes and the pulls that either create conformity or non-conformity. The pulls are those things that are external and take effect in their ability to cause conformity. These pulls are like the bonds that Hirschi identified in his four components. It is the pushes that are important to this research. Reckless calls them the inner-control systems. He identifies inner containment as involving "good self-concept, self-control, ego strength, well-developed superego, high frustration tolerance, high resistance to diversion, high sense of responsibility, goal orientation, ability to find substitute satisfactions, and tension-reducing rationalizations" (Fox, p. 141). Because of the reliance upon Freud's work, it appears that Reckless has made a statement beyond his theory. He is establishing that there are psychological elements that formulate decisions that dictate action on the part of an individual. It becomes
even more obvious that Hirschi's and Reckless' theories contain elements of determinism and free-will. 

Individual choice still enters into the equation. 

Reckless not only asserts the individual's involvement, but he also takes into consideration external situations, providing a more holistic view. Yes, there is a connection between homelessness-disenfranchisement and criminality, but only in a very superficial way. The interview responses do establish that, at least for this sample population, laws were broken by those identified as homeless-disenfranchised, according to pre-established definitions of this study. We can further establish the link because 73% of the individuals interviewed had not committed any crime prior to being homeless. The discussions held with the respondents clearly established that the purpose of these crimes were an attempt to survive. Unlike any of the aforementioned theories, they were totally out of the realm of mainstream society in making their decisions which determined their actions. There was no breaking of societal bonds, for the bonds had already been broken. These individuals found themselves way past considering the pushes of containment theory. They were in situations of deep degradation. They had left civil existence and come face to face with reality: one must eat to survive. The elements are harsh enough to kill, so one must have shelter. Their reality substantiated their decision but, at the same
time, muddied the perceptions of the rest of society where survival is a secondhand thought.

It is at this point that the author would offer a concerned note of caution. In other social problems, especially those where addictive behavior is possible, much is said about activities that set an individual on a path to that addiction. With illegal drugs, the entry-level non-habit forming drugs are referred to as "gateway drugs". This is to say that, although entry-level drugs often are not illegal or harsh in their effect upon the individual, they serve as a stepping stone to harder and harder types of drugs. For instance, one might start with marijuana and end up using heroin. Some authorities would make the transcending steps more specific and insist that cigarette smoking is the gateway drug to marijuana and that marijuana leads to the use of heavy narcotics. The caution that the author addresses is that the situations which create homeless-disenfranchised people bring about a reality that justifies criminality. Who is to say that their criminal activity won't continue? Distress or vengeance or even the simple drive to survive could provoke a continued involvement in criminal behavior. Therefore, it is altogether fitting to adapt the gateway perspective to the homeless-disenfranchised plight. It very well may be that the criminal activities identified as a link in this study are also an indication of gateway crime. If this is
true, then additional research could reveal that a good many incarcerated were previously homeless-disenfranchised. More specifically that they were homeless-disenfranchised and became a law unto themselves. There had to be a first crime, but the circumstances of that first crime and the attitude could be identified as the gateway crime to a life of lawlessness. Again, it would be interesting to identify how many of the incarcerated were homeless-disenfranchised when their first crime was committed.

It is for these reasons that the author has insisted on using the terminology "homeless-disenfranchised". Disenfranchisement means not being a part of the group and, therefore, having no rights or privileges. If one is not a part of the group and has no rights and privileges, then one can establish a separate group with its own rights, privileges and laws. This would justify a new reality. In our society such realities are referred to as "insanities" and this is why homeless individuals are often characterized as being crazy. One of the more sane individuals this author has met is a 55-year-old white female interviewed for this study. She explained that the reason she dug through the trash was that many of the items she retrieved were sold at antique stores for money. She would take the items to resale shops in order to get money to survive. Yet, a day did not go by that this recycler was not called "crazy" by
some passerby.

Other observations indicate that the homeless-disenfranchised were from lower middle class families. A good many of these individuals had incomes close to but slightly lower than their parents’. Economics play a vital part in producing safety nets in deterring disaster. Downward mobility creates an effect of self-blame and in many different ways bequeaths to the children of those who have suffered such ills, all different kinds of anxieties where their own competence to promote self-security is concerned (Newman, 1988).

There is definitely a case to be made for the lack of appropriate assistance on the part of social programs. It is a fallacious belief to contend that a couple of nights in a shelter will solve a homeless-disenfranchised person’s problems. “Three hots and a cot” are just a bandage approach to a major social problem (Hombs & Snyder, 1986). As with many other social problems long-term extended involvement is necessary. But unlike other social problems, there is and should be hope for success in large percentages. The author did not find the sample population to be different from other individuals one deals with on a daily basis. For the most part there appeared to be an interest in learning and a desperate desire to be re-enfranchised. These people were interested in voting, but because they had no legal address, this inalienable right was cut off. The
American puritan heritage guides the social thinking that individuals have the ability to control the circumstances in their lives. It is easier to blame the victim than it is to question the systematic economic conditions that are out of the control of the individual (Newman, 1988).

There is a consistency from interview to interview of the ill-effects of alcohol, illegal drugs, job loss, wife abuse, child abuse, exhaustion of funds, unwanted pregnancies, etc. All of these dilemmas created the vicarious situations which lead to homelessness-disenfranchisement.

Spinoza (Bartlett, 1980 p. 309) has been quoted saying, "To give aid to every poor man is far beyond the reach and power of everyman... Care of the poor is incumbent on society as a whole." As true as this may be, there is a greater call to society, and that is to ensure that none of its members lose their inalienable rights because of refusal to remember inalienable responsibilities. Individuals appear to have given too much uncontrolled power to mechanisms and political groups who assure that the ills of society will be taken care of.

When one looks past the mask of the homeless-disenfranchised and makes an effort to listen to what their symbolic action means, one hears a desperate and sincere cry for HELP.
LITERATURE CITED


APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE
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You are being requested to complete the following questionnaire in an effort to provide this research with possible answers to the questions of homelessness. This is a voluntary act on your part. Your identity will be protected and under no circumstances will you or your situation be made public. You may answer some or all questions. Your truthfulness will be greatly appreciated. As the survey will be read to you, and responses will be noted on the questionnaire by the interviewer, any questions on your part will be answered to your satisfaction. You may see the questionnaire and notes at any time during or after the survey. If you wish to change an answer, you may do so. Under no circumstances are you to give your name, social security number, or any identifying characteristic of yourself. Any additional information provided by you to any of the questions asked will be appreciated.

1. Age
   ____ Under 20
   ____ 21 - 30
   ____ 31 - 40
   ____ 41 - 50
   ____ 51 - 60
   ____ 61 and over

2. Highest educational level achieved?
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
   ____ Trade school
   ____ On the job training (military, corporation, etc.)
   ____ Associates degree
   ____ B.A. or B.S.
   ____ Graduate school

3. ____ Male
   ____ Female

4. What is your ethnic background?
   ____ Afro-American
   ____ Hispanic
   ____ White
   ____ Asian
   ____ Other

5. Approximate income of your parents' household while you were living at home?
   ____________________________

6. How many times were you married before you became homeless?
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6+
7. How many times were you divorced prior to becoming homeless?
   0 1 2 3 4 5+

8. Your present marital status?
   ___ married
   ___ separated
   ___ divorced
   ___ single
   ___ widowed

9. How many children did you care for prior to becoming homeless?
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 10+

10. How many children are you caring for after becoming homeless?
    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 10+

11. Your approximate annual income prior to homelessness?
    __________

12. What do you believe was the major reason you became homeless? Explain.

13. What were the three major losses you suffered in becoming homeless? Explain.

14. What do you consider the major difficult in being homeless? Explain.

15. Prior to being homeless did you ever break the law in an effort to provide yourself or your family with personal or general needs (i.e. food, clothing, rent, etc.)? Explain.
16. During or after being homeless did you ever break the law in an effort to provide yourself or your family with personal or general needs (i.e. food, shelter, clothing, rent, etc.)? Explain.

17. If your answer to Number 15 was "No," and your answer to Number 16 was "Yes," would you please explain why you think you were justified in doing so?

18. Have you ever been convicted of a crime prior to becoming homeless?

19. Do you think that any of your convictions prior to homelessness led to being homeless? Explain.

20. Have you been convicted of a crime since becoming homeless? Explain.

21. Do you think that being homeless led you to break the law? Explain.

22. Do you think that your homeless situation is your responsibility? Explain.

23. Do you think that your homeless situation is society's responsibility? Explain.
24. Do you think that your homeless situation is the government's responsibility? Explain.

25. Would you prefer not being homeless? Explain.

26. Do you understand what homelessness is? Explain.

27. Do you understand why you are homeless? Explain.

28. What do you think would be most helpful in providing short-term (3 months) aid to your recovery from being homeless? Explain.

29. What do you think would be the most helpful in providing long-term (one year) aid to your recovery from being homeless? Explain.

30. What does your family (i.e. father, mother, sister, brother) think about you being homeless? Explain.

31. Do you think society owes you or should help you? Explain.
32. If you succeeded in no longer being homeless, would you be willing to help other homeless people? Explain.

33. Do you personally feel bad about being homeless? Explain.

34. What do you think is the number one thing keeping you homeless? Explain.

35. Do you take any kind of prescribed medication? Explain.

36. If you are taking prescribed medication, what are you taking it for? Explain.

37. Do you use alcohol or any illegal drugs? Explain.

38. How many shelters for the homeless have you stayed in? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7+

39. If you have stayed in more than three shelters, please explain why?

40. What do you think is keeping you from finding a job?
VITA

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