BEYOND SHELTER: A PARADIGM OF HOMELESSNESS

by

ALLYSON DOMANSKI

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract

Based on the premise that homelessness exemplifies absolute poverty, this thesis comprises a cross-cultural comparative analysis of homelessness as exists in the developing nation India and in post-industrial America. With the intent of discerning the emergence and persistence of homelessness, this social planning issue is examined from several constituencies, including the contextual, historic, demographic, spatial, residential, vocational, by comparing and contrasting the circumstances surrounding the respective pavement dwelling populations. Homelessness, seen to be caused by macro and systemic forces rather than the pathology of individual homeless people, has not received an appropriate planning response and this is shown; the homeless remain neglected. Based on a thorough literature review, it appears that there is no comprehensive body of theory on homelessness to which planners can look when making policy, therefore this thesis seeks the isolation of instructive paradigm to guide planning efforts and offers suggestions for change accordingly.

The sum total belongings of a pavement dwelling woman in Ahmedabad: a few pots for cooking, a blanket and an old *sari* for covering

Acknowledgements

Few ideas travel the length to what becomes their conclusion without input or suggestions from others. By its nature, a thesis is no exception. Even before the choice of topic was ascertained, Dr. Mario Carvalho was instrumental in guiding the direction I've taken, ever offering sound advice; no one teacher has more fueled my enthusiasm for learning and new thinking than he, a fact for which he deserves much thanks. I am grateful also to Mr. Prasanta De at the School of Planning, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (C.E.P.T.), in Ahmedabad, India, who labored over its initial draft, after listening intently and offering advice as to how I might approach this unorthodox planning issue in the Indian context. The readers on my committee, Dr. Klaus Klostermaier and Professor Basil Rotoff, provided encouragement and constructive criticisms, and they too, must be thanked. Appreciation also goes to Gary, Alina, Elizabeth, and Greg, whose suggestions for editting and especially, moral support I relied on.

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Most importantly, my parents and brother deserve special recognition for supporting me in my every pursuit; however out of the way, however it taxed their patience, they've been behind me in my rather unorthodox career moves. To them I am ever grateful.

Lastly, I am indebted to the men and women living on the footpaths of Calcutta and Ahmedabad, for telling me their stories which remain so inspiring, for allowing me to record on film the conditions surrounding their threadbare existence. To them I dedicate this work.

Preface

> "No good has ever come from feeling guilty, neither intelligence, policy, nor compassion. The guilty do not pay attention to the object but only to themselves, not even to their own interests, which might make sense, but to their anxieties."
>
> Paul Goodman

Throughout the period while working on this thesis I was frequently asked why I chose to do what I did. My reasons for embarking on this study were many: professional, personal, and naturally, academic. Firstly, convinced that the future of city planning lies in the developing nations of the world, where the scope, magnitude and nature of the problems is unlike anything encountered in the industrialized countries, it is my aim to be among those in the forefront of that increasing shift in emphasis toward so-called 'Third World' planning. The urgency of demands facing Third World cities presents a tremendous challenge to planners, requiring resources of every kind, certainly human; the need for greater knowledge and more information is particularly acute. To those of us committed to the goals of less inequity and better living conditions for the poor peoples of the world, one is hard-pressed to identify a more timely and opportune undertaking than development planning.

Secondly, since no amount of reading adequately prepares someone for all that is the Third World, one must acquire first-hand experience. Professional aspirations aside, it was my intention to go to India to test myself, to discern whether I was the sort of individual capable of adapting to strange new environments replete with adversity and unfamiliarity; whether I was competent in assimilating different socio-cultural milieus; or if I possessed the necessary patience, tolerance, tenacity, compassion, understanding, and above all, spirit, to make a commitment to the cause of social action on behalf of the disadvantaged. I learnt that I do, that I am that sort of person.

Lastly, I chose what I did because the subject of shelter and issue of homelessness are of critical import to both the people by whom shelter is demanded, and those from whom it is supplied. Observing this gap between demand and supply to be widening, my ideal has been to contribute toward its lessening, however imperceptibly.

During my stay in India, from time to time I was asked by the concerned few what my contribution would be,[1] how *I* would be improving the lives of the homeless. Agasp, I replied that the most I could offer would be greater understanding into the difficulties confronting the country, making no pretense as to bettering the lot of the poor. As a student, a guest of their country, I could confer little else. Perhaps, I added, (if only to ease their dismay) my thesis would be read by other concerned and committed individuals and some minute contribution might arise thereafter.

At that point I became keenly aware that too often, academic studies are lamely offered as substitutes for action. True social activists therefore, have every right to be suspicious of them. That is, for all the understanding gleaned from producing the effort herein, and likewise from the work of others equally dedicated to documenting these concerns---none of it amounts to much. As more becomes learned about the homeless (eg. who they are, what they need, why they are homeless), it is evident that what's more pressing but less known is how votes can be won to garner the resources needed to address their problems.

Because in the final analysis, homelessness is basically a political issue. It can only be addressed by first, changing the ways we as societies think about the people living where our feet pass, so as to induce political will; and second, through sensitive and appropriate

---

[1] In India, there remains an inordinate amount of reliance upon both Western knowledge and on those from the West who pass off opinion as expertise. The tendency to favor external counsel---however exogenous---is attributable, in part, to the colonial hangover of British domination; also, I think, to overconfidence in the ideas of the West and a slight though discernible underconfidence in their own capacity to deal with the overwhelming problems facing the country. However, if they do lack a bit of confidence, they more than compensate with ingenuity, technical expertise and above all, human resources. Still, Indians value the word of Westerners, as if it provided a measure of reassurance that what they're doing is OK.

approaches to planning, likewise to social, economic, housing and political policy-making. Of this we must not be mistaken.

Be that as it may, and much as I dislike opening on a pessimistic note, realistically we remain distant from achieving either requirement for effective redress of the problem---a fact that further diminishes any contribution we hoped for.

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A Nepali street child deprived of schooling, health care, or proper nourishment, who must tend to a young sibbling while parents earn a living

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Urban poverty is not a problem of people but of structures maintained by an elitist and technocratic value system which keeps a significant proportion of the population poor and powerless."

Alfred deSouza,
The Indian City

"What, after all, do we mean by poverty? The income and the possessions of an American, unemployed, inner-city resident on general relief would be like a king's ransom to a member of a thriving hunter-gatherer tribe in the Kalihari Desert. And yet the former is seen as impoverished and the latter (to anyone who has observed the quality of such a person's life) enormously rich. Poverty is not so much a matter of possession in itself, but of a more subtle and significant affair: power. The poor have no control over the events of their lives."

Hugh Drummond,
"Power, Madness and Poverty"

THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS

You see them camped out on city streets---some people live in a makeshift lean-to of discards, others sleep on the footpath with only the sun, sleet or stars above, most have nowhere else to go---and all scarcely survive from day to day. Their needs are many, resources nil, typified by the sum total of their belongings: a swatch of tattered cloth to sleep on or under, a small vessel to collect water, perhaps a pot or two and a recycled *ghee*[1] can cum stove for preparing one or two meagre meals per day.

Should they have means to a livelihood in the unorganized informal sector, working as a rickshaw puller, railway coolie, full-time beggar, hawker or vendor of cheap goods, they generally settle as near to that income source as will be tolerated by municipal authorities, squatting on train station platforms and main thoroughfares alike. Negligible earnings perpetuate a hand-to-mouth existence which can mean a lifetime on the street because saving for *saalamee*[2] and afterwards rent for a *bustee*[3] mudhut---a notch above the pavement in Calcutta's indigenous housing hierarchy---takes years.

The ultra poor somehow scratch out an existence from cities indifferent to their needs and hostile to their visible presence, having no shelter to conceal highly personal, ordinary human acts deemed offensive when conducted in full public view. Given the depth of their privation, most have no choice. Who are these unfortunates? 'They' are 'the homeless' and in the cities of India, particularly the metropolitan ones, few are poorer or endure greater hardship than street people called pavement dwellers.

On the other side of the world survive pavement dwellers whose lives are just as grim---the contradiction though, is that they aren't citizens of a Third World country. Amidst North American post-industrial affluence are men, women, and increasingly children whose

1 clarified butter sold in large square, reyclable cans
2 non-returnable 'front money' which must be paid to the slumlord in addition to rent.
3 Bengali word meaning 'village' but applied to Calcutta slums for their backward, village-like environs.

weathered, begrimed bodies can be seen slumped in doorways, huddled under bridges or next to subway hot-air grates, (excepting those now equipped with an effective deterrent, barbed wire) passed out on park benches, and as more or less permanent residents of Grand Central, Penn Station and the like---just as Bombay Central or Howrah Station house their longstanding unauthorized occupants. While the majority of America's homeless are unemployed, some, like their paper-picking brethren of Calcutta, eke out enough to eat (but never enough to pay rent) through the sale of junk acquired by sifting through garbage dumpsters. Others rely on soup kitchens, fewer beg, and all are impoverished or destitute.

While homelessness in urban North America is nowhere near the acute endemic problem it is in Asia, the estimated two million or more pavement dwelling persons in the U.S. alone[4] is proof that the self-named First World is hardly more developed than the Third when it comes to providing adequate, affordable shelter to its poorest urban poor. For all its wealth and opportunity and despite the advantage of several decades of planned urban growth and development, the United States has 20 million hungry adults and children by a common definition of hunger.[5] The sober reality of hunger and homelessness in America suggests rather strongly that abject poverty is not exclusive to, nor necessarily a function of, Third World underdevelopment. Larger, more systemic causes are responsible---of this the author is convinced.

What is to be done? Why are people homeless and what factors are responsible for propelling them to the streets? How did homelessness emerge and why does it persist? How, if at all, is this exigency being addressed? Is the planning profession responding in the manner it should be and if not, why? In what ways can it take up this cause whose impact on cities and citizens portends future disaster? Supplying the catalyst to this thesis, these

4 To many, this figure is contentious---considered by some as too high and others, too low. New York's Coalition for the Homeless estimates there are 2.5 to 3 million homeless Americans, while Washington's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates a population one-tenth as high or 250,000 to 300,000.

5 More than 33 million people live in poverty, (ie. for a family of four, the poverty level is US$10,989) 19 million of whom depend on food stamps amounting to 49¢ per meal. (as cited in "Hunger in America", Scientific American. April 1987.)

questions provide its underpinning and are some of the issues with which the author is concerned.

International Concern

Last year, 1987, marked the first nearly-global wakefulness to the issues of housing, thanks to the public awareness campaign and efforts undertaken in commemoration of the United Nations' International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). For all that attention, however, IYSH achieved shamefully little. For, it makes little difference to he who sleeps on the chilling pavement of city streets each night whether the U.N. devotes one year or ten to highlighting his homeless condition unless it is overcome. It is of less consequence still, if all that high-brow conference discourse only amounts to tokenism but does not afford him housing or shelter beyond which his *gamcha*[6] provides, beyond which a newspaper-lined jacket or flimsy box does. Intellectualized pity he doesn't need; intelligent, immediate action he does---of which planning must be a part.

So despite worldwide attention increasingly focussing on the residential circumstances of the ultra poor, with some of that attention drawn to the abysmal inequities dividing locally and globally the haves from the truly have-nothings, it is too slight to have impact on the magnitude of the problem. Lofty resolutions are no better than pat solutions. Answers, if there are any, will be hard-won and social change, harder yet.

PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY

Because of the very magnitude of the dynamics at hand, it would seem there is no need to provide a justification for planning for homelessness. Thus the task immediately before us appears in sharp relief: the causes which force human beings to comply with the supreme

6 an old piece of cloth used to cover the body as a small blanket would.

ignominy of societal rejection, of being pushed onto the pavement, must be scrutinized in order that strategies be formulated to directly attack those causes. With that goal in mind and as regards housing homeless citizens, our efforts, at the very least, must be preceded by an analysis of the processes which influenced their becoming homeless in the first place and more importantly, why they continue to remain so. Only within a comprehensive analytical framework which takes into account the assumptions, value systems and development ideology that influence decisions regarding urban planning, economic, social and housing policies, can we grasp the structural nature of the kind of urban poverty that homelessness is.

Equipped with a thorough understanding of the emergence and persistence of homelessness will assist planners and policy makers in their attempts to eradicate it. More broadly, heightening awareness of this global malaise through the documenting of it, stimulates individual potential to take greater responsibility for society's disadvantaged members. Indeed, all initiatives should strive not only to rectify the housing shortage in cities, but to address man's needs beyond shelter as well. Preventing even just one person from succumbing to the inhuman indignity of living on the street is none too idealistic; accordingly, policy recommendations can ill afford meekness. Though one humble effort will never suffice to effect social change, the endeavor herein is but a minute contribution whose hope is to motivate much-needed action.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

From Calcutta to Nairobi to Hollywood,[7] seemingly overnight popularity has shone the limelight on ostensibly the social issue of the 80's. New only in its scope and magnitude,

7 Pavement dwelling in Calcutta probably got its earliest exposure after the World Bank initiated its aid and development work; thereafter via the acclaim accorded Mother Teresa. Nairobi is the site of the IYSH and UN HABITAT offices and from where information dissemination on shelter issues originates. In the U.S., the issue gained greater exposure through Hollywood's film industry which now and then assumes the role of the country's social conscience.

homelessness is an old malignant problem whose history spans millenia. But so long as existing housing and public policies fail to address the conditions of the poor, whether homelessness is unsolvable and permanent is untestable as a theory.

Premises

A more operable theory forms the basis for the cross-cultural comparative analysis of which much of this thesis comprises. Firstly, taken as both premise and justification for such a comparison, homelessness, to those it befalls, is existentially identical no matter where you go, that anywhere---rich or poor nation----homelessness is "a very positive state of having----the having of hunger, sickness, degradation and stupor."[8] While the *consciousness* of being homeless is existentially indistinguishable from one locale to the next, for everywhere it is demoralizingly wretched, likewise the *act* of housing oneself is as universal and existential as the intake of nourishment, the desire to procreate and the raising of offspring. The need to shelter oneself is no less ingrained in man's psyche.[9] Because shelter instincts are present in every human being, national, ethnic, racial or cultural differences remain independent. This enables comparison between shelterless peoples regardless of nationality.

Secondly, when examining homelessness what becomes evident is that apart from famine there is no form of poverty worse than this. Virtually no one anywhere is poorer than those having nowhere to go but the street each night, therefore homelessness exemplifies absolute poverty, a level enabling comparison between nations rich or poor because such poverty is rock bottom to both. And as with all absolutes, comparison is possible.

Substantiating this claim has entailed analyzing homelessness as obtains in two markedly disparate nations, the developing country India and the highly industrialized United

8 Lawrence Kotelo (1987), as conveyed to the author.

9 If consulting Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs', homeless people would occupy the bottom-most rung of the pyramid, that of survival existence and striving to meet basic needs.

States,[10] whose only real commonality is that each is a liberal democracy with an irrefutably capitalist economic organization.[11] While homelessness is to a certain extent the crude upshot of an uneven industrializing process, (and especially that of a poor country's), we are not convinced that the underlying causes of India's homelessness are principally attributable to unbalanced industrialization, rapid population growth and accompanying mass poverty, for the reason that homelessness proliferates in diametrically opposite conditions too. Affluent post-industrial America, whose population growth is barely touching replacement levels, is no less beleaguered with homeless people per capita than India.[12] Undeniably, India's longstanding poverty aggravated by unchecked population growth has exacerbated the struggle for scarce housing, all of which can culminate with homelessness. But since it is not unique to the Third World, it is plausible to assert that its emergence, if not persistence, is more macro and systemic in nature and less the fault of the poor themselves, or of an individual's pathology.

Nor are we convinced that underdevelopment itself is at issue. Most of mainland China and much of Soviet Russia, which can be said to be industrializing themselves---despite fantastic advances in space technology and nuclear weaponry that India has also---are

10 While it is perhaps easier to compare on the basis of class and production relations the differences between socialist and capitalist countries, it is naturally more difficult to make comparisons between developed and developing nations, on account of the state and level of productive forces. For this reason, one should be vigilant against flippancy when the temptation to glean parallels seems blatant, otherwise that too, is a form of exploitation of which developing nations have seen plenty. This caution notwithstanding, full cognizance is given to the huge chasms between national wealth, standard of living and overall levels of development exhibited by the U.S. versus India, so this study makes no pretence to assume comparison is valid on any other level except as pertains to homelessness.

11 On the one hand, we could have opted for an analysis of two less dissimilar states, say the Asian countries of India and Sri Lanka, both of which face a barrage of growing pains resulting from the former colonial presence and concomitant impoverishment, in addition to staggering population growth unsupportable by urban land holdings. Their similarities however, may have served to obscure the arcane determinants of homelessness, making sorting out the apparent causes from authentic causes, tricky. On the other hand, we chose to examine homelessness as arises in America---rather than in Canada which might have seemed logical in light of the author's nationality---for the reasons that the problem has taken so firm a hold in the U.S. that, to our knowledge, it is virtually without compare anywhere in the developed world. In Canada, homeless people are far fewer because our system of social supports is still very much intact, compared to evidence of the welfare state being dismantled in America. The Canadian system, though hardly fault-free, is more caring of disadvantaged groups and has fewer holes through which the poor can fall to homelessness.

12 Refer to these findings in Chapter 3, "Population and Rate of Homelessness".

likewise countries which engage in agricultural activities reminiscent of the 18th or 19th Century. Over-population should not be seen as the true nemesis of the problem either, because China and Russia sustain very large populations and over-crowding too. Yet despite under-industrialism and over-population, homelessness is practically unheard of, and to our knowledge does not exist to any degree in either nation.[13]

It does exist, if not thrive in the U.S. where even colossal wealth cannot preclude the disjunction of homelessness. If the problem were solely one of underdevelopment, then America's sophisticated advances in urban development and management would surely have overcome the obstacles to housing citizens. Evidently not though, as we find thousands, possibly millions of people resorting to the streets, curling up on sidewalks at night in snow-bound, even death-bound winter because they have no more permanent shelter than do their counterparts in the comparative warmth of Indian cities.

To reiterate, what this says to us is that the problem of homelessness is rooted deeper than underdevelopment or mass poverty would suggest; more accurately, that it is closely connected to the larger system governing society and the values which underlie it. Homelessness is, after all, both national and international in scope, not isolated to select pockets of relentless penury.

Goals and Objectives

The intent of this inquiry then, is to examine the emergence and persistence of homelessness through a cross-cultural comparative analysis of its intrinsic nature, in order

13 As a social necessity, housing in the USSR receives the status of constitutional right; housing is not a marketable commodity traded and sold at black market prices so no one is without. Fair distribution of the nearly 80% of all units financed by the state ensures that rents are low and that everyone be housed, though it may necessitate doubling-up. (See Subhash Rele, (1986) "Houses for Millions---The Soviet Way", Yojana). In China, apart from what would appear to be a few instances of voluntary homelessness, there too everyone is sheltered, though the large cities are short of housing. That results in overcrowding---but no homelessness, thanks in part to the *danwei* (co-operatives) and government housing. J.Kim notes that the recent urban reform policy of "allowing market forces to replace state controls" is increasing both rents and the number of landlords and it is "business people who have benefitted from...urban reforms." ("Housing in China", JAPA, April 1987)

to dispel some of the prevailing myths which stifle action. We hypothesize that homelessness, being caused by macro and systemic forces rather than the pathology of individual homeless people, has not received an appropriate planning response for the reason that as far as is known, there is no comprehensive, action-oriented theoretical construct in place to which we can look for direction when making policy.[14] Furthermore, we attribute this void to adverse societal values perpetrating attitudinal indifference to the circumstances confronting the disadvantaged.

Thus, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the need for an instructive paradigm[15] to broaden theory and enlighten our understanding of the problem. The goals of a new paradigm would be to establish a theoretical framework to firstly, displace our present misbegotten and perverse outlook towards the homeless, and secondly, unseat planning's ineffectual performance in the area of urban poverty, vis-à-vis a reduction in homelessness.

In accordance with those goals, our objectives are to show that homelessness,

1) should be viewed as a serious, as yet unmitigated distortion of the industrialization, urbanization and urban development processes;
2) has grown as result of public lassitude owing to bias against the poor;
3) is perpetuated by the continued reliance on paradigms entrenching that bias; and thus,
4) is exacerbated by negligent mediocrity in approaches to planning, housing and public policy, (including economic policy, education, employment, health, and social programs) as regards the class of nonpoor;

all of which is intimately linked to, indeed is a product of, societal values and malevolent attitudes. Toward fulfilling these objectives, we undertake this inquiry and devote this thesis.

---

14 After a thorough literature review, we found that theory is weak---if nonexistent---in this area; consequently, few are the guidelines from which a course of action could be derived.

15 Thomas Kuhn (1962) clarifies the definition of 'paradigm' employed for the purposes of this thesis: "On the one hand it is used to stand for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community; on the other hand, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution to the remaining puzzles of normal sciences." Thomas Kuhn. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962 p.175

TERMS OF REFERENCE

If planning specifically seeks to embrace local views, conditions, imperatives and usages, it should refrain from the wholesale adoption of fashionable, often exogenously derived and therefore inappropriate responses to problems. A good a start as any is with vocabulary.

The terms of reference below offer an interpretation of homelessness and explain who is referred to when speaking of the homeless. The terms make no pretext of being definitive---for how could they be so? Not even the man who resides on a sidewalk, relieves himself publicly, bathes from an open sewer line and eats what others leave behind could easily define what toll life on the street exacts from his psyche. A well-housed, middle-class, semi-educated, politically-left, caucasian is therefore, not even going to try. Homelessness, and the processes by which it manifests, confuses the very people whom it visits. Moreover, the term conjures a plethora of muddled responses by those for whom it is *not* a way of life and will likely never be. Consequently, responses are founded on myth, deception, misunderstanding and bias. Debunking these necessitates clarification---as definition is awkward---of some of the ambiguities implicit in a discussion of this nature.

Interpretation of Homelessness

At its most fundamental, the homeless are those persons, including family units, who are without home or hearth, who have no place to sleep at night which can rightly be called their own, and are thus forced out onto the street[16] or in search of a temporary shelter facility. More broadly, because it occurs in varying degrees in a variety of forms, homelessness should be understood not merely as the absence of home as a physical or emotional construct, but in its fuller sense of deprivation as the culmination of socio-economic, political, residential, psychological, health, marital or other problems about which the

16 Even those who voluntarily live on the pavement , (eg. John Turner calls some of them "bridge-headers", others we call 'income maximizers') whose business is best served from that particular locale are forced to be on the street for wont of private, affordable and accessible accommodation near their place of employment.

euphemism "homelessness" says nothing. The expression acts as a convenient catch-all that assembles into one heap a mélange of people as heterogeneous as society itself, whose only common denominator is poverty and the absence of roof overhead. It is attached to many kinds of people, each whose story is different but each whose problems are generalized, ignored, categorized under one rubric, homelessness, as if the domiciliar dimension was singularly at issue.

Another query pertaining to semantics crops up. As was the case with the word 'homelessness', use of 'the homeless' is problematic. Both 'the homeless' and 'pavement dweller' are culture-specific, indigenous terms, the former commonly used in North America (and the global community), the latter, common to India.[17] Narrow in connotation these words are benign, neutral abstractions alluding to a physical dimension of shelter and deny all semblance of humanity to those it makes reference to. They obscure the heterogeneity of individuals whose role as father, mother, sister, brother, neighbor, worker, or citizen goes undifferentiated. While depersonalizing and ignoring the richness of human experience, goals and resources of those without housing, the names are not pejorative in a sense which implies degraded lower status (eg. underclass or lowerclass). Nonetheless, to be deemed homeless is to be socially ostracized and stripped of one's last shred of social identity.[18]

Other difficulties arise with the currency of the word homelessness, particularly with regard to its root, 'home'. A precise meaning is needed to differentiate 'home' from 'house'

17 Appearing nowhere in any literature, the reasons for this difference in characterization are not clear, but one surmises that the presence or absence of kin has bearing. That is, whereas 'the homeless' of America are more often solitary in their condition, devoid of family supports and thus virtually without a home in its psychological or emotional sense, India's 'pavement dwellers' are not infrequently whole families living on the streets together, their nuclear (and sometimes, extended) family structure very much intact. The psychological/emotional affinity attached to home is, for them, still very strong. Curiously, the fashionable popularity of the catchwords 'the homeless' appear to be insidiously creeping their way into the Indian material on the subject. As yet another instance of superfluous westernization, one hopes that they will not replace the indigenized use of 'pavement dweller'.

18 Without an address, one cannot vote, receive mail, be counted in a census; it is also difficult enrolling children in school, applying for employment, storing belongings---or finding a moment's privacy.

because the two are not one in the same, though used interchangeably to name that physical shelter space wherein we take residence. While 'house' unambiguously implies presence of walls, roof and structural form, which can also be called 'a home', the converse does not follow. Which is to say, 'home' does not necessarily imply the existence of a house.[19]

While differentiating between house and home is facile, establishing what *constitutes* a home, is not. That is, even if one is inarguably houseless but he 'makes a home' for himself, is he or she 'home-less'? A few examples will illustrate this conundrum.

Is the woman who lives alone in a cardboard box in Manhattan home-less? isn't the box her 'home'? Because someone lives so long on a Calcutta footpath that rent must be paid to a pavement-lord, hasn't that become his 'home'? What of the family living in a hutment whose three 'walls' consist of torn tarp, poly and gunny sac propped against a compound wall with bamboo---are these people home-less? If so, Bombay has five million of them. Are the Kickapoo Indians of Texas who live under bridges by the Rio Grande, home-less? What about runaways, 'throw-away' youths and substance users in who live in abandoned buildings and return there nightly? Seasonally migrant workers who camp out on Delhi streets while maintaining rural family ties, are they home-less? What of bag ladies in Grand Central or coolies in Howrah Station? Both are longstanding residents of the washrooms and platforms.

For the purposes of this thesis, everyone described above is homeless. Admittedly, these people have made some kind of 'home' for themselves, be it meagre, illegal or unorthodox. However, (and not merely for the sake of this thesis, but as principle in general) staking out claim to a corner on the urban frontier should not be seen to constitute the creation of a

19 Home is a notion more connotive of security, identity and support (often familial or kin-based), there being a psychological, subjective or emotional association understood. Even where no walls, roof or structure exist, which is thus not a house, home can endure for it denotes a sense of belonging, a perceived, felt and real, albeit intangible, construct. Psychological attachment and a sense of belonging to that perceived as home are not predicated on a material embodiment and need not be objectified. House, alternatively, is always tangible---but to which one can also grow emotionally attached.

home. Otherwise few of these people would be home-less in the literal sense---destitute perhaps, but apparently not homeless.

To further such rhetoric---the same that has been used to absolve us from taking action on behalf of the homeless---is to further the neglect of these people, an exploit this thesis has tried to avoid.

The present tendency to create excuses for public apathy and indifference towards the homeless is an unconscionable habit perpetrated to both assuage guilt and alleviate the pressure to act socially responsibly. Indeed, what little has been done to lessen the misery of the homeless or redress the unmitigated crisis that homelessness is, says a great deal in itself---about our societies, value systems, political economy and policy making process. It especially speaks volumes about ourselves, commenting on how we as a people and as relatively advanced societies, are failing in the duty to care for our weakest fellow members.

If societies are to sustain growth but more importantly, enjoy development, such neglect of entire segments of the population can not continue. The issue merits attention---even if it eludes resolution. In order to reverse the process leading to homelessness, a necessary but by no means sufficient condition is that our understanding of the problem be fuller than that which is suggested by our present policy response, a condition this thesis strives to fulfill.

CHAPTERIZATION OVERVIEW

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two opens with a hard look at the global shelter reality, accompanied by a glimpse into the present magnitude of the problems facing the world's developing countries and their urban centres. However unforgivable it might be to compare a Third World nation with one of the most affluent on earth, Chapter Two gives a contextual overview first of India, then the United States.[20] This serves as a lead-

20 Due to the nature of this unconventional planning inquiry that examines two vastly different cultures, about which the reader may or may not be knowledgeable, it is necessary to supply

up to the comparative analysis of their respective homeless populations which takes place in Chapter Three. The second chapter also traces the history of homeless people, following as near an Eastern and Western path as possible, the intent of which is to demonstrate firstly, our longstanding disdain for the poor, and secondly, how hard it is to break out of centuries-old habits and conditioned attitudes that influence policy.

Chapter Three provides a detailed profile of the general characteristics of homeless people[21] in both India and the United States. The intent is to assist planners in identifying those populations vulnerable to homelessness so that policies can be formulated to offset disadvantages and offer increased choice and opportunity. Preceding the demographic and socio-economic analyses are discussions on the scope and magnitude of the problem, considering population size, its geographic and spatial distribution, the rate at which the populations are growing. Following this is an aetiological overview of some of the determinants of homelessness, after which we look at the homeless existence from employment, residential, and survival perspectives.

Lastly, Chapter Four provides a brief summary of the analysis to that point, then examines the response to the problem by the planning discipline, indicating some of the instances where planning has failed to respond to the needs of the poor and homeless. We show that the presently ineffectual outlook toward mitigating homelessness is owing in large measure to the absence of an action-oriented theoretical framework; presently there is no set of directives to guide positive action. The thesis calls for a new paradigm to address homelessness, for redefinition of the predominant values, norms, roles and attitudes toward the homeless, plus a plea for social learning, social reconstruction and more sensitive development ideology, to serve as the guidelines for positive future action. A conclusion follows.

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background information on each. Since this thesis is destined to reside in the libraries of both Canadian and Indian schools, it will prove helpful for the reader from one continent to have insight into the context of the other.

21 We did not skimp on the detail in this section for the reason that documentation, being rather scarce, is hard come by. To supply a fairly complete picture of the population in question will help reduce a planner's time spent determining target populations, based on which characteristics make an individual susceptible to homelessness.

A single-parent family of pavement dwellers;
children are uneducated, poorly fed and poorly clothed

Pavement dwelling Bombay women earn a meagre living as rag and paper pickers, scavenging city streets

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND: CONTEXTUAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

"Well, India is a country of nonsense."

Mohandas K.Gandhi, 1927

"The American Dream is in trouble..."

David R.Mosena, 1984

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Globally, one billion people are ill-sheltered, living in environments detrimental to physical and mental health.[1] An estimated 100 million people are literally homeless, comprising a population as diverse as the cultures from which they originate: peasant societies to post-industrialist nations, from highly developed to least developed countries alike and almost all societies in between, homelessness is in hapless evidence.

Against 20th century technological advances in satellite communication, intelligent computer systems, sophisticated space exploration and rapid world travel, one-fifth of

1 By the end of this century the planet will be home to a probable six billion inhabitants, one-quarter of whom will have neither house nor shelter in which to live. (U.N. Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) 1987)

mankind's unmet needs are truly basic, lacking adequate nourishment, potable water, appropriate health care, regular employment, fair wages, housing and schooling. While billions of dollars are spent to house nuclear warheads, so little goes to house the millions of human beings with absolutely nothing that they subsist however they can, scrounging for food, doing odd jobs, sleeping in the streets. For when one has nowhere to go, one goes anywhere.[2]

The situation is gravest in the developing countries. Approaching 50% (but in some places, 80%) of its urban populace are unauthorized squatters or slum and pavement dwellers incapable of accessing housing judged decent by even lax Third World standards. Living conditions do not markedly differ from that which prevailed centuries ago.[3] Given that nearly half of the world's population will reside in urban areas in a dozen years, with two billion of those in burgeoning Third World cities, the problem of housing and shelter is ominous, the imperative for planning and social action, blatant. Without question, the future of city planning lies in the developing world and the future of developing countries lay in sound urban and rural planning.

The City in the Developing World

Homelessness has grown in part owing to unprecedented population growth pressures.[4] Exacerbating the extreme housing crisis is urban growth, amounting to 150,000 more

2 In a city where real estate values are among the most exorbitant in the world, roughly half of Bombay's population lives on the footpaths; countless families reside in the city's unlaid sewer pipes or perilously along rail lines within feet of speeding commuter trains. Cairo's overpopulation and severe housing shortage prompted the government to add "Tomb" to its official census housing category since more than one million people inhabit the vast cemeteries and mausoleums on the city's outskirts. And in New York City, the dearth of affordable housing has forced members of the underclass to shelter themselves in cardboard boxes and beneath stairwells.

3 The evidence of pestilence and squalor threatens public health with plague-like epidemics; mortality rates are abnormally high; hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and widespread discontent portend social unrest and political upheaval as cities intermittently erupt with insurrection.

4 In mid 1987, the world's population was increasing by roughly 220,000 people every day, 90% of whom are in developing countries where 90% of all population growth will take place, none of which are rich nations, the thinly populated Middle East notwithstanding.

newborns and migrants[5] each day, adding 49 million urbanites to the developing world yearly. By the year 2000, Third World cities will swell by some 78 million people a year---214,000 every day.[6] Such growth and the accompanying demand for housing are presently impossible for governments to cope with. The future prognosis is even less hopeful.

For all its problems, huge as they be, the city provides a wellsource of opportunity. It offers real alternatives and increased choice, job potential and schools, the prospect of upward mobility and a measure of relative social liberation. Like other Third World metropolises, those in India have emerged as the nodal points for concentration of higher order administrative, legislative, technological, industrial, commercial, cultural and economic activities. That notwithstanding, similar levels of advancement can not be exalted when considering the gross deficiencies faced in feeding, housing, employing, educating, healing, policing, servicing and transporting the millions who live there. Clearly, part of the problem is that the sophisticated functions of a city have come to transcend its duty to meet the basic needs of citizens. The capacity of already crippled urban areas to absorb growth rates of 3% to 5%, to which is added twice that in slum and squatter settlement growth, plus, migration from rural hinterlands contributing anywhere from 20 to 50%---leaves little room for optimism that needs of space, environment, energy, infrastructure, employment, services and shelter can be matched to requirement.

Considering that 1.2 billion people were living in the developing world's cities in 1985, with another 800 million in them by the year 2000, a conservative doubling of shelter, infrastructure and services would only suffice to maintain the status quo.[7] No allowance could thus be provided for flood, famine, drought, earthquake, nuclear meltdown or any

5 For many the city's magnetic pull is an escape from the economic frustrations of persistent rural poverty, landlessness, joblessness and few if any openings for work. In village India, the tyranny of casteism, parochialism and the vestiges of feudalism are rampant; inadequate schooling, housing, sanitation and water supply combined impel people to leave their villages in search of a less dire existence for themselves and their children.

6 UNCHS, 1986

7 Such an effort would have little impact on the 700 million urban dwellers already living in absolute or relative poverty, nor would it appreciably alter the situation confronting the jobless 300 million.

one of an assortment of similar catastrophes. The task of accommodating the incessant influx of newcomers, many of whom will find themselves shelterless for long periods of time, promises to be fraught with difficulty. The climate of fiscal restraint induced by mind-numbing foreign debts and domestic deficits adds further strain. Moreover,

> "the decline of traditional agriculture, rapid population growth, the absence of alternative centres to disperse migratory flows, the concentration of economic activities in a few major cities---these factors will guarantee that the urban population of primate cities will continue to expand rapidly, thus leading to the further expansion of slums and squatter settlements." [8]

And inevitably, an equally rapid expansion in homelessness.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Planning is useful to effect social change only in so much as site specificity is scrutinized. For without understanding the community, society or nation in which betterment is sought, planning will have no meaning. Therefore, requisite to an analysis of the emergence and persistence of homelessness is an overview of the contextual framework wherein it occurs. Submitted below are pertinent sketches of India and America to lend insight into the macro processes underlying the problem. Following these is a brief history of homeless people, intended to shed light on the basis for contemporary policy decisions.

8 The World Bank, 1984

INDIA

India is the epitome of contradiction [9] whose contrasts are especially stark. For all its 20th Century advancement in the fields of telecommunication, computers, agriculture, hydro-electric power, iron and steel works, textiles, military defense and recently, space initiatives, the benefits of massive core sector investments in the economy have yet to trickle down to the poor majority. Their lot remains untouched by either modernization,[10] or conservative capitalism,[11] however incompatible with India's traditional socio-cultural ethos or its socialist ideology espoused at Independence 40 years ago. The Indian subcontinent is steeped in widespread illiteracy, impoverishment, malnourishment and albeit unquantifiable, a legion of traditional, religious, and superstitious practices which defy Western logic and rationale.[12]

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9 'Contradiction' manifests in several ways. Apart from the obvious geographic, social, and economic disparities, there is ideological contradiction as well. The ideals of liberal democracy are now pursued as ardently as those of socialism, even though it was intended at the time of Independence that a socialist pattern of development be paramount, in the hope that the abstrusities of Western imperialism not permeate further. However, an unmistakably capitalist economy has taken firm hold. In the move towards a liberal democratic ethos, establishing the institutional framework that generally accompanies it has been largely inhibited by the invidious traditions of caste, religious fervor and communal enmity, of private property and inequitable wealth, of the oppression of women and the poor. It is here that the contrasts between modern and traditional culture are staggering. On another level, evidence of the pervasiveness of "private affluence and public squalor" is disconcertingly reflected in the lack of consideration for others: words like 'please', 'sorry' or 'excuse me' do not translate, nor are they used.

10 Peter Cutler (1984) in World Development found that while India's economy enjoyed steady real economic growth in the 60's and 70's, there was virtually no change in the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty, that growth "accrued to the better-off sections of the population, so that poverty has grown relatively, if not absolutely." p.1129

11 Critics of Rajiv Gandhi's Government are unanimous: the entrenchment of capitalism was fixed in the 1987 Budget. With its giant leap in defense expenditures, encouragement of market forces, abandonment of several government controls, increasing primacy of the private sector while restricting the power of unions, the goal of reducing further corporate taxation, and scant mention of social programs---all bears a striking resemblance to 'Reaganomics'.

12 One hesitates to call some practises 'backward' but it's difficult to argue otherwise. Certain religious sects still condone public flagellation, self-immolation (of newly widowed women upon the pyre of their deceased spouse), human sacrifice before gods/goddesses and despite the outlaw of slave labor a century ago, the custom pervades today in some rural areas. These are, for all immediate considerations, insurmountable by either government, planners or policy makers and simply must be worked around.

Vital Statistics

To dispense with a few measurements, 1981 statistics show 64% of the total population officially illiterate, a figure masking the higher rate among females: 75%. Despite measurable growth in the economy there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of the population living below the so-called poverty line.[13] In 1960, 38% of the population fell beneath it; by 1980, one-half of India's 685 million people or 48.4%, were officially poor,[14] to which should be added an even larger contingent of unofficial poor. Only one-third of all Indians are employed and non-agricultural employment has been too small to absorb the significant growth in the labor force. Rural labor---itself 83% of the total workforce---is worse off: the increase in landlessness from 37% in 1971 to 47% by 1985,[15] closely parallels the increase in homelessness as many, if not most pavement dwellers are formerly landless agriculturalists.

Although we lack comprehensive and current data, caloric intake is assumed to be of the order of 1,955 calories per person per day, but such an average for rich and poor alike belies the malnutrition affecting the latter. The dismal fact remains that the average Indian eats no more today than what he did at the dawn of Independence---despite phenomenal progress in grain production. The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) based upon life expectancy at birth, infant mortality, and degree of literacy, ranks India among the lowest 20% of the 126 countries monitored by the World Bank; even among low-income nations, India ranks lower than Sri Lanka. An average Indian lives about 60 years but Canadians can expect an additional 14. In the two decades preceding 1985, the number of children in India likely to die in infancy fell from 151 to 93 per 1,000 live births. Standing alone it's impressive; next to Canada's seven deaths per 1,000 births, it's not.

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13 The poverty line was redrawn as of 1987 from Rs.3600 to Rs.6400 per annum [Can$600.] or just over Rs.500 per month, perhaps double what the average pavement dweller can scrape together.

14 S.K.Ray Indian Economy New Delhi, 1987. p.431.

15 S.K.Ray Ibid. p.541

Population and Urban Growth

It is expected that by the year 2001, the population of India will have surpassed that of China. Needless to say, India has neither China's land mass nor its family planning policy to dissuade the further multiplication of one billion people. The projected urban population will account for one-third the total---some 326 million city dwellers---an exponential trebling of the 1971 population and double that of 1981. A third to half of all urbanites will dwell in squalid hutments sprawled in mad flux as an additional 20 million people per year will aggravate already overburdened municipal utilities and rural lands subdivided to the extent of diseconomy.[16] Cities will indubitably be put under tremendous pressure.

The absorption capacity of the rural sector is insufficient, exemplified by the growth in the number of cities with populations greater than 500,000 (from 11 in 1961 to 36 in 1981) and the annual shift of four million rural-to-urban migrants. With international migration being negligible for decades now, it is birth rate which influences growth most but thanks to improved health care, life expectancy is longer and mortality, declining. Though infertility is the bane of women's existence, fertility may well turn out to be the bane of India's prosperity.[17] The consequences of unchecked population growth reveal themselves nowhere more vividly than in metropolitan centres teeming with crowds of people, animals and vehicles from rickshaws to Mercedes.

Metropolitan Problems

An Indian current affairs magazine recently expressed its consternation over the problems besetting metropolitan cities, graphically condemning them thus:

16 Underlying urban poverty of the kind sleeping on the street is often rural poverty, the former largely an extension of the latter. As population swells, pressures on rural land increases, forcing its subdivision into meagre holdings, gradually making it uneconomic to farm. Hunger borne of the loss of land and income leaves but three options to the impoverished villager: migrate, vegetate or revolt---the first being most popular.

17 It was as early as the First Five Year Plan that attention was drawn to the adverse effects of rapid population growth, seen to retard economic efficiency and deteriorate the investable surplus.

> "India's cities have become cesspools of squalor, rot, confusion and shameless urban mismanagement...A third of the people in urban areas live in shacks with gunny sacks as doors and pavements as toilets. Another half of them live shrouded in a concrete jungle of flats, not able to see beyond their neighbor's window. Parks and airy spaces are being gobbled up by hungry builders... Everywhere, overloaded city civic services are collapsing under the ceaseless hammering of the population bomb. City buses and suburban trains are bursting at their seams with commuters. Power shortages are common with most cities experiencing 'rolling blackouts'. Water is even scarcer with per capita supply in cities one of the lowest in the world. The less said about sewers the better. Phones scarcely work in most houses. Pot-holes only get deeper. Anarchy cascades down on what loosely pass for roads and highways in the name of traffic. The cities wallow in the filth and slime of their own pollution and congestion and slowly choke themselves to death...The giant melting pot of cultures and life-styles that cities have become is fast turning into a festering boil. Along with the buildings, crime is going up. Suicides are up, so is unemployment. And social tensions are hitting new highs." [18]

After colonial freedom in 1947, the proliferation of India's industrial technology hastened rapid urban growth whose chaotic consequences are those above. Despite growing job prospects in organized trade, manufacturing and industry, along with the ancillary jobs of the unorganized or informal sector, poverty and unemployment has gone unabated because the labor force multiplies faster than jobs are created. Sheer numbers overwhelm the physical urban fabric, especially existing housing, transport, sanitary, health and educational facilities. Social tensions in the form of destabilized family life and social structure result from the migration of young men mainly, skewing the age and sex structure within cities and altering the social organization of urban life.

Rural immiserisation extends to urban immiserisation and the ways of rural life manifest in hutments emerging overnight on any urban land that looks empty, including refuse dumps and that onto which industrial waste pours.[19] The atrocious conditions of rapidly diffusing and congested slums threatens public health with cholera epidemics, smallpox

18 "Urban Apocalypse" in India Today Jan 31, 1987. p.9

19 Because of the constant threat of eviction for unauthorized occupation, people seek the most unlikely, most repugnant places to reside and avoid displacement.

and tuberculosis. Municipal infrastructure is rendered insufficient to meet demand and ineffective under the strain of overuse.[20] If for no other reason than to prevent total anarchy vis-`a-vis municipal services, the case for better planning of Indian cities and towns needs no reiterating.

The unforetold scale of such changes to the urban structure transformed the very nature and dynamic of metropolitan problems, making management of urban improvement, never mind social change, near insuperable. Among the most visible failures to manage change is written not on the walls but on the footpaths, sleeping form by sleeping form.

The task of pruning generally meaningless statistical measurements tends to get lost in the fray of more urgent challenges bombarding those holding positions to effect change. Problems previously unknown to established public administration institutions confound city managers whose civic machinery is incapable of handling the deluge. Those weighing priorities to allocate strained finite resources are faced with problems of political urgency demanding greater attention and immediacy than the need to provide public toilets and simple sanitation to congested urban areas---even though public health is threatened when people have to defecate on the street out in the open. Innumerable problems are more pressing than installing tubewells to ensure an adequate supply of potable water or releasing scarce urban land to house citizens of small means---because both entail losses to city coffers as against the guaranteed profit from developers of yet more retail or commercial space. As happens in the West, housing and urban affairs always receive a low priority when compared to national defense and military spending.

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20 In Bombay, half a million people live in Dharavi, the largest slum or *jhopadpatti* in all Asia where one water tap serves 320 people, one toilet, more than 300 people. Long quarrelsome queues are a fact of life, fights over water occur daily, but stress on toilets is less severe because people can't be bothered to queue for a privy overflowing with excrement so instead, take to the streets and open spaces nearby. Things are no better in the 300 or so *bustees* dotting Calcutta where more than a third of the city's 12 million people huddle in filth. Water supply in some areas is less than ten gallons per head. Even after Rs. 250 million (Can$25 million) was spent on slum improvement, up to 100 people per day make do with one latrine, at best two if functional, though more often not, because both water and maintenance are inadequate. The situation is everywhere as desperate.

AMERICA

Not twenty-five years ago, it was still conceivable that the world's image of an idyllic future resembled an American postcard, that nations everywhere longed to assimilate the U.S. in whatever ways possible. It represented economic prosperity, strength, stability, opportunity, affluence, freedom, creativity, justice, advancement---the good life, and countries were encouraged to follow its lead. Today however, the ideal that America once presented of itself, that to which nations could once aspire, is no longer valid. The formerly richest nation in history is presently broke and the U.S. is now the greatest debtor nation on earth. While the national trade and budget deficits make Argentina look solvent, the debt of Iowa farmers alone is US$2,000,000,000 more than the national debt of Peru.[21]

With marijuana being one of the principal cash crops comparable to corn, wheat and soybean, the nation has a $60,000,000,000 a year drug habit, the crack-down of which is hoped will significantly reduce the prevalence of crime, organized and otherwise.[22] Racial enmity and black segregation still persist in the Deep South. In the bastion of liberty, the AIDS virus has spread like wildfire, consuming homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, and now families and children. For all the over-the-counter contraceptives available, unwed teenage pregnancies and abortions are hitting new highs while legal abortion clinics are being bombed by the Pro-Life faction. The cultural disincentives to childbearing have reduced not only the birth rate to record lows but the attraction of having children as well.[23] Public schools and universities are graduating functional illiterates and in some cities, more students drop out than graduate.

Environmentally, the U.S. is wrenching under acid rain, pesticides, nuclear waste, industrial effluent,[24] smog and air pollution; the sun isn't seen in some cities until one

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21 Some of which is mentioned in this overview derives from Harper's Index throughout 1986 and '87.

22 Law enforcement copes with gang-wars in the poorest city streets, to serial murders, to 'white collar' computer heists in corporate headquarters, and all else between.

23 Professional double-income couples today aggravate the low birth rate by opting for dogs---not kids.

24 On average there are five industrial accidents involving toxic chemicals per day across the country.

o'clock. Traffic in Manhattan is approaching congestion so severe that the City is considering charging an admission fee for vehicles going from Midtown to lower Manhattan. Los Angeles may add double decking to all its existing freeways in efforts to alleviate the daily morass of tie-ups in a city too sprawling to afford a subway system.

While the price of luxury can cost $200 for merely lunch at the Four Seasons, the price of poverty is denying public assistance payments to two of every three families living below the poverty line. If made a state, Washington D.C. would have the highest per capita income in the Union---but it would also have the highest infant mortality, only a touch above Jamaica's. The white-run Capital is now 71% black with 100,000 people depending on charity and soup kitchens to survive. Since 1978, the percentage of blacks living in poverty has increased by 24% while 41% more whites have joined them. Three-quarters of America's unemployed workforce receives no unemployment benefits. More than 33 million people are living in poverty, 20 million of whom are hungry. And, the estimated two million Americans who constitute the nation's population of street-sleeping homeless men, women and children, are impoverished and down and out, have lost their jobs or housing, or both, lost their families, their support systems---some have lost their *minds*. People who roam the broad avenues of the richest metropolitan cities in the world have become our modern gargoyles as silent spectators to the banquet eluding them, yet take to grubbing through refuse dumpsters because food scraps are to be found there. With nowhere to put up by day or night when public or private shelters are full, in snowy winter bodies are found frozen dead from exposure---and public indifference.

It's little wonder that homelessness occurs in either India or America considering these contradictory contexts. That however, says nothing about *why* it arises---an area explored in greater depth in upcoming chapters, after examining who the homeless are. In the mean-time, a brief historical analysis follows, whose purpose is to provide some background into the values and attitudes underlying policy formulation.

THE HOMELESS IN HISTORY

Although the word 'homelessness' is a fairly recent addition to the English language,[25] the phenomenon itself is not new, nor are the homeless new to contemporary urban culture. The history of homelessness spans the length of written history, homeless people having existed as long as the concept of home. In this section, we trace the manifestations of homelessness in history, viewed from both Western and Indian perspectives.

Early History

Throughout the ages, that marginal segment of the population without a home has worn scant attire but sundry appellation.[26] Their names reflect the way society explains or negates their presence, its acceptance or rejection of them vacillating over time and between concern and contempt. Reaction toward these strangers in our midst has been mixed, ranging from benevolent tolerance to outright hostile loathing, making them objects of pity, hospitality, fear, charity and quite often, abuse. As long as man has not been bound in chains or slave to such masters as Pharaohs, warlords, or the city-builders of ancient Greece who owned the poor as chattel---ever since man has been free of helotry---there have been homeless people.[27]

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25 According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the first reference to "homeless" appeared in 1615 in George Chapman's Odyssey though context is unclear: "his daughter 'tis, who holds this homeless driven, Still mourning with her." In 1782, Vicesimus Knox in Essays, Moral and Literary, came closer to our present association: "Friendless, homeless, unbeloved, unregarded". One of Charles Dickens' characters was "forgetful of her homelessness" in Dombey and Son, 1848. The earliest mention of urban homelessness came in 1862 when Robert Vaughan wrote The Age of Great Cities which tells of "His life of poverty and homelessness". (The Oxford English Dictionary Vol V, H-K. Oxford, The Claredon Press, 1933.)

26 Known as wanderers or pilgrims in the Bible and thereafter as nomads, paupers, gypsies, vagrants, vagabonds, rogues, beggars, idlers, destitutes, outcasts, misfits, hobos and social parasites---today they are labelled bums, bag ladies, street sleepers, pavement dwellers, grate dwellers, the houseless and simply, the homeless.

27 When man was not free but the property of his master, his fundamental needs of food, clothing, shelter, and of course, a livelihood of labor, came under the purview of the master so, to our knowledge, people were not homeless because they were not free to be, nor did they have the choice to become so.

History shows that public sympathy sided with "sojourners" in 7th Century England when the Church ordained that a duty of hospitality was owing needy strangers. He who did not receive the poor into his house, wash their feet and give them alms, was to exact penance of mere bread and water. In times when the emphasis was on the collective, begging was sanctioned and socially condoned. Similarly, in ancient Indian society, living off the efforts of others was acceptable due to the *ashram*[28] concept and the religious duty of almsgiving.[29]

Social Productions

During the prefeudal and feudal stages of development in which nearly everyone lived in relative equality with close kinship ties, any member's social disability (eg. destitution or resourcelessness) or biological disability (eg. disease or deformity) became the responsibility of the collective and rarely was public charity resorted to.[30] This 'collectivisation of misery' came initially when charity was extolled as a religious virtue. Then during subsequent stages of feudalism,

> "the extollation of penury or mendicancy must have served the objectives of diffusing the tensions and frustrations generated by unequal distribution of resources and the consequent destitution in the later stages of development."[31]

Living by the simple agricultural and trading functions of social production required little division of labor, so any notions of work and industry or pursuit of an independent way of life were not forthcoming until the onset of capitalism, some centuries hence.

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28 A place of retreat where free food and lodging are profferred.

29 Although widespread poverty probably inspired the richer classes to act charitably by endowing almshouses, these were meant mainly for pilgrims and wandering bands of scholars, not poor beggars.

30 B.B. Pande. "The Rights of Beggars and Vagrants" in India International Centre Quarterly Vol.13,#3&4, Dec 1986 p.122

31 Pande. Ibid. p.118

Middle Ages

By the 11th Century, the pendulum swung the other way and a new meaning was attached to the hoards of impoverished men and women wandering over Europe. The perception of outcast persisted well into Medieval times when familial or communal ties which formerly bound the indigent became severed during the ideological and economic reformations of the day. As 'beggars and vagabonds' they were regarded with enmity, viewed as an indictable social evil.[32] Little was better for the 'vagrants and rogues' of Elizabethan times, as the whipping, flogging, or hanging of these constituted public entertainment.

Medieval Indian cultural history tells little of the standard of living of people, especially the poor and peasantry. We know that under Turco-Afghan and Mughal rulers, India enjoyed economic self-sufficiency through commercial capitalism and also that the nobility lived lavishly beyond their means. As for the lower classes, knowledge is meagre; the poorest of the peasantry suffered from benign neglect and lived no better than they do today.[33]

In the Mughal period, alms were frequently bestowed upon 'the needy and the deserving' but since the poorhouses built were reserved for dervishes, fakirs and devotees, it is likely only they constituted 'the deserving'. However in the 16th Century, Mirat-i-Ahmadi wrote this passage, suggesting a less biased benevolence:

> "Let them be charitable, according to their means, to all religious mendicant, and to all poor, indigent, and naked persons who will not open their mouths to ask for the means of subsistence." [34]

32 Reinforcing that condemnation was Martin Luther, who, in his work of 1528 entitled Liber Vagatorum "Book of Vagabonds and Beggars", sought not only the eradication of the papacy and its members, (he was excommunicated seven years previous) but as well, the other class of "locusts"--- the mendicant poor.

33 Yusuf Husain. Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture. Asia Publishing House, Delhi, 1957. Husain claims that "the condition of the lower classes living in the towns and cities and of the peasantry was much as at the present." As regards housing condition, most of the foreign visitors characterized it as "miserable in thatched huts." (p.144)

34 Pran N. Chopra. Social Life During the Mughal Age (1526-1707) Durga Printing, Agra, 1963. p.75.

Pauperization and Capitalism

Back in Europe, the Reformation ushered in the Renaissance and its dismantling of feudalism, giving rise to commerce, the growth of cities, concomitant dissemination of capitalism and the onset of industrialism. During that period of transformation from feudalism to capitalism, pauperization became widespread, as Dickens wrote of, and Marx noted in Das Kapital:

> "The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free" proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufacturers as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds." [35]

Marxist historical analysis relates the sharp rise in beggary, vagrancy (and presumably, homelessness) to the emergence and dispersal of the capitalist mode of production. While the traditional or pre-capitalist structures inhibited the emergence of homelessness, thanks to their social production relations, the traditional structures could not provide sufficient resistance against the force with which capitalist productions were imposed by the British seeking to enhance their own markets.[36] In the transition from social to capitalist productions, impoverished workers and paupers appeared as the fall-out when the social production mechanisms that once kept the poor sheltered and off the streets were dismantled. Moreover, the army of surplus labor served well the interests of early capitalist industrialists who benefitted from quick profiteering by hiring workers on their own terms, no matter how exploitive.[37] With the move to mass production, the addition of technologies

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35 Karl Marx. Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy 1887.

36 As consequence of the colonial enslavement, the foreign rulers left behind an economic organization based on exogenous ways of life and the legacy of *laissez-faire* economics persists. With the entrenchment of free trade as befitted British purposes, the way was paved for the insidious dissemination of economic and cultural norms by Western powers, which further deformed and fragmented the indigenous social and pre-capitalist economic systems, though such norms were perceived as the vital ingredients to hasten the modernization process.

37 For a good analysis of this historical shift to "peripheral capitalism", see Samir Amin (1974). Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment.

aimed solely at the most efficient use of capital rendered workers' skills obsolete; retrenchment of labor followed as higher-paid labor was eliminated and replaced by fewer unskilled and poorly-paid workers. Made superfluous by technological and managerial methods, the "industrial reserve army" of unemployed has gone hungry and, by its very existence, helped force down the wages of those fortunate enough to be employed. Unable to sell even one's skills, never mind one's labor, penury eventually leads to homelessness.

Theories on the Origins of Beggary and Vagrancy

Briefly on the origins of mendicancy, the Marxist theory of social disorganization runs thus. Asserting that beggary and vagrancy are the undeviating by-products of, and inseparable adjuncts to, the capitalist mode of production, pauperization is seen to foster the growth and advancement of capitalism because the latter makes headway in a competitive job market by utilizing the surplus labor to its own advantage. Since that surplus is not engaged in full employment, people resort to mendicancy in order to survive, hence its growth along side that of capitalism,[38]with pauperism giving way to homelessness.

While this explanation characterized 18th to 19th Century Europe, the same was not to obtain to any significant degree in India until the late 19th, early 20th Century with the colonial emphasis on plantation and industrial capitalism. Of India, B.B. Pande notes that,

> "The problem of beggary and vagrancy registered a marked growth, and assumed the form of a social menace, only in the 1940s. The emergence of plantation and industrial capitalism in India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries compelled a large section of the rural population to migrate from rural to urban and industrial centres, mainly as a consequence of the colonial government's policy of planned destruction of the indigenous industrial and trade base...The number of people who migrated was always much larger than those who gained employment."[39]

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38 With the imperative of competitiveness diffused, extreme poverty evolved as increasing numbers of semi- or un-employed people could not be absorbed in a saturated job market that had beat down wages to unsurvivable levels.

39 Pande. Op.Cit. p.122

Another theory on the origins of beggary and vagrancy takes a somewhat wider view, claiming that dehumanizing circumstances are rooted in societal disorganization. Certain defects in social and economic structures, such as unemployment, unremitting impoverishment, hegemonic conflict, rapid social, industrial and technological change, political instability, or cultural upheaval all are macro forces giving impetus to beggary, vagrancy or homelessness. Secondarily, landlessness also figures as a explanation of historical import.

Landlessness and Enclosure Laws

In the same way that land as it is privatized spawns homelessness today, in industrializing Europe of the 18th and 19th Century the numbers of homeless people grew with the advent of the enclosure laws. What was the impact of agrarian transition as enclosure took place? By privatizing formerly public land, these laws engrossed farmland and opened the newly personalized commodity onto the market where it was bought and sold ambitiously. In so doing, 'the commons', lands whose traditional common access and usage once provided succor to the homeless poor, eventually diminished as the homeless increased. The earliest 'squatters' were thus driven from the land into the cities with each sale, and homelessness, along with its inversion, bourgeois culture, were spawned in unison by those processes.

The enactment of the Poor Laws, a bourgeois defense mechanism, had the effect of discouraging landlords from building laborers' cottages because they might have sheltered potential paupers. Driven from the land, England's poor were forced to migrate to cities. According to one source, the city of Bath was suffering, as were other 'well-to-do cities', from an influx of new homeless: its townsfolk had been "obstructed by wretches sprawling on the pavement, exhibiting mangled limbs, fictitious sores and counterfeiting convulsions in order to extort alms." For their part, extortion this was not. Survival strategies as these were no more irrational or illogical than the bourgeois' recourse to the Poor Laws.

Recent History

In modern society, the entrenchment of capitalism wrought the conservative propensity to label homeless people---if they were even acknowledged as *human*---"unworthy, undeserving, antisocial, indigent out of inertia rather than because of public apathy or private exploitation." [40] Treated as enemies of the capitalist economic order, they were thought to deter development both for withholding their labor power and by setting a bad example for others. Of this non-conforming group, Leon Radzinowicz comments:

> "Seen as a threat to morality and industry, vagrancy could not but be especially infuriating. For in the 18th and the early 19th Century, a strong moral indignation reinforced the feeling against vagrants. At a time when the disciplined industry of the poor seemed so essential to economic development, exhortation to hard work, condemnation of improvidence, criticism of indiscriminate relief combined to harden the attitude to professional beggars and imposters... Their freedom and irresponsibility were bitterly resented. Idleness, "a reluctancy of people to be employed in any kind of work" was regarded as the basis of both vagrancy, mendacity, (*sic*) and a high offence against public economy as well as against good order." [41]

Albeit this attitude pervades contemporary society still, the majority of homeless people are not at all reluctant to work. On the contrary, most want nothing more than to be employed in any kind of work by which to feed themselves and earn a livelihood. The real offence against 'good order' has little to do with a reluctancy by individuals but rather reluctancy by the public economy to supply sufficient employment opportunities, the wage of which is adequate to meet all basic human needs.

Victorian Ideals

The peculiar moral code of Victorian England eroded slightly the contempt for the homeless so stigmas toward them, which resulted from moral indignation and fermented earlier in the

40 Patricia Cayo Sexton. "The Life of the Homeless" in Dissent, Winter 1983, 30:1. p.47
41 Leon Radzinowicz. A History of English Criminal Law Vol 4, 1968, p.17

Poor Laws, lessened somewhat. The social dictate of charity to help the poor purge themselves of alleged "impurity" arose not out of a sense of justice or empathy but instead, it is argued, from self-interest, self-protection, and a fervor to cleanse away societal evils through hygiene. The parasitism of the homeless was contributing to the problems of: a) public health, 2) law and order, 3) labor discipline, and even 4) decency and morality.[42] As precursor to the City Beautiful Movement,

> "early bourgeois culture tried to purge, improve, and purify all of urban civilization---whether through schools and prisons, or, quite literally, with public baths and massive new water and sewage systems. Order, ordure---this is, in essence, the tension at the heart of bourgeois culture, and it was the singular genius of the Victorians to make it the main component of their medical, aesthetic and moral systems." [43]

By way of example in India during the British Raj, the menace of epidemics[44] brought the public health issue to the fore. Primarily a consequence of the colonial government's policy of "planned destruction of the indigenous industrial and trade base",[45] cities like Calcutta were inundated by mass rural migration. The landless, jobless, hungry, sick, and lepers alike spilled onto the pavements when the squalid horrors of the *bustees* worsened. Shock waves reverberated throughout the élite European community for even it was not spared when epidemics scourged Bengal.[46] Because the 'disease spewing' living conditions threatened economic prosperity and international trade in Eastern India, some public health measures were effectuated.[47] Diffidence about capitalist norms and the mass

42 Pande. Op.Cit. p.118

43 Peter Martin. "Helping and Hating the Homeless", Harper's January 1987, p.46.

44 Including the plague, malaria, tuberculosis, and zymotic diseases such as cholera, smallpox, diarrhea, fever, dysentery.

45 Pande. Op.Cit. p.122

46 The Calcutta Census of 1902 calculated the death rate among Europeans as "appalling, perhaps close to 100 per mille", saying nothing of what it was among the poor masses who were dropping like flies.

47 Although the curtailment of disease and death was notionally a universal good, the greatest beneficiaries of sanitary and hygienic modernization were the Western communities. Historian Ira Klein argues that the pursuit of universal public health objectives came in conflict with the economics of development, adding that "a policy of direct control over, and distribution of, social benefits was alien to the philosophy of the rulers...[and] ran against the grain of laissez-faire individualism and entrepreneurship." (Ira Klein. "Public Health in 19th Century Calcutta"(upcoming)

poverty which gave rise to such conditions in the first place remained unchecked, unchallenged. A century has since lapsed---but nothing has outwardly changed.

Part of that lassitude stems from longstanding insolence toward the poor. The perceived parasitic social evils of beggary, vagrancy and homelessness were seen to hinder the growth and development of plantation and industrial capitalism as imported by the British and remaining thereafter.[48] Not only problems of labor discipline, beggary and vagrancy were regarded as serious social problems, threatening the code of decency and upsetting law and order. This belief eventually led to the enactment of formal beggary laws which were preceded by the Municipalities Acts, Police Acts and the Public Nuisance Act, subjecting offenders to prosecution.

The mark of Victorian Britain was not of course, confined to India. Colonial America was profoundly influenced by British thinking as evidenced by the establishment of almshouses, workhouses, gaols and asylums to keep paupers off the streets and out of public view. Their unsightliness required that they be institutionalized---on the premise that they were abnormal, deviant or sick, as opposed to simply being poor. Masked under the guise of 'welfare', the ethic of the workhouse could hardly be called Protestant; work was deliberately kept brutal so as to deter other idlers from taking advantage of free room and board. Likewise, gaols were more places of punishment than houses of correction, and little need be said of the asylums for the insane; the horror stories of psychiatric experimentation are benumbing. India's still operative Beggar's Homes are not known for rehabilitative benefit either but rather for their demeaning, deplorable conditions.[49] Thousands die hungry and in pain in these 'dungeons for the poor', so until facilities are improved to a humanly acceptable condition, people will continue to sleep on the pavement.

48 Relying largely on the optimum use of cheap labor power for the formation of capital and creation of surplus profits, the homeless pauper nettled productivity in taking exception to the ethic of industrious hard work---or so ran the argument.

49 In 1984, India Today reported that in the year previous, 473 detenues of Delhi's 12 homes died of "malnutrition, injection, and plain neglect". (Prabhu Chawla. "Beggars Homes---Dungeons of Doom", India Today July 15/84, p.88)

Contemporary Attitudes

In recent history, homeless people have customarily been paupers but the term 'outcast' more accurately reflects the truth. Their condition is the upshot of being cast off, uprooted, degraded, dejected and debared from meaningful or prosperous work by classes ranking themselves superior, a political economy excluding their entry, society's value system which embraces success but not failure of individuals, by a social order perceiving them as incorrigible, unassimilable, useless, threatening and hostile to change. Distinctions were made then as they are now between those deserving and those not deserving of public charity. In many ways these notions remain with us still, having penetrated the societal psyche into perceiving other disadvantaged groups as symbolic of outcasts also.[50]

Policy makers are not above such prejudice. The influence of the poor laws still colors attitudes and behavior of some welfare officials, as the historical compassion-contempt dichotomy exposes itself time and again in present-day policies toward America's homeless.[51] In recent years the poor were blamed for being a heavy pull upon the national purse because they were seen to be the ones doing the purse snatching as street crime simultaneously soared. Accordingly,

> "those who traded on rising welfare costs and street crime delivered this message at the polls: the poor are not only undeserving and expensive to support, they are made even more miserable and antisocial by public assistance." [52]

This attitude prevails today---translating into policies privatizing the welfare state---making it ever more difficult for the marginalized population to elude the street.

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50 In this way, a people's ethnicity or minority status, idiosyncrasy and even their relative poverty has served to stigmatize them and engender prejudice of the kind the outcast homeless knows well.

51 The 60's 'war on poverty' and the period thereafter demonstrated that dichotomy only too well. It was not long before sympathy toward the poor reverted back to antipathy as government support for welfare and dole dwindled. Priorities shifted funds away from welfare's burden on the exchequer to more 'pressing' needs such as military an arsenal stockpiling.

52 Cayo Sexton. Op.Cit. p.81

From the earliest days then, homelessness has rarely been viewed with acceptance. Government likes to keep tabs on its people because census-taking enables it to tax and supervise them. Those without a permanent address or worse, those whose transience transports them across state lines are therefore anathema to the organized, planned society government espouses.[53] In America, the homeless are suspect in the context of the stable middle-class moral order which they so precariously reside outside of. In India, the pavement dwelling poor are considered a liability and their habitats of little consequence; together with human inhabitants, all is apparently expendable and easily bulldozed. Why such insensitivity towards fellow men, especially the least of them, is not outlawed in the name of civilized 20th Century community life---is hard to grasp. Against a history of more or less constant abuse it is clear why present actions directed at the homeless are what they are. But still, that in no way justifies them.

In the next chapter, we take a close look at contemporary homeless people, discussing the considerable increases over their historical presence in terms of population, growth rate and distribution, in addition to a demographic comparative analysis of the homeless in America and pavement dwellers in India.

53 Lately there have been some attempts to try to sedentarize more nomadic types for the reason that their lifestyle does not conform to the social ideals cherished by a developed nation, nor is it deemed appropriate by developing ones.

Health care services are inadequate so an unattended victim of polio lives on the pavements, transporting himself on a plank with wheels

Shelter is often makeshift of discards: bamboo, gunny sac, polyethelene, tarp, all of which must be purchased

CHAPTER THREE

A PROFILE OF THE HOMELESS

"Under the frost-bitten, rain-marred lamppost
I have stood here, deserted,
For the last twenty years of my life;
Looking slantingly
I have been watching the criss-cross grave of sorrow.
I fear, having stood thus for such a long time,
one day I will be murdered while asleep.

If one calls this fated picture History,
then I accept History.
The creation and civilization that has grown
beyond my existence
has no meaning for me at all.
If I ever attach any meaning to a truth
then it is this,
Calcutta, my lonely bed."

Samsher Anwar
pavement poet, Calcutta

"Survival's always on your mind. What's in your mind is the next meal, the next step, the next block. Your future is no more than the block ahead of you."

Robert O'Brien
homeless Vietnam 'vet

This chapter devotes itself to identifying who the homeless are and what their lives are like. Using this facilitates recognition of those likely to become homeless, an essential tool if planners are to begin addressing the problem. Equipped with a profile of that segment of society whose weakness makes them vulnerable to lose their place in the job and housing markets, planners can more competently design policies specifically oriented to halt the slow spiral downward to homelessness, if not reverse its process. Consequently, a profile of the homeless population includes:

1) their population, distribution and rate of growth;
2) a demographic analysis which examines some of the characteristics common to homeless people;
3) an overview of their economic and residential circumstances, indicating those areas most in need of redress; and
4) a glimpse into their existence, a day in the life of a homeless person.

But first, this chapter opens by discussing the scope and magnitude of homelessness.

PART I) POPULATION, DISTRIBUTION, RATE OF HOMELESSNESS

A) POPULATION

As it was throughout history, the domain of the homeless continues to be the bottom-most rung of the economic and social stratification hierarchies where the poverty, misery and indignity of street life approach extreme manifestations. Although comprising a marginal population compared to the total, the homeless constitute a sizeable number in absolute terms. This however, belies the actual incalculable magnitude, owing to difficulties in obtaining a precise head-count of an easily mobile and at times, moving subject, also one fearful of contending with generally hostile civic authorities threatening eviction, demolition or imprisonment. Thus, caution should be exercised when consulting census documents.

Definitional issues (ie. discrepancies as to who is and who is not homeless), data-gathering techniques (ie. differences in the methodology employed in enumerating this group), political ideology and tacit bias (ie. the variety of purposes for which such data are collected and used) and the very nature of their being homeless (eg. carrying self-perceptions of powerlessness and subjugation)---all of these combined make acquiring accurate statistics a formidable task. Moreover, in the absence of a systematic national study of homelessness in either India or the U.S., determining a close approximation of the homeless population is beset with ambiguity.[1] The presumed aggregate, while daunting, is inconclusive and should be regarded as only a very minimum estimate.

The Houseless Population in India

Combining India's houseless rural (1,724,111) and urban (618,843) populations amounts to 2,342,954 or .34% of the nation's 685 million people in 1981. (See TABLE 1) Discrepancies in the official count are apparent when looking at individual cities. The Government of India (GOI) 1981 Census enumerated just under 65,000 houseless persons in Calcutta, whereas the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) estimated an aggregate of 200,000 for the metropolis.[2] Heeding the 200,000 estimate throws into serious question the houseless total for all Indian urban areas, seeing that Calcutta's and Bombay's combined houseless population already accounts for half. (See TABLE 2) In Delhi, while one government agency pegged that city's houseless population at 23,000, another agency, the National Buildings Organization (NBO), maintains there are more than twice that many, or 50,000 houseless persons in the Capital.[3] This in no way infers that

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1 On the one hand are 'official' government statistics, often bogus figures criticized for being low to the point of 'gross insensitivity'. On the other, are those of the local authorities and advocates for the homeless, 'outrageous figures' being as much as ten times the officially cited ones.

2 Calcutta Metropolitan District: Some Facts and Figures (1980) p.8. Though the latter is thrice the census count, it should not be discarded as mere fabrication on the reasoning that a city knows best its residents and their circumstances and is in the best position to make such statements about them.

3 In this case, who is the better judge of the situation---the NBO, whose interests lie in housing only, or the Census, whose clearly do not---is not as obvious as would seem. While the NBO indeed has a better vantage point to assess how many people fall outside the housing market, it has as much interest in citing a high houseless population as the Census has in citing a low one. This is no paradox. For in the logic of a business, which the NBO is, the agency stands to receive more subsidies and concessions from the Centre when the housing picture is portrayed as bleak---which it is.

TABLE 1

HOUSELESS POPULATION IN INDIA, 1981

	INDIAN STATES & UNION TERRITORIES	TOTAL HOUSELESS POPULATION, BOTH RURAL AND URBAN	HOUSELESS POPULATION URBAN ONLY
	ALL INDIA	**2,342,954**	**618,843**
1	Maharashtra	542,457	99,824
2	Madhya Pradesh	332,437	53,496
3	Gujarat	310,414	43,201
4	Andhra Pradesh	250,866	75,307
5	Rajasthan	166,815	84,430
6	West Bengal	132,802	32,424
7	Karnataka	127,750	42,929
8	Uttar Pradesh	108,540	48,329
9	Bihar	60,184	25,770
10	Tamil Nadu	57,461	26,163
11	Punjab	56,372	23,260
12	Orissa	50,761	9,469
13	Haryana	43,698	8,901
14	Delhi	26,870	22,516
15	Himachal Pradesh	23,929	1,721
16	Kerala	21,746	8,599
17	Jammu & Kashmir	10,792	1,058
18	Goa, Daman & Diu	7,198	3,257
19	Chandigarh	4,047	4,047
20	Pondicherry	3,798	2,958
21	Sikkim	1,306	441
22	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1,025	108
23	Tripura	409	104
24	Mizoram	375	88
25	Meghalaya	335	116
26	Nagaland	258	189
27	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	178	126
28	Manipur	128	10
29	Lakshadweep	2	3

Source: Census of India, 1981

TABLE 2

HOMELESS POPULATION ESTIMATES OF SELECTED CITIES, INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES

1)	Calcutta	200,000	5)	Los Angeles	30,000
2)	Bombay	100,000	4)	NewYork	100,000
3)	Delhi	50,000	6)	Chicago	25,000

Sources:

1) Calcutta Metropolitan Statistics CMDA, 1980.
2) Indian Express . 16 July 1985
3) Government of India , National Buildings Organization . 1981
4) HABITAT INTERNATIONAL. Vol 10#4 1986
5) Social Service Review . Vol 57#4 Dec 1983
6) U.S. News & World Report. Dec 9 1985

the NBO statistics are exaggerated; rather they might be seen as no more high than the Census statistics be seen as low, the latter low by reason of carelessness in counting and carefulness in protecting a national image.[4]

In the two decades preceding 1981, while Bombay's population doubled from 4.1 million to 8.2 million, the number of pavement dwellers allegedly shrank by nearly 20,000 people, or one percentage point, a tumble from 1.5% of the 1961 total population to .54% in 1981. (See TABLE 3) The spuriousness of 'official' statistics is evidenced by the fact that only a few years ago, 200 to 300 migrants per day were moving into, not out of Bombay. Today, there are more than 800 migrants streaming into the city looking for a livelihood every day,[5] where the pavement must suffice as home because the exorbitant cost of even slum

4 In Delhi, no one believes that the Capital is besmirched by immobile bodies along the stately avenues; people there think that only happens in Calcutta.

5 India Today recently (January 31,1988) reported that, "In Calcutta, 2,000 migrants flow in every day. In Bombay, 25,000 a month and in Delhi, 1.2 *lakh* [a lakh is 100,000] every year." (p.116)

housing is not within their paying capacity and there are simply too few vacant housing units to accommodate such an influx. One possible explanation for the population decline relates to the census estimates on gender structure that report significantly fewer females to males than other research studies indicate, and may partially account for the wide gaps in tallies.[6] Interest-based discrepancies such as these are not uncommon abroad either.

TABLE 3

PAVEMENT DWELLERS IN INDIA'S METROPOLITAN CENTRES

Municipal Corporation	Total Houseless Population			Percent Change %		Percent of Population	
	1961	1971	1981	61-71	71-81	1971	1981
Calcutta	18,232	48,802	64,385	+166	+32	.70	.70
Bombay	62,177	59,169	44,289	-5	-25	.99	.54
Delhi	6,216	15,136	22,516	+144	+49	.4	.39
Madras	9,032	7,049	6,841	-22	-3	.29	.16
TOTAL	95,748	130,156	138,031	+36%	+6%	.68	.49

Growth Rate: 1961-71 = +36% 1971-81 = +6%

Source: Census of India, 1961,'71,'81 (compiled by the author)

6 Substantiating this, one study notes: "In Bombay and Calcutta, there was strong evidence that the 1971 census enumeration grossly underestimated the female population among the pavement dweller population, and this may also be true of the Delhi census enumeration." (Andrea Menefee Singh & Alfred deSouza. The Urban Poor: Slum and Pavement Dwellers in the Major Cities of India . New Delhi, 1980. p.107) Moreover, because it must be embarrassing for a male-dominated society to admit that many of its women are not taken care of and must live off the street, government is understandably the last to acknowledge that fact, least of all support it statistically.

The Homeless Population in the U.S

In New York City, 'home' to perhaps the largest assembly of street people outside Calcutta, the estimates range from a likely 45,000 to a somewhat dubious 100,000.[7] However, consensus among most studies, even HUD's, indicates that one-fifth of all homeless people are families; since there are 15,000 such members in NYC's shelter system at present, a possible 75,000 are homeless altogether. Although an estimate of 100,000 is cited in HABITAT INTERNATIONAL, there is no evidence of its authenticity, but its definition may well encompass the "tens of thousands of people living in over-crowded quarters with friends or relatives [who] will be among the next homeless statistics."[8] Clearly the issue is contentious.[9] (See also TABLE 2)

Wide variance in quantification locally is consistent with that at the national level; in fact, one merely reiterates the other. Estimates of the total U.S. homeless population (which, unlike India, is almost exclusively urban[10]) varies from a conservative one-quarter million to a figure ten times that, or 2.5 million.[11] Advocacy groups[12] support the latter and contend that *one in every hundred persons* will find themselves homeless at some point in

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7 The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that 44% of all homeless people stay in shelters and that on an average night in New York in 1984, 20,200 people sought shelter, substantiating the 45,000 estimate.

8 Dorothy Wickenden. "Let Them Eat Tarts", in The New Republic . Feb.10/86, Issue 3 #708. p,4.

9 In Chicago, 25,000 are believed to constitute the city's homeless but estimates range "anywhere from 1,000 to 200,000, depending on how one counts", though the latter seems highly disputable. In 1983, estimates of Philadelphia's homeless stood at 20,000, rather steep for that city. Two years later, a study by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation laid to rest all queries and the number is now a plausible 10-13,000. A similar reckoning is given for St. Louis but the number in Los Angeles remains uncertain.

10 Many of the illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America, who can be considered homeless, lay low in the rural areas of the South-western States, though they can go more unnoticed in cities.

11 HUD estimated that 300,000 persons were homeless on a given day in 1983, but that number has since risen, while the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Coalition for the Homeless claim 2.5 million is more accurate. In Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere, Hombs and Snyder assert that the numbers reflect only the "visible homeless", totally ignoring the homeless individuals and families who are "often so ordinary in appearance and conduct as to be invisible except to those who know exactly where, and for what and whom to look." The authors report that the homeless often take great care to maintain acceptable behavior and conventional dress so as to be admissible occupants in public places.

12 Such as the Partnership for the Homeless, New York's Community Services Society, and Washington's Community for Creative Non-Violence, to name but a few.

the year. If correct, that estimate roughly equals the official houseless population of all India---no small thing in a nation whose population is less than one-third of India's.[13]

Implicit in this issue is the likelihood that people in such great numbers are not merely falling through the great gashes in America's so-called social services 'safety net'---they're missing it altogether. As noted earlier, without a permanent address, they cannot vote, be counted in a census, claim welfare or social security, receive mail, participate meaningfully in society, and least of all be planned for. Situated beyond shelter, outside the orbit of society's normal tracking systems---the labor market, household sector, the welfare state---the homeless do not actually exist in statistical terms as they do in India's census category, "Houseless Population" (though even that itself is a dubious count and people are not seen as citizens). The homeless can be tallied only when they come in contact with one social agency or another, an infrequent occurance.

Suffice to say, it is not genuinely known what the magnitude of the homeless subpopulation is. Whatever their count in either India or the U.S., few would disagree that in absolute terms, the number measures unwieldy proportions. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in an upcoming section, this growing population shows no sign of slowing its pace.

B) DISTRIBUTION OF HOMELESSNESS

The incidence of homelessness is most acute in the Third World but increasingly prevails in cities of the First. The greatest distribution occurs in vast, populous conurbations whose employment and economic opportunities offer potential for securing a livelihood or subsis-

13 So seemingly high but commonly held an estimate should not be viewed as purely the pith of political leverage as advanced by the advocates. What is overlooked by otherwise analytical investigators is that the total number of people homeless at *one* point in the year is not at all the same as the aggregate of unduplicated individuals rendered homeless at *some* time throughout the year. That may well amount to 2.5 million persons per annum but at any given time therein, a lower number may be more reasonable.

tence.[14] Characterized by a positive relationship,[15] homelessness varies more or less according to city size; that is, the larger, more densely populated the metropolis, the more pervasive and prevalent the distribution of homelessness.

To illustrate, up to one-quarter of all India's industry emanates from Maharashtra, but not quite 15% of the nation's total urban population lives there. Bombay only absorbs 5.5% of that population but the city, India's most developed industrial, financial and commercial centre, controls 25% of the nation's foreign trade, generates 10% of all industrial jobs and 18% of the manufacturing value added.[16] Most employment opportunities and spin-offs in the unorganized sector are located on Bombay Island---precisely where low-income housing is nonexistent and where two-thirds of Bombay's pavement dwellers reside.

Likewise in New York, the post-industrial hub and mirror of both national and international economies, the most widespread distribution of homeless people is where the greatest opportunities are---where the population and densities are highest, where low-income housing is least available, if at all---on Manhattan. Both the level and intensity of economic activity has bearing on homelessness, at least in so far as it supplies some wherewithal for bettering survival chances and abating hunger, constant negotiations for the poor.

Contrary to expectations, no proven correlation exists between climate and the distribution of homelessness. While statistical analysis confirms that homelessness is a function of city size,[17] there is no evidence of an independent statistical relationship between homelessness and climate when the rate of population growth is corrected for.[18]

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14 The major cities of the Indian states of Maharashtra and West Bengal, and in the US, California then New York, are distinctive in this respect; concomitantly, they are beset with profound homelessness.

15 It must be added that ideology and the economics of competition remain constant in the equation.

16 World Bank, 1980.

17 Homelessness arises disproportionately in the larger metropolitan areas of America as compared to smaller ones. Stevens Redburn and Buss (1987) found that "the scope of the problem is greater not only in larger areas but in rapidly growing ones".

18 Although the southern U.S. states have proportionately high total, and homeless, populations, this is due to their growth rates which are accelerating faster than elsewhere. The considerably cooler western states have barely one-fifth the U.S. population but one-third of all homeless people.

Preferred Locales

While most every central city harbors a collection of down-and-outs, their maximum concentration is in the core of metropolitan centres. Typically found in the older and often decaying urban areas, (especially true of chronic, longstanding cases of homelessness) this group tends to congregate nearest nodes of intense economic and/or transportation activities. Railway, subway and bus terminals, the nucleus along a route thereof, major market areas of a retail or commercial nature, as well as business districts, all rank as preferred locales of attainable livelihood. These then, comprise an inordinately higher distribution of homeless people, as compared to areas of less intensive land use development such as formal residential areas, where their presence would be somewhat less incompatible but hardly more welcomed.

In India, because obtaining food and money upon which to live are the prime motivators influencing decisions to stake claim on one urban space over another, shelter *per se* is not the issue; rather, being in close proximity to a form of earnings is paramount. No developed system of social security exists so if one doesn't work, one doesn't eat. In contrast to India's semi-tropics, North America's fiercer climate places the struggle for shelter tantamount to finding nourishment; being employed, though necessary, takes third place.

The poverty and circumstances facing the homeless make choice so restricted as to be effective compulsion. People don't select a particular location in as much as exigency forces them on whatever space remains unoccupied at the time.[19] Although homeless people may not have an understanding of the complex metropolitan economy that rapidly eddies about them, they are astute enough to make conscious decisions on the economic viability of one place over another. They reside where their job is, along arterial routes, or

19 Why else would people live on the edge of a traffic-island median at the foot of Calcutta's anarchic, teeming Howrah Bridge if the sidewalks weren't already full? Families situate themselves smack in the middle of relentless six-way traffic on Calcutta's tram line round-abouts, and so close that they are nearly on top of the rail lines that transport Bombay's commuting millions.

as near to a source of income and earnings as possible.[20] The only immediate way out of the trap of homelessness is if people's span of choice is widened by increasing income levels, made possible through employment.

The homeless poor often find refuge within the anonymity of the inner city, but if another area offers slightly more comfort, protection, opportunity or amenity, a space therein is sought. Consequently, distribution is diffused. Attempts are made to live close to public facilities (eg. lavatory, water connection) and where possible, to utilize makeshift shelters such as a church, mosque, temple, *dharamsala*[21] or courtyard thereof. Similarly, the bus, subway and train station platforms or washrooms, railway wagons, and otherwise abandoned structures, even unlaid sewer pipes---will house the houseless.

The quiet, unobtrusive holes in the urban fabric are also popular hiding places, offering a measure of safety and security against harassment from police, "drunkards, psychopaths and perverts", and at times, from aggressive prostitutes and criminals. Instead of facing the stars and India's unpredictable elements, natural and antisocial, any kind of overhead shelter is commonly scouted out, if only a stairwell, awning or arcade overhang---whatever is least inconvenient. In North America though, the need for warmth and protection from winter keeps people in the area nearest public or private emergency shelters, the indispensable last resort of many.

C) RATE OF HOMELESSNESS: i) India

With the distribution of homelessness being most concentrated in the cities of the Third World, which are among the fastest growing in the world, it is useful that planners understand how a city's growth affects that of homelessness. Because there are countless influences which give rise to homelessness, some mention is given to peripheral factors below.

20 Studies show that few pavement dwellers live further than a thirty minute walk, or within one mile of their workplace, as prohibitively costly transportation cuts into their meagre earnings. The SPARC (1985) survey found that 85% of Bombay's pavement dwellers do not use city transport at all, and since roughly one-half are engaged in home-based employment, no travel time is required.

21 a rest house for travellers, often on a pilgrimage

In the two decades following 1961, India's total houseless population[22] nearly doubled from 1,265,213 to 2,342,954 in 1981, registering a growth of 85%. (See TABLE 4) This, as against the 49% increase in total population growth, is significant on several counts. Our findings show that:

1) The share of houseless persons to total population increased from .28% in 1961 to .34% in 1981, indicating that in spite of more than 30 years of planned development, conditions of the very poor had not improved but rather worsened, as .06% more of the population was shelterless in 1981 than in 1961.
2) Although the low level of urbanization (23%) ensures that village India account for the bulk of houseless persons in absolute numbers, the per capita proportion of houseless persons to total populations more than 50% higher in urban areas than in rural areas.
3) While the proportion of rural houseless to total rural population decreased slightly from .27% to .25% during 1961-81, it does not reflect fewer houseless people overall, but rather reflects the migration of rural houseless persons into the cities, who are now counted among the urban houseless. Growing urbanization and rural to urban migration transferred the .02% decrease in rural houselessness to the urban areas where the proportion of urban houseless to total population rose from .37% to .39% during the same two decades.

Lastly, as aforementioned,

4) the problem is most acute in the four largest metropolitan centres, which combined, experienced a 36% growth rate between 1961 and 1981. Since cities are, by definition, resource short, accommodating a constant population influx into the city is impossible, exemplified worst by the sprawling growth not only of *bastis*, *jhopdis*, and *chawls*[23] but also of pavement living. The further congestion of already saturated urban densities portends an apocalyptic future which threatens total breakdown in Third World cities, instead of achieving a better quality of life for citizens.

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22 Defined by Census as "beggars, vagrants, tramps, pavement dwellers, and other houseless persons who have no roof to dwell under."

23 Indigenous terms for slums, spontaneous squatter settlements and decayed tenement housing.

TABLE 4

INDIAN HOUSELESS AND TOTAL POPULATION INCREASES

	TOTAL POPULATION (TP)		HOUSELESSPOPULATION (HP)		PERCENT OF HP to TP	
	1961	1981	1961	1981	1961	1981
Urban	78,963,603	159,727,000	295,549	618,843	.37	.39
Rural	360,298,168	525,458,000	969,664	1,724,111	.27	.25
TOTAL	459,234,771	685,185,000	1,265,213	2,342,954	**.28**	**.34**

TOTAL POPULATION INCREASE = **49%**

TOTAL HOUSELESS INCREASE = **85%**

Source: Census of India (compiled by author)

Although the absolute number of pavement dwellers is growing, the actual rate of growth appears to have slowed down, as the proportion of pavement dwellers to total population declined from a 36% growth rate during 1961-71 to 6% in 1971-81. (Refer back to TABLE 3) While any real decline in the growth rate of homelessness is to be lauded, we think it naîve to accept so dramatic a reduction in the absence of proof or evidence and therefore, seriously question the reliability of the census figures. Because the precise reasons for that decline are nowhere apparent, the following is offered as partial explanation.

Growth Rate Change

How does city growth affect the growth of homelessness? One reason we suggest relates to an observed correlation between metropolitan decennial growth rate and that of its

houseless population, whereby a city's accelerated growth rate corresponds to an increase in pavement dwelling, and conversely, decelerated urban growth reflects a decrease in pavement dwelling.[24] In the four largest Indian metropolitan centres under study, one such parallel pattern emerges though the corresponding change is not necessarily proportionate. (See TABLE 5) By way of example, in both Delhi and Calcutta, the 1971-81 population growth rate had risen several percentage points over the previous decade and correspondingly, both cities were characterized by net increases to the number of pavement dwelling houseless. Conversely, Bombay and Madras experienced in 1971-81 a slower growth rate from the decade before, which was paralleled by a downturn in the growth rate of pavement dwellers. On that basis, we maintain that the same set of factors causing changes to a city's growth rate will likewise cause growth changes to its houseless population, an argument we return to.

Specifically, Delhi's 1961-71 growth rate of 54.6% accelerated slightly the following decade to 56.7%, while the houseless population also increased. During that same period, the pavement dwelling population swelled by one-third in Calcutta, paralleled by a total population growth rate increase of one-third, from 22.6% in 1961-71, to 30.4% during 1971-81. Bombay's growth rate decelerated by 16% from 43.8 (1961-71) to 37.8 (1971-81), while the growth rate of pavement dwellers allegedly fell by 25%. The decennial growth rate in Madras slowed considerably from 63% in 1961-71 to 35% in 1971-81, which was likewise followed by a decrease in the growth rate and population of pavement dwellers. Again, it appears that the factors influencing city growth rate also influence the rate of homelessness; to understand fluctuations in the latter, requires considering what might have been affecting city growth rate during that time. Each city being unique, they are treated separately, though overlap is evident in terms of the conditions prevailing upon their growth.

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24 Though no studies have been conducted in India to prove/disprove this theory (whose connection is weak in the absence of statistical data), research in the U.S. indicates that a positive relationship exists between the growth of homelessness and a city's growth rate. As Redburn Stevens and Buss (1987) noted, the highest incidence of homelessness obtains in cities whose population growth is most rapid.

TABLE 5

POPULATION GROWTH RATE CHANGE & RATE OF HOMELESSNESS

	Total Population: Growth Rate Percentage			Percent Change:	
				Total Population	Houseless Growth Rate
	1961-71	1971-81			
Calcutta	22.57	30.35	**acceleration**	+34%	+32% **increase**
Bombay	43.80	37.80	**deceleration**	-16%	-25% **decrease**
Delhi	54.57	56.66	**acceleration**	+4%	+48% **increase**
Madras	63.02	34.91	**deceleration**	-44%	-3% **decrease**

Source: Census of India, 1981 (compiled by author)

Delhi

The focus of political life in the world's largest democracy, Delhi is notable for having one of the highest growth rates in the country. Like other national capitals that have been among the fastest growing cities anywhere, Delhi's growth is attributable mainly to increasing migration associated with rapid, unplanned and unchecked urbanization. In addition, Delhi, unlike Bombay or Calcutta, is not restricted by geographical or topographical constraints to its outward growth, being situated as it is on the flat, featureless Gangetic Plain. Ease of expansion makes Delhi somewhat conducive to indiscriminate squatting---a boon to the poor needing somewhere to settle, but the bane of planners desirous of orderly, planned development of the Capital. The flexible informal labor markets operating in a climate of stiff competition continue to offer employment opportunities in industry,[25] retail and wholesale trade,[26] also with government or the public sector. For the uncontrolled job prospects these invite, people are drawn *en masse* here.

25 Fastest growing: electrical and electronics, rubber, plastic and petroleum products.

26 The largest: textiles, auto parts and machinery.

Acquiring shelter in relation to one's economic capacity and within employment and social affinity communities, (called 'squatting' to some) is a fairly good indicator of the strained economic conditions in a very imperfect housing market. Unauthorized settlement will add an estimated 2.4 *lakh*[27] households to Delhi's 750 or so*bastis* by 1991, estimates the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). That represents a growth of nearly 11% per annum since 1951---or twice the city's population growth rate.[28] Even if growth rates were maintained at current levels, squatters (which include pavement dwellers) and unauthorized colonies would constitute 5.25 million or 43% of Delhi's estimated 12.2 million population in 2001.[29] If the 1971-81 houseless population growth rate of 49% presages what may lie ahead, pavement dwelling accretion will sooner or later amount to wholly unacceptable levels for a city as image-conscious as Delhi. For this is precisely what led up to the impulsive resettlement of squatters during Emergency; their ubiquity and the conditions in which they lived became no longer tolerable to the civic authorities. [30]

In the case of Delhi then, the opportunities offered by a city competing for eminence among other world class cities have bolstered its growth.[31] Migrants drawn from the countryside as cheap construction labor are exploited by the overseers recruiting them, are always underpaid, rarely housed, and usually live on the construction site itself. Accrued benefits of the economic growth fostered by these workers have never been evenly felt or equitably distributed, as evidenced by the two factors related to rapid population growth rate, namely, 1) the burgeoning slum, squatter, pavement and other unauthorized settlements; and 2)

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27 one lakh is 100,000 so 2.4 is 240,000

28 Almost one-third of the city's total population increase was absorbed by *bastis* in 1971-73 alone.

29 India Today in January 1988 reported that the population will surpass the DDA's estimate by more than one million, but the percentage of ill-housed persons will still hover around 40%.

30 The hasty resettlement during Emergency raises a possible explanation for Delhi's houseless growth rate deceleration after 1971, for it may have prompted pavement dwellers to vacate the footpath and take up where the resettled squatters once resided. No substantiation of this pseudo-'filtering down' theory is available, for wont of data or studies tracing pavement dweller mobility over time, an area in need of investigation.

31 To wit: For Delhi to host Asiad '82, more than 100,000 laborers were at work constructing stadiums, hotels and roads "on the city's greatest building operation since Lutyen's Delhi was grafted to the ancient city". (Trevor Fishlock. India File. Rupa Books, Calcutta, 1983, p.134) The same was true for the rather grand Indira Gandhi Airport, and the Capital is unique in getting large outlays for urban beautification.

the growth of the unorganized sector which exhibits enormous capacity for labor absorption,[32] the vast majority of whom are the urban poor. The fruits of Delhi's growth remain cradled by the sizeable élite class of politicians, bureaucrats, functionaries, civil servants and other officialdom to whom the city caters so well. Under their guidance, integration of Delhi's economy---indeed that of the nation's---with the international capitalist system has proceeded hand in glove. This has perpetuated and exacerbated the social, economic, even spatial imbalances of which pavement dwelling forms but a part.

Calcutta

This grossly congested metropolis of 12 million, into where another one million commute daily, still managed a 34% increase in population and 32% increase in pavement dwellers during 1971-81---but for reasons different from Delhi's. The roots of Calcutta's growth and accompanying problems are partly historic, partly geographic, and most recently, largely political. Being a primate city and the only one of any magnitude in India's northeast, Calcutta is the economic centre of the region. It owes its historical existence to the colonial expansion of international trade and industry, made possible through its vast port facility on the Hooghly River. Along its banks, some 60 million people will be struggling just for survival by the end of this century, given present growth rates.[33] To Calcutta will go the dubious honor of being the fourth largest city in the world.

Whereas Delhi has favorable topography, good drainage, scarcely any physical constraints

32 In spite of appallingly low returns on labor, much below those of the organized sector, no guarantee of security or insurance against sickness, injury or old age, people still must resort to the demeaning tasks for which the unorganized sector is known. To illustrate, the number of establishments having under ten workers grew by 450% during the 1960's, which, by itself was a period of tremendous growth. (Amitabh Kundu. "Inequality, Poverty, & Urban Growth: The Case of Metropolitan Cities in India", in Poverty in Metropolitan In Cities. (eds) S.Manzoor Alam & Fatima Alikhan. Concept Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1987, p.34.) Little else than a last-chance outlet for all that the organized sector fails to provide, Banerjee argues that "the informal [unorganized] sector is not a mechanism for creating additional employment; it's just a label for all the odd things people do in order to survive." (Nirmala Banerjee. "Working on Your Own", in The Statesman, Calcutta, February 27,1983. p.8)

33 Margaret Catley-Carlson. "Oversights, Insights & New Sights" in Development: Seeds of Change. 1984:4 p.82

to limit urban sprawl, Calcutta's linear conurbation is only nine meters above sea level, has at best eight to ten kilometers of developable land on either side of the Hooghly, giving it such poor drainage that less than 30% of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation is sewered. Outward growth is severely restricted by low lying swamp and salt lands, but along these fringe areas, growth rate is a phenomenal 22-25% per annum.[34] The lands are little better in the rural areas. The perennial stream of migrants into Calcutta since its inception is assignable to the inadequacy of highly salinic, monocrop lands, often rendered infertile and thus unproductive either through overuse or ruination by natural calamity. To many of the cultivators and small scale agriculturalists who later find themselves homeless on Calcutta's streets, the inadequacy of farm lands means inadequacy of income, which means obligatory migration if one wishes to survive.

Fleeing both economic and social ostracism, Calcutta's early demographic explosion of migrant labor became victim to the relentless exploitation that continues today.[35] Seen as a "necessary evil", this large segment of the population was never paid enough to establish a decent life in the increasingly costlier urban environment and was forced to inhabit slums and *bustees*, whose overcrowded, unserviced and disease-ridden conditions were persistently ignored by industrialists and city authorities alike.[36] Indifference, coupled with a paucity of funds worsened things much over the years. When Calcutta was the cholera capital of the world during the 1950's, the disease was claiming annually a thousand lives---few of whom lived on Park St. or in Alipore, indicating that the historical class bias favoring the well-off was well entrenched---and has remained so.

But it was Partition and the War over Bangladesh which brought the massive influx, exploding the population and problems as people created settlements in every space imaginable. Two-fifths of Calcutta's present population arrived in the tragic upheaval sur-

34 Calcutta 'proper' is, and has been, experiencing a kind of stasis---if a yearly growth of just under 4% can be termed 'stasis' for a city its size.

35 Proprietary industrialists who capitalized handsomely on the virtually unlimited supply of working class labor, drawn to the main industries of jute, engineering, tea and cotton, were able to deliberately maintain unfairly low wages.

36 See Christine Furedy. "Whose Responsibility? Dilemmas of Calcutta's Bustee Policy in the 19th Century" in South Asia. (upcoming)

rounding Partition.[37] As the *bustees* overflowed to the brim and other accommodation or land was impossible to appropriate, people spilled out onto the streets, along canal embankments and railway lines. Of the million or so displaced to Calcutta during and immediately after 1971, as many as 10% of them settled on the pavements, three-quarters of whom "considered Calcutta's pavement their permanent place of residence."[38]

To make matters worse during the 1970's, natural calamities[39] surely contributed to an increase in population growth rate and likely too, to the growth of pavement dwellers. Disasters traditionally drive people into the city, having lost everything in the rural areas save for their debts to moneylenders. Even if able to secure some form of income in Calcutta, (cultivating not being an easily employable skill in a city) they will probably join ranks with the 60-65% of Calcutta's population having no access to formal housing because wage levels are prohibitively low, cheap housing, unavailable. The alternative scenario is even less promising and means becoming part of Calcutta's 2-3% having no access to any shelter whatsoever. Once people accept that they will neither access decent housing nor be housed by the authorities, their potential for permanence increases.[40] And

37 After successive waves of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, (particularly arresting were the waves of 1950, '56 and '64) the worst came in 1971 over the war for Bangladesh, when officially, at least 75 lakhs [7,500,000] entered West Bengal--which does not include those who crossed the borders at unmanned spots, another significant but unknown figure. More than one million of those ended up in Calcutta. (Government of West Bengal. Refugee Rehabilitation Committee's Report . Calcutta, 1981. p.1)

38 (Indian Statistical Institute. Calcutta 1976: A Socio-Economic Survey of Pavement Dwellers. Calcutta, 1981. p.17) The remainder squatted on the city's swampy margins, totalling another 1-1.5 million refugees in principally unregularized colonies. Between 1971-77, the rate of arrival of pavement dwellers coming to Calcutta's streets was increasing faster than the percentage of those leaving the pavement, which is hardly surprising seeing that 2.2 million refugees thronged into West Bengal in 1973-81. Once the political situation in Bangladesh stabilized, the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee found that the number of displaced persons that came to stay in West Bengal permanently was "not less than 80 lakhs [8 million], if not more", or approximately one-sixth of the State's 1981 population, *one-quarter to one-third* of the Calcutta Metropolitan District's population.

39 The monsoon of 1978 was excessive, and according to one government document, was followed by a "dreadful flood [that] surpassed all previous records of wanton and widespread destruction. It totally shattered the economic structure of rural West Bengal". Tailing the unprecedented flood, the next year brought a devastating drought, producing a severe economic crisis from which recovery for many was foregone.

40 Sudhendu Mukherjee & Andrea Menefee Singh in "Hierarchical and Symbiotic Relationships Among the Urban Poor: A Report on Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta", The Residential Circumstances of the Urban Poor in Developing Countries , (UNCHS, HABITAT, Praegar Publishers, 1981) found that more than a decade ago, one-fifth of Calcutta's pavement dwelling population had been living on the streets more than 15 years.

though chronic pavement dwelling is not adding to the growth rate, nor it is abating it.

In the case of Calcutta then, it appears that a correlation between population growth rate and houseless growth rate holds true. For as the metropolis was being inundated by refugees, so too was the rate of pavement dwelling on the rise. Newcomers have been arriving at a faster rate than those leaving the pavement due to obstacles in the way of both consolidating regular earnings and procuring more permanent shelter. So long as that city's population continues to swell---which is certain---homelessness will inevitably follow suit, the ill-effects of which are discussed in a subsequent section.

Bombay

Shifting now to India's most populous western metropolis, Bombay is India's business capital, busiest port, its own Hollywood, and has become the dream destination of millions.[41] Whereas the observed correlation between houseless and population growth rates was positive for Delhi and Calcutta, (these cities experiencing increases to population growth rate and houseless population concurrently) in Bombay, the reverse applies. As evidenced by the growth rate deceleration of both total population and houseless population, the relationship that emerges is negative.[42]

On account of Bombay's rapid yet exploitive industrial growth and the city's consequent population increase, it is not difficult to explain (though hard to justify) how a population of houseless people could grow alongside. This is shown below. What is not easy to spell out however, is where 25% of Bombay's houseless population 'disappeared to' during 1971-81, and just what became of some 15,000 pavement dwellers enumerated in the 1961 Census who were suspiciously absent from later enumerations. Tracing their emergence in

41 In only four decades, the population soared fivefold; from 1941-81, a city of 1.8 million grew to one of 8.2 million. Expected to double by 2001, the Bombay Metropolitan Region will be nearly as populous as the Calcutta Metropolitan District, closing the gap at about 16 million, which, though still very rapid, is a rate slower than in past years.

42 Short of statistical analysis, (inoperative in light of such questionable data) proportionate changes in growth are not apparent.

Bombay offers some clues.

In accordance with furthering its status as the glittering city of opportunity, the swift expansion of Bombay's industrial, commercial, and trade functions made it a significant recipient of newly urbanizing populations.[43] The suffocating congestion for which the city, its slums and pavements are now known, is as much a result of its dynamism as of its geography. Bombay, like Calcutta, shares the problem of limited space upon which to grow.[44] Owing partly to tremendous pressure on naturally confined space and partly to wild speculative practices of free market competition, Bombay's real estate is among the most expensive on earth.[45] It is in Bombay that Western influence is most pronounced; an evening stroll along Marine Drive is not unlike that of several coastal cities of the industrialized nations---an image Bombay strives to assimilate. For if Delhi is image-conscious, Bombay is vain.

Even from its earliest days, when the city's 19th Century prosperity was founded by rich textile millowners who exploited a quarter million millworkers, Bombay has been devoted to the accretion of wealth.[46] By virtue of the textile industry and other industrial, chemical, engineering, and communications developments fleet-footing it, the consequent rapid increase in population went unchecked and the provision of civic amenities and housing could not keep pace with burgeoning demand. Thus in Bombay, like Calcutta, like Delhi---like most every Third World metropolis---slums sprang up virtually overnight. The purchasing power of mass migrant labor was curtailed by picayune wages, obliging workers

43 For all its affluence, Bombay garners its share of the kind of poverty found in any unelectrified village across India. Migration knows no class barrier---both rich and poor are attracted by opportunity. Class contrast is nowhere starker than the juxtaposition of squalid ramshackle hutments fronting the luxurious architecture of high rises. Outrageous real estate, land values, housing costs, not to mention the cost of living in Bombay, have made the city's glitter turn to rust with the stain of abject poverty.

44 Once a series of seven small islands, after much draining, filling and spending, Bombay is now a narrow peninsula of approximately six by twelve miles whose lower-most reach houses the none-too-austere commercial and business district, the administrative headquarters of private and public sector corporations alike.

45 Land on Nariman Point or Malabar Hill is at par with the prices in Manhattan and Hong Kong.

46 The city's favorite and most revered Hindu god, Ganesh, attests to that ideal, for He is the god of affluence and material advancement.

to inhabit crammed *jhopadpattis* [47]. Of the 10 million Bombayites, not less than 5.5 million live in such slums or in hutments crammed on the pavement. Another one-quarter of the population inhabits the dilapidated *chawls* or tenements.[48] When space and likewise cost of these reached a premium, people took to the pavements.

Today, since the middle class can no more afford the price of housing than can the poor, a kind of 'gentrification' is in evidence throughout Bombay slums. In the absence of enforced, protective tenancy legislation, the traditional low-income slum dweller is easily evicted when he cannot compete with either escalating prices or the higher income of the new gentry who are unable to penetrate the brick wall of Bombay's formal housing market. To make room for doctors, lawyers, engineers, bank officers, and airline crew, whose salaries can pay the extortionate increases demanded by landlords---the poor get pushed out onto the pavements. A planner with the Bombay Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA) informed the author that the estimated number of pavement/hutment households stood at 800,000 in 1987---but reluctantly added that, "it's growing".

It was for fear of just such a growth scenario that in the mid 1970's, Bombay authorities started the pavement clearances.[49] Anxious that beautiful Bombay not resemble nightmarish Calcutta with shanties and bodies littering the streets, the Maharashtra Government upped both the tempo and intensity of the brutal task empowered to the 'demolition squads' of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC).[50] With only remote chances of resettle-

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47 the word used in Maharashtra for slum or shantytown

48 The growing intractability of shelter not only elicited a staggering slum growth rate of more than 17% among the 1700 or so slum pockets during 1971-81, it has driven prices ridiculously high. Even the 'smallest and worst' tenement selling for Rs200 to Rs300 in 1970 would, as of April 1987, "fetch anywhere between Rs30,000 and Rs40,000". The better ones cost up to Rs 1 lakh [Can$10,000], more if they are concrete structures. (Tania Midha. "White Collar Slum Dwellers", in India Today , April 30, 1987, p.99)

49 Convinced of the potential spread of crime, disease, not to mention social and economic upheaval, the rapid colonization of pavements insensed the city's ruling and upper classes to the point of legislating their swift removal with the Vacant Lands (Prohibition of Unauthorized Structures and Summary Eviction) Act in 1975.

50 Using lathis and bulldozers as back-up, the demolition of slum and pavement hutments was followed by the gun-point eviction of thousands, covering a 35 kilometre stretch of Greater Bombay from Cuffe Parade to Jogeshwari. Authorities viewed the clearances as "tough, but necessary, the excision of malignant growths".

ment and their live pulled asunder, people were carted off in BMC lorries to the periphery, where they were dumped off and told to simply go back where they came from.

It is against this backdrop of mass evictions to which we ascribe the 1971-81 sharp decline in houseless population. According to a shaky edifice of assumptions, many of those driven out, stayed out. Faced with a penalty ranging from Rs1000 to a three year imprisonment, it is likely that 'deterrent penalties' effected their draconian intent.[51] Another supposition is that by the time the census came round, in their zeal to make the ordeal that was demolition look more of the 'improvement program' it was embellished under---authorities may have fudged the figures a bit. Remarked a residents' association president: "What we fail to understand is that even though the names of each one of us was on the voting list, only four of the 835 huts here were numbered in the 1976 census." [52]

Secondly, by linking two factors---when advances in rural development first became felt, and when the majority of pavement dwellers migrated to Bombay---again it appears that growth rate of the metropolis influences the rate of homelessness. Bombay's slower population growth rate during 1971-81 indicates some rural development progress, thanks to land reforms and the 'green revolution' of the 60's.[53] This period of slower growth parallels the findings of several pavement dweller surveys, which show this period as having been a slow one for migration.[54] Today however, overall migration continues to

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51 In the absence of any data, it is unverifiable whether the numbers of non-returning evictees balance with the census houseless population decrease of roughly 15,000.

52 (Cited in S.S. Jha. Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums. Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1986, p.115.) Under a constant threat of eviction, only the four counted stand any chance of resettlement, though bribery may augur well for the uncounted others. In the logic of municipalities whose strained resources dictate any and all action, enumeration falsification can be argued to be in 'the public interest'. This is no contradiction. For millions of rupees are 'saved' in the short-run by not paying compensation or rehabilitation costs, but in abrogating resettlement plans, the inescapable economic and social costs are deferred to a later, but only more costly, date. In addition, it placates the taxpaying, civic-minded public when told that the pavement population is down, which implies that the government must be doing a good job, credible or not.

53 Although landless agricultural labor increased from 27.9 million in 1961 to 47.5 million in 1971---a startling jump of 70%---its rate of growth decelerated considerably to 17% for 1971-81, as offset by the effects of rural development. It also bears mention that the majority of pavement dwellers constituted landless agricultural labor before migrating to Bombay.

54 Only a small percentage of the most recently enumerated pavement dwellers are newcomers to the city. A minority have lived in Bombay fewer than six years (1979-85), whereas the majority arrived during the 1960's, when Bombay's total population was growing faster than any other period. (See

be as substantial a source of Bombay's population growth as natural increase, a fact that can only add pressure to the housing market. As the intractability of shelter intensifies competition, a BMRDA planner's estimate that the number of new households squatting on the pavements each year will grow by 40,000 to 50,000---could well come to pass.

C) RATE OF HOMELESSNESS: ii) United States

"Homelessness is a mass epidemic," disclosed a congressional committee in April 1986, "so overwhelming that the problem must be treated as a national emergency." The issue is barely a decade old, but its magnitude and growth rate, without precedent. Whereas India's houseless population growth of 36% represents an outdated decennial rate during a period of rapid growth, one of 30% represents the American homelessness growth rate for just *two* recent years,[55] during which population growth was slow, if unremarkable.[56] While the fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families,[57] (usually young women with small children) reports suggest that "very shortly, the majority of the nation's homeless will be children." [58] (See TABLE 6)

As with Indian cities, the largest American cities have the greatest proportion of homeless people.[59] The rate of America's homelessness varies according to city growth rate, again similar to the relationship apparent in Indian cities. That is, the more rapidly growing the

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the Ramchandran (1972), SPARC (1985), and the Niketan (1985) studies.)

55 U.S. Conference of Mayors. The Growth of Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty in America's Cities in 1985, Washington, 1986

56 In New York City between July 1982 and September 1986, the growth rate of homeless families alone grew by more than 350%; some 4,365 families, over 15,000 individuals, were counted in the city's shelter system, an 85% increase over 1984. Add to that, those outside the city-provided facilities and the number is higher still.

57 In 1986, The New York Times reported that an additional 10,000 to 12,000 families would become homeless over the next year, according to one of the city's non-profit religious coalitions.

58 Wickenden. Op.Cit. 1986

59 Though considered conservative figures, in cities of one million people and larger, 13 per 1000 people are homeless; cities 250,000 to 1,000,000, 12 people per 1000 are homeless; and in small cities of 250,000 or less, 6.5 per 1000 persons are. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A Report to the Secretary on the Homeless & Emergency Shelters, Washington, May 1984. p.20)

TABLE 6

Population & Growth of Homeless Families in New York City

Date of Enumeration	Number of Families	Percent Change
December 1976	633	
July 1982	950	+50%
January 1983	1,555	+68%
January 1984	2,354	+51%
November 1985	3,960	+68%
September 1986	4,365	+11%

Increase from July 1982 to September 1986 = 360%

Source: Human Resources Administration. (as cited in The Public Interest #85 Fall 1986, New York, p.4

metropolis,[60] the higher the incidence and growth of homelessness. This is but one of the obverse effects of deindustrialization.[61] Extinguished of their livelihood and driven to sell off their belongings, thousands of mainly working class Caucasians have fled the 'rust belt' to the western and southern U.S. cities where job potential is said to exist. This 'tilt to the sunbelt' exodus is a social and economic dislocation whose impact is felt most by those unable to readily assimilate or be absorbed by the job market, who end up jobless for long periods of time. By no coincidence, the cities of the American West and South are the most rapidly growing; their homeless population is likewise the fastest growing. Not only are homeless people, who have little or nothing tying them down, drawn to the growing centres for the better economic prospects and employment opportunities they offer, but the

60 The National Planning Association reported in June 1986 that high growth cities are those of the South and West, with Los Angeles ranking first, Anaheim, San Jose and Phoenix taking third, fourth and fifth respectively. While all of these can reasonably expect rising homeless totals over the next several years, not one of these cities are known for their compassion, complaisance or tolerance of vagrancy associated with homelessness. Phoenix, in fact, has outlawed it altogether.

61 This is the 'white flight', out-migration of mainly working class Caucasians from the north-eastern cities where the dying steel industry and factory deindustrialization has caused increasing displacement of workers by automation or obsolescence.

nature and rate of urban development taking place uproots more marginalized persons. Low-cost shelter is destroyed in the name of 'progress', or is outpriced as rents increase through rehabilitation of the area or building itself.

At the national level, few disagree that homelessness is on the rise, despite disagreement over its actual growth rate. Between 1980-83, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimated that the homeless growth rate was 10% per annum,[62] while the 1984 U.S. Conference of Mayors estimated a rate increase of 38% for 1983 alone. The 1985 estimate, described as "careful", shows homelessness as having grown by 23-30% from 1983---nearly the houseless growth rate for *ten years* in Calcutta.

Indirect indicators show the growth of homelessness as well. Having surveyed cities to determine whether and how the reported economic recovery was affecting the poor, three-quarters of the municipalities reported to the Mayors Conference that in 1984, increasing hunger among citizens necessitated increasing their emergency food assistance.[63] The addition of more emergency shelter facilities bespeaks another unmistakable index of growing homelessness. [64] 'For every new bed that opens up, another homeless person turns up', bemoan city officials cognizant of spiralling costs to supply new, and maintain old shelters for the seemingly endless appearance of new faces.[65] Indicative of New York's homelessness growth is the increase in the operating budget for the homeless: $6.8 million in 1978 but five years later it was $38 million. As of December 1985, the City was spending $200 million on the homeless, between services, emergency shelters for individuals, or hotels/motels for families. With the latter being the fastest growing homeless

62 This belies the faster rate among individual cities, as the figure is flattened because towns and cities alike are included in the calculation. This 'low' number then, is much less applicable to metropolitan centres where the greatest growth occurs.

63 The number of soup kitchens, food pantries and other food centres increased by 15% during the year, while the total number of meals was 50% higher in 1984 than 1983. Not surprisingly, several cities reported even greater increases: Boston 200%; Chicago 182%; Dallas 100%.

64 Since 1980, the number of men's shelters has risen 66% nationally, whereas the number of women's shelters multiplied thousandfold from 1970 when there were none, to 1100 in 1986.

65 In 1987, there was an average of 28,000 homeless poeple in New York shelter and welfare hotels each day. Meanwhile, there were an estimated 45,000 vacant apartments in the city that landlords kept off the market intentionally. (Harper's Index, May 1988)

population, and at $70,000 a year per family of four in a Bronx barracks-like shelter,[66] it's little wonder the City's expenditure of homelessness escalates as it does.

Summary

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is noted that,

1) In both absolute terms and relative to the total population, the problems of homelessness and marginalization of the poor are becoming more acute, particularly in large urban areas and throughout the developing world. Because the target group is sometimes transient, enumeration is difficult. Official census estimates do not generally correspond with those conducted by other government/non-government agencies, institutions, or investigators, the former being significantly lower than the latter.
2) The distribution of homelessness is a function of city size. Characterized by a positive relationship, the more populous the urban agglomeration and the faster its growth, the greater the distribution of homelessness. The ratio of homeless persons to total population increases according to increasing city size, ie., the larger the metropolis, the higher the ratio of homeless persons to total population.
3) The above relationship is predicated on economic opportunity. Smaller cities and towns offer fewer employment and economic prospects than the metropolis, so to where opportunities abound, homeless people migrate.
4) Maximum concentration of their distribution is in the older inner-city whose intensive land use sustains all functions necessary for street survival in close proximity. They congregate nearest high level activity nodes (transport, commerce or industry related) or where potential jobs, nourishment shelter, warmth or security can be found.
5) Factors influencing city growth rate likewise influence that of homelessness. Political, economic, geographic or developmental conditions that positively or negatively affect city growth, similarly have a corresponding impact on the rate increase or decrease of homelessness.

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66 The New York Times. "Housing Family in a Shelter Costs City $70,000 a Year", Mar 7/86. p.B3.

PART II) DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding why homelessness exists is possible only when a clear picture is known of who the homeless are. The purpose of this section is to identify those populations whose poverty, vulnerability to exploitation and crisis potential can culminate with homelessness. Distinguishing such groups assists planners in targeting programs for the disadvantaged in order to prevent that disadvantage from putting more people out onto the street. What follows therefore is a sketch to work from, their profile.

General Characteristics

The salient feature characterizing the homeless subpopulation is heterogeneity. The 'traditional' homeless person, as reinforced by early sociological literature,[67] was portrayed as an older male drifter or derelict with no kin but his whiskey; in India, the gaunt, semi-clad mendicant with out-stretched hand and begging bowl was viewed as a "socially disorganized loner."[68] In accordance with those ingrained images, today's homeless American has been mythologized as an independent, eccentric descendant of the boxcar-riding hobo of yesteryear who chooses a life on the street, while in India the pervasive perception is that all pavement dwellers are parasitic professional beggars. Being so limited in scope, these no longer are valid portrayals. For, how ever much perpetuating such stereotypes assuages society's guilt and confusion over these unfortunates, the hobo and mendicant form but a fraction of the presentday homeless demography.

Apart from a lack of housing and lack of adequate income, any profile that endeavors to formulate some aggregate notion of 'typical' contemporary homeless people obscures the very nature of their diversity, which draws upon all walks of human life but one, the propertied or monied overclass. Concomitantly, if there is one characteristic common to all

67 For example see: Nels Anderson. The Hobo: Sociology of the Homeless Man , Chicago University Press, 1923.; Howard Bahr. Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation. New York: Oxford, 1973.; Douglas Harper. Good Company. University of Chicago Press, 1982.; Samuel Wallace. Skid Row as a Way of Life. New Jersey: Bedminister Press, 1965.

68 Mukherjee and Menefee Singh . Op.Cit. p.144

pavement dwelling homeless people, it is the seemingly intractable problem of poverty.[69]

Another characteristic we suggest is consistent among all homeless persons is crisis susceptibility. As victims of successive crises, they are severed from regular social structures ranging from family and friends, to the workforce, educational and vocational institutions, religious or cultural associations to political and electoral privileges. Because the process of becoming homeless is invariably one of social powerlessness and economic weakness owing to social, economic, political, environmental, rural, urban, emotional, marital, or mental problems, marginalized persons and likewise ordinary members of the working class sometimes fail to recover from a series of devastating setbacks.[70] To an antagonistic general public and to some street sleepers themselves, the homeless are dissociated from mainstream society and do not either belong or fit in it.

Also notable about the homeless is that two fundamental 'types' can be differentiated: the voluntary **un**houseable and the **in**voluntary, houseable street sleeper. The latter by far comprise the greatest majority, wanting nothing better than to get off the street but lacking the wherewithal to do so. However, a small percentage of all homeless people have consciously opted for street life, choosing to detach themselves from society by rejecting the norms of it. Stating that some people voluntarily choose to live on city streets is dangerous[71] but not acknowledging those voluntary forms is denying people a rightful place to exist, which differs little from the habit of denying the existence of millions of the homeless

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69 The homeless are much poorer than the poor in general, occupying society's nethermost social and economic strata. Their level of absolute poverty is comparable across cultures for two reasons: 1) the 'ultra poor' class of one society does not differ much from the ultra poor of another---relative to that society's other members and predicated on the general standard of living norms; and 2) absolute poverty is almost solely a measurement of minimal nutrition combined with the failure to meet even the barest essentials of physical existence, since survival depends on "a precarious balance between caloric intake and caloric energy required to earn money to buy food." (Simon Fass. "Housing the Ultra Poor: Theory and Practice in Haiti", JAPA , Spring 1987, p.193).

70 A traumatic event (like job loss, loss of income, death or separation from spouse, sickness or disability, oppression) consumes the energy, assets and resources of people much like ourselves. One debilitating incident after another festers the original wound---treatable and avertible were it addressed at the outset through assistance---and culminates finally in the loss of housing, with homelessness.

71 Because 1) it gives license to further the neglect of those who do not choose such a lifestyle; and 2) it makes it easier to continue disregarding the true causes of the problem. Only by including the subject of choice is it possible to discern why homelessness persists.

people by simply shutting our eyes to them.

The New Homeless

Although the face of the homeless has changed, the population is still predominantly male, often single but younger than previously. Most studies of India's pavement dwellers concur that men comprise roughly two-thirds of all, half of whom are single and unattached. Approximately one-third are between the ages of 25 and 44. A similar picture emerges in the U.S. where two-thirds of the homeless are single men, while one in five are married and head a family unit. Homeless men in the U.S. are younger than the earlier vagrant (mean age 37) indicating that 'baby boomers' have entered the ranks of the homeless. In both nations, most are mentally stable, able-bodied men who would not find themselves sleeping on cement were they not inextricably caught up in dire economic straights nor dispossessed of land, job, income, house, home or family.[72] (See also Chapter 3 Part III) (See TABLE 7 and refer to it in the remaining sections of Part II)

Because the guarantee of a universal minimum living level or welfare to sustain the unemployed is absent in developing countries like India, surviving means working. Though the earnings of pavement dwellers are so low as to be negligible, the majority are employed in some marginal capacity in contrast to their counterparts in America who remain largely outside the labor market.[73] At least three of every four homeless Americans are without an income from employment, while one in four men turning up at emergency shelters do so out of job loss.[74] (See TABLE 8 for causes of homelessness) This should

72 Rural pauperization in India has meant the loss of land for two of every three migrant pavement dwellers, losing it to rich acquisitive landowners, usurious moneylenders or for reason of relentless crop failure. This means going without an income from agriculture, the only vocation known to many, which may necessitate separation from family or its breakdown when the male breadwinner seeks urban employment opportunities to avoid bonded labor. One is seven individuals is a seasonal laborer, returning to the rural homestead as per the economic feasibility of so doing.

73 Apart from the day labor jobs now permanently occupied by immigrants willing to do the lowliest of work just to be able to stay in the country, there are virtually no jobs of a casual or marginal nature to take up the slack of unskilled, disadvantaged Americans as the unorganized sector does in developing nations.

74 See The Vera Institute of Justice (1981); Robertson et al (1984); The United Way of Los Angeles (1983); HUD (1984); Hutchison et al (1986); Snow et al (1986); the New York Human Resources Administration (1986).

TABLE 7

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

DEMOGRAPHICS

INDIA	UNITED STATES
-2 of every 3 are male	-2 of every 3 are male
-1/2 of all males are unattached	-most are unattached males
-1 of every 8 are single female	-1 of every 7 are single female
-6 of every 10 are intact families	-2 of every 10 are intact families
-2 of every 5 families are female-head	-2 of every 3 families are female-head
-over representation of minorities (Muslims &Lower Castes)	-over representation of minorities (Blacks, Native Indian, Hispanics)
-1 in 20 suffer physical / mental impairment	-1in 5: physical/mental impairment
-1 in 7 persons are chronically marginalized	-1 in 7 are chronically marginalized
-1 of every 20 are refugees	-1 of every 20arerefugees /immigrants
-1 in 10 voluntarily unhouseable by choice	-1 in 20 voluntary unhouseable(choice)

Compiled by author

not be taken as evidence of indolence or idleness on the part of America's homeless but it does point to an appreciable creativity on the part of India's pavement dwellers. It also points to the rigid formality of the U.S. economy which, despite espousing free enterprise and laissez-faire ideology, does not tolerate hawking, street vending or other informal activities except under extremely controlled circumstances, few of which are open to those with no money, no credit rating, no housing or address.

Of this economically-weak but normal-functioning male population whose homelessness owes to economic circumstances, a large percentage have low levels of education. In India, many have none whatsoever. The nature of their limited skills ensures that the jobs acquired will be dead-end and low wage. Having a negligible capacity for savings, the majority live from day to day which makes escaping from the street a long and difficult process. Though myth claims otherwise, contemporary homeless people are not prin-

cipally the nomadic, roving vagrants they are perceived to be; rather they remain for years in one area, shuffling about by day but returning to the same place night after night. [75]

MINORITIES

Of the approximately six to seven of every ten persons rendered homeless out of economic compulsion, a significant number of those are minority peoples. Though the proportions vary from city to city, minority over-representation among the homeless is common to both developing and developed worlds. Among pavement dwellers, the ratio of minorities is higher than that of India's total population minority ratio, just as it is higher among homeless people in the USA. Doubly oppressed---first for their minority status and second for being homeless---India's non-Hindu homeless minorities are disproportionately Muslim, Scheduled and lower Castes, especially untouchables or *harijans* who often constitute a majority. As prevalent as non-Hindu pavement dwellers in India are non-Caucasian homeless people in America, both in disproportionate ratios compared to the total population representation. Political and economic refugees (constituting about 5% of all homeless individuals in both nations) in addition to legal, illegal and undocumented immigrants are the other peoples whose homeless condition further their oppression.

FAMILIES

Of the roughly 60% of all whose homelessness is attributable primarily to economic exigency, the same percentage constitutes a family unit in India, while approximately 20% of all homeless Americans are families. Although a low percentage presently, being the fastest growing homeless segment in the USA , it is not apt to remain low for long. Evidence from India also points to increasing proportions of families among all homeless. [76]

75 The younger, jobless or marginally employed males are more transient for the reason that, lacking family ties, they have little to lose or leave behind. By leaving, more opportunities may arise.

76 When examining micro surveys conducted over the years, the tendency clearly shows an increase in families. The majority of SPARC's respondents are in family units; Niketan found that 17% were single members in 1985, as contrasted with Ramchandran's findings of one decade earlier when 54% were single members.

Clearly, the need and desire to be housed is greatest among homeless families. Parents express despair knowing that generations of their children could face the same hardship and insecurities accompanying the impermenance of tenuous residential and economic circumstances that the parents have endured. Unwittingly, legacies of a way of life are passed on, even those of homelessness,[77] so countless people will spend decades on the pavements because their vulnerability to crisis amplifies the disadvantage they began with.

While the majority of Indian houseless families have both parents present, (indicating greater stability compared to homeless American families who are largely single-parent) approximately two of every five Indian families are headed by single women. Approximately one in ten female migrants to Bombay were victims of family breakdown or conflicts which resulted in the wife being abandoned or driven out. The social stigma of desertion does not easily allow for such women to return to their kin in the villages so they are left to bring up their children by whatever means possible. Prostitution and teaching children to beg at strategic locales are but two ways women survive the streets.

The US has one-third as many homeless families as India, but a greater percentage of those---at least two-thirds but some studies say 90%---are missing a father. One-half to two-thirds of the homeless female-headed families are black. Mainly the result of family breakdown, marital/co-habital separation, divorce, desertion or domestic abuse, the mothers of two to four children are themselves young (late 20's, early 30's); often functionally illiterate, (not merely lacking a high school diploma) or totally illiterate (overwhelmingly so in India); women are consistently jobless, without independent income and at best, marginally employed as domestics earning a subsistence wage.

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77 Though no comparable data is available for India, Dr. Bassuk of Harvard University studied the "legacies of dysfunction" among homeless families in Boston. The backgrounds of two-thirds of the mothers of homeless families had been chaotic and stressful, growing up in "disorganized families and suffering from at least one major early family disruption." She adds, "it is not only the economics of poverty that has created the new phenomenon of homeless families but the combined effects of poverty, violence, and profound deprivation of a person's development and self-esteem." (Ellen Bassuk. "The Feminization of Homelessness: Homeless Families in Boston Shelters").

TABLE 8

CROSS-SOCIETAL COMPARISON OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AETIOLOGY

India	United States
7 OF EVERY 10 ARE HOMELESS	**6 OF EVERY 10 ARE HOMELESS**
BY ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL IMPOVERISHMENT	
√ Principally Family Units	√ Principally Unattached Individual
A) 4 OF EVERY 5 CITING ECONOMIC COMPULSION OWING TO:	A) 2 OF EVERY 3 CITING ECONOMIC COMPULSION OWING TO:
1) OPPORTUNITY CRISIS	**1) OPPORTUNITY CRISIS**
√ 60% Landlessness / No Income *No Rural Job Opportunities*	√ Joblessness / No Income *Insufficient Job Opportunities*
√ 15% Natural Calamity / Disaster *(Flood, Famine, Drought)*	√ Man-made Disaster: Demolition *(Loss of Cheap Rental Units)*
√ 15% Seasonal Migrants *(Denied Year-round Income)*	√ Cut-off / Denied Social Welfare *(Denied Monthly Income Assistance)*
√ 10% Distress Migrants	√ Transients in Search of Work
2) URBAN CRISIS	**2) URBAN CRISIS**
√ Vulnerable to Labor Exploitation from Economic Weakness / Insecurity	√ Unemployment due to Changes in Economy: Industrial to Service-Based
√ Semi- / Unskilled: Limited Prospects	√ Semi- / Unskilled: Limited Prospects
√ Marginalized Low-wage Employment *(Unorganized Informal Sector)*	√ Marginalized Casual Employment *(No Unorganized Informal Sector)*
√ Strikes, Walk-outs, Plant Closures	√ Strikes, Walk-outs, Plant Closures
√ Displaced / Evicted from Housing *(Non-payment of Rent / in Arrears)*	√ Displaced / Evicted from Housing *(Non-payment of Rent / in Arrears)*
√ Severe Shortage of Cheap Housing *(Units Available are Unaffordable)*	√ Severe Shortage of Cheap Housing *(Units Available are Unaffordable)*
√ Victim of Urban Development *(Slum CLearance, Upgrading, Rent Increase)*	√ Victim of Urban Development *(Slum Clearance, Renovation/Rehab)*
√ Centrally-located Rental Units Lost *(Pressure for land: Peripheralized)*	√ Loss of Inner-City Rental Units *(Gentrification: Marginalized)*

India	United States
B) 1 OF EVERY 10 CITING SOCIAL DISAFFILIATION:	B) 1 OF EVERY 5 CITING SOCIAL DISAFFILIATION:
√ Rural Oppression / Power Structures *(Inability to Influence or Overcome)*	√ Bureaucratic / Power Structures *(Inability to Influence or Overcome)*
√ Marital or Family Breakdown *(Disaffiliation due to death of spouse)*	√ Marital or Family Breakdown *(Disaffiliation due to death of spouse)*
√ Spouse Desertion, Divorce, Conflict *(Women escaping in-law oppression)*	√ Spouse Desertion, Divorce, Conflict *(Women escaping domestic violence)*
C) 1 OF EVERY 20 CITING POLITICAL REASONS	C) 1 OF EVERY 20 CITING POLITICAL REASONS
√ Political Tension / War Outbreak *(Refugees, Illegal Immigrants)*	√ Seek Political / Economic Refuge *(Refugees, Illegal Immigrants)*
1 OF EVERY 20 ARE HOMELESS	**1 OF EVERY 5 ARE HOMELESS**
OWING TO PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENT / DEFICIENCY	
√ Physically Disabled, Handicapped,infirm	√ De-institutionalized Mentally ill
√ Mentally Ill, Diseased, Unable to Work	√ Physically Disabled, Unable to Work
1 OF EVERY 7 HOMELESS IS A CHRONICALLY MARGINALIZED PERSON	
√ Loss of Significant Others, Elderly, Beggar, Vagrant, Criminal, Ex-Offender Orphans, Street Youth, Prostitute	√ Loss of Significant Others, Elderly Alcoholic, Substance User / Abuser Criminal, Ex-Offender, Run-aways
√ Unemployable for long periods of time	√ Unemployable for long periods
1 OF EVERY 10 HOMELESS	**1 OF EVERY 20 HOMELESS**
VOLUNTARY UNHOUSEABLE	
√ Houseless Voluntarily, Societal Misfits *(Outcasts, Holymen, No shelter wants)*	√ Voluntary Homeless, Society Misfits *(Society Drop-outs,Vietnam Veteran)*
√ Income Maximizer, Dissociate by Choice	√ "Domestic Refugees

Compiled by author

In the US, more than half of all homeless were recipients of federal public assistance for longer than five years; before becoming homeless, virtually all were receiving assistance---which was lost once their address was. Admittedly, raising a family single-handedly under any circumstance is demanding and distressing. Managing with no money, no house, no security, no support, no future---is for some, trying beyond the point of coping. Functional or behavioral problems such as poor parenting skills and an inability to maintain cohesive relationships, coupled with the pressures of rearing children with neither financial nor human resources only heightens the depth of privation associated with homelessness.

NON-FAMILY FEMALES

As with families, the addition of lone women to the ranks is further indication that the homeless population has diversified. No more spared the degradation of street subsistence than men, women are generally younger, less educated, (more than 90% illiterate) more unemployed, and prone to greater danger than men. The reasons women most frequently cite for their homeless situation are marital breakdown (eg. divorce, desertion or abuse by spouse) and death of a spouse whose savings or assets were insufficient to maintain housing.[78] Age and health are other considerations. Besides being widowed, she may be in poor health or too old to continue physically arduous work, thereby losing the means to pay for housing. With no emergency social assistance in India and the slow dismantling of social programs in the USA,[79] women short on economic and emotional strength too often find themselves at the mercy of street life. But for many women, domestic violence is what drives them out---even when they have no where to go.[80]

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78 The economics of poverty can lead to mortgage foreclosure or eviction for nonpayment of rent if a spouse dies, leaving no pension/financial security, or if upkeep costs are impossible to meet.

79 Noted the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty: nearly 90% of impoverished married women, half of whom are separated, receive no public assistance even though eligible for it.

80 In India, unreasonable and exorbitant dowry demands often result in abuse that tragically ends when women are 'accidently' burned to death. The less unfortunate ones manage to escape from their homes only to land up on the street, having been spurned for the marriage collapse by in-laws and ashamed parents alike. Though less extreme, Austerberry and Watson (1983) found that of 165 homeless Western women, 95 said they lost secure accommodation to marriage breakdown when a domestic situation of repeated abuse made staying impossible; equally out of the question was getting the husband/cohabitee to leave. Both nations exhibit examples of desertion by a spouse that left financially dependent women with nothing but personal emotional and economic crises.

HOMELESS CHILDREN

As for children in Indian cities, very little is documented apart from their numbers and a sketchy idea of their low rates of school attendance and generally lower levels of education.[81] Not only is access to education the privilege of those having an address, but parents, being largely unschooled themselves, are less than encouraging of time given to learning when time can be put to earning; making money to help the family eat takes precedence over learning to read. Alternatively, youths are denied a childhood of schooling and play because they must care for baby siblings while parents go off to scratch out a living. Young children are thrust into the role of adult before their eighth birthday; many will be laboring before their tenth.[82]

Once working, if scavenging for paper and rags won't pay enough to help out parents as well as satiate a growing boy's stomach, the youth may run away to fend for himself. Joining a gang of other street boys means that a meagre income can be supplemented by small-time crime, a way of life which becomes difficult to give up. Having known only the street since practically birth disables some from accepting the idea of shelter, so many remain homeless until death, perhaps marrying and raising children on the street, trapped in a vicious homelessness circle.

The situation for homeless kids in the US is hardly better. Though many have access to public schools, frequent mobility of homeless families[83] removes children from classes for long periods of time. For the abandoned or 'throw-away' youth in the US,[84] surviv-

81 Of the 50% of Niketan's (1985) Bombay respondents who had children between 6 and 18 years of age, 56% did not have one child attending school and 56% of all families did not have one literate member among them; at least one member was illiterate in 85% of all families. Findings were worse still among the children in Ramchandran's (1972) study.

82 In Calcutta, the ISI study (1981) noted that more one-quarter of all pavement dwelling kids between 5 and 14 years were earners, while one in three boys under 13 worked for a living.

83 Homeless American families move around on average three times in every six years as against 1.3 times in six years for families on AFDC (Assistance for Families with Dependent Children). [T.J.Main (1986)] On account of this upheaval, homeless children aged six and older are "extremely depressed and anxious", found Dr.Bassuk while almost half the preschoolers "showed developmental failures of major dimensions." (cited in Science 2 May, 1986)

ing takes the form of theft, prostitution or drug-running, and at age 12, not knowing about life, a child is easily abused and is vulnerable in the absence of parental care. The societal indifference that allows children to stay on the streets today, will cost an incalculable price in the years ahead if the damage is permanent and children end up institutionalized in a community health system as adults.

THE PHYSICALLY / MENTALLY IMPAIRED & CHRONICALLY MARGINALIZED

Another large segment of the homeless population is incapable of sustaining economic self-sufficiency owing to a handicap which prevents ease of entry into the labor market.[85] No less compelled by reason of economics to live on the footpaths than those described earlier, people of this group are further impaired---physically, mentally, socially or emotionally---and have been cast aside for so long that they no longer are capable of coping in main-stream society, but nor are they capable of coping with street life.

Homelessness by itself is a crisis that can confuse and prey upon even the healthiest of minds and sturdiest of bodies. When that mind or body is debilitated by mental illness or disorder, then compounded by homelessness, life can be especially trying. For he who need muster effort to button a shirt, surviving on alienating streets without a familial support system is frightening and disorienting. Disowned by relatives and shunned by society, India's 10-15 million victims of mental illness frequently find themselves homeless upon release from jail, having entered the mental health system via the criminal justice process. Arrested as "wandering lunatics", the inadequate psychiatric facilities available are costly, inaccessible to most and do not often have space to accommodate what the law

84 Of the roughly 500,000 homeless kids, many are unwanted and abused children, drop-outs, drug addicts or run-aways from the ghetto. Groups of kids often band together and stake claim over a dilapidated building to replace the home they never knew.

85 In India, at least 15% of all pavement dwellers suffer from either a mental or physical impairment and another 15% have been chronically marginalized from the employment sector. In the USA, 20% of the homeless suffer impairment, overwhelmingly mental illness, and as with Indians, another 15% have been marginalized for agedness or eccentricities deemed anti-social.

brings them.[86] Nor are the mental institutions obligated to accept victims.[87] Hence, people whose only crime is their sickness (deemed "dangerous and unfit to be at large") are confined to jail where they are not considered part of its official population and "are entitled to neither food nor medical facilities."[88] When released from prison the homeless mentally ill have but street beggary to look forward to, for they lack the social organizational talents necessary to negotiate a socially acceptable niche for themselves.

The situation is hardly better in the U.S. Hundreds of thousands of the chronically mentally ill were rendered homeless when de-institutionalization[89] backfired. Though health care costs became more manageable as institutional cots were emptied,[90] and plans for community health centres were shelved, the social costs of a marked rise in homelessness have been an infinitely greater price to pay. At least one in five homeless persons suffer from a mental disorder,[91] attested by the percentages of street people (ranging widely from 10% to 97%) with histories of psychiatric hospitalization. In addition to the mentally ill, the casualties of drink or drugs comprise another 15% of the American homeless.[92]

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86 As Dhanda (1986) noted, during the '70's, there were only about 90 Psychiatric Units scattered across the country, along with a handful of mental hospitals. These function in isolation and have limited services with no integrated system in place to provide essential care and treatment to the mentally ill---even those who can afford what facilities are accessible. For those who cannot pay, choices are limited to fending for themselves and hoping against landing in jail.

87 The Law (ie. the Lunacy Act) does not empower Magistrates to refer the mentally ill to mental hospitals if they entered the system via the criminal courts. Also this Act "continues to encompass mental hospitals alone" and does not therefore facilitate transfer of the homeless mentally ill into psychiatric units. (See Amita Dhanda, "Rights of the Mentally Ill--A Forgotten Domain", in India International Centre Quarterly Vol 13 #3&4, December 1986.)

88 See U. Baxi. The Crisis of the Indian Legal System (1982) p.159-63 as cited in Dhanda (1986).

89 A policy which was to transfer care for those suffering from mild schizophrenia to severe personality disorders from state psychiatric institutions into community-based half-way houses that never materialized, owing to budget cuts.

90 The population in mental institutions fell from 505,000 in 1963 to 125,000 in 1981 as psychiatric patients were discharged. The advent of psychoactive drugs offered hope of rehabilitation in a neighborhood setting, where their quality of life would theoretically improve, while simultaneously alleviating the financial burden on the state institutions.

91 See: Snow et al (1986), "The Myth of Pervasive Mental Illness Among the Mentally Ill", in Social Problems, June 1986; E. Bassuk, "The Homelessness Problem", in Scientific American, Vol 251 #1, July 1984; L.G. Rivlin, "A New Look at the Homeless", in Social Policy Vol 16 #4 Spring 1986; C.T. Mowbray, "Homelessness in America: Myths and Realities", in The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry , Vol 55 #1 January 1985; S.Katz et al, "Down & Out in the City: The Homeless Mentally Ill", in Hospital & Community Psychiatry, #39(9), 1983.

92 Severed from family and community social structures for an addiction whose effects seriously impair functioning and deplete their finances, this social deficiency afflicts poeple of any age or background.

Indian surveys don't reveal substance addicts but they may be among the numbers of physically handicapped or diseased pavement dwellers. The lame, blind, deformed, those stricken with TB, polio or leprosy and who have been rejected by poor families incapable of nursing them, those unable to afford institutional care or who fall outside its purview---approximately one in twenty houseless persons suffer some such infirmity. The destitute elderly, whose families (if alive) dispensed with them long ago, have neither pension nor income. To prolong the years left in a withered, emaciated body means depending on the goodwill of strangers for spare change or on benevolent societies for hand-outs.[93]

Approximately one in six homeless Indians need depend upon begging or charity.[94] With a national population of 1.5 million beggars---minimum---and only 109 beggar homes in India having places for fewer than 17,000, scarcely 1% of all beggars can avail themselves of these facilities. Mendicants do not generally make contributions of social utility so, like prostitutes, are indictable by law. Nevertheless, as beggars they contribute to the indigenous traditional economy, for even this means of procuring income is work, demanding considerable energy out of one whose is diminutive.

While a handful of cripples with begging bowls are fixtures in the New York subway, one-quarter of America's homeless claim that charity or public assistance is their primary income source.[95] Many homeless mentally ill or pensionless elderly come to depend on soup kitchens, churches or charitable organizations, while others simply dine at trash cans depending on no one to give them food by foraging it alone. Occasionally one sees a middle-aged 'bag lady'[96] order a cup of tea at a cafeteria then sit at an uncleared table to

93 Since virtually all of these people are unemployed in the normative sense, subsisting more or less permanently outside the labor force, beggary is all they can manage. Sometimes old or crippled men and women who appear terminally affixed to a street corner with hand outstretched as if paralyzed are evidently more surprised when someone acknowledges their presence with a few coins than if they were ignored altogether---which is more often the case.

94 See Mukherjeee (1975), ISI (1981), and Ramchandran (1972).

95 See Stevens Redburn and Buss (1987)

96 Bag ladies are women on the streets who port all their worldly goods and belongings with them in most economic luggage: paper or plastic shopping bags. Usually Caucasian but often black women of 40 years or younger, with no education beyond high school, the majority are unemployed and separated, divorced or abandoned by husbands. Stoner (1982) found that their most serious problems are a lack of money, nowhere to live, joblessness and family separation with reduced socialization.

unobtrusively devour the scraps left by former customers. Such people may even turn down hand-outs because they are either too suspiciously cautious to trust anyone, too worn out to bother, or too proud to beg.[97] Besides substance users, the elderly and mendicants, the homeless population of both nations encompasses the traditional chronically marginalized vagrants, criminals, ex-offenders, former inmates and prostitutes. Like the elderly and infirm, they are seldom employable (except prostitutes) and remain jobless for years.

Survivalists all, if given the choice and opportunity virtually none in this group would decisively opt for the street as a way of life. The very existence they endure as aged beggars, schizophrenics, lepers, heroin addicts, the purposely maimed, to psychotic bag ladies---bespeaks the void of choice available. Though desperately poor, all are houseable and likewise in need of professional attention.[98]

Contrary to popular myth, the vast majority of Indian and American pavement dwelling people do not voluntarily choose to make the street their home to repudiate society's inherent norms and values; rather, it is society that rejects them. Since "they don't look right", they are castigated not because they do anything truly objectionable but because they appear so. Despite appearances, the impoverished singles or families compelled to reside on the footpath by reason of economic exigency, physical, mental or social deficiency have not elected to undergo a life of public degradation, however convincingly argued otherwise by societies wanting nothing to do with them.

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97 Much less of a stigma is attached to beggary in India than in the US and thus, having to succumb to mendicancy---an act rather alien to Western capitalist society--- is for some, a humiliation beyond homelessness, because it is just *not* done.

98 Only a fraction are marginalized and debilitated to the extent of utter non-sociability but for many to capably maintain both themselves and housing---unassisted---is asking too much. A facility to help them care for themselves is therefore indispensable

THE VOLUNTARY UNHOUSEABLE

It cannot be denied---a minute population of the homeless aggregate voluntarily chooses to be homeless, houseless, aimless.[99] Perhaps 10% either disclaim want and need for housing or denounce affiliation with the society which failed them. Some don't want help, others believe they can't be helped because they just don't fit; they never have and likely never will. Some people once 'fit' but can't any longer, having met with contingency, ordeal or trauma from which they never recovered, changing their lives irrevocably.[100] To 'domestic refugees' in the US, operating around humanity is anathema; bittersweet asylum is found within the alienation that homelessnss conveniently spawns. Hindu *sadhus* harbor less discontent with society but they too, elect the isolation of the street;[101] an anti-materialist philosophy or simplistic rural background devoid of embellishment leaves some houseless Indians with no aspirations to acquire goods or live in "fancy" shelters.[102]

Although only one in ten or twenty take to the street of their own volition, a fairly large contingent of the voluntary houseless are those whose very livelihood is predicated on the particular pavement whereupon they live, because of the relative prosperity that that space accords them. 'Income-maximizers' reside where the profitability and convenience of

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99 Despite the risk of stultifying action-oriented efforts by pointing out that some homeless people could care less for housing and that some would flatly refuse it because they choose street existence to be left alone, the small number they constitute is not apt to make or break policy---that is, once political will evolves to decide that the needs of the homeless are finally worthy of consideration.

100 In America, many of the younger homeless men are veterans from Vietnam, a generation confused, disoriented and jobless before going to war---who now fight a private war to cope with the traumatic experience and the post-trauma stress to adjust. Emotionally devastated to the extent that coping with their embitterment over what their country demanded of them, what it did to them, has meant turning against it in total denial of American life. The stress of trying to put the war behind them shows up in "alcoholism, broken marriages, drug addiction, crime. And it showed up too as life on the street, which was for some vets a desperate choice made in the name of life---the best they could manage. It was a way of avoiding what might have occurred had they stayed where they were: suicide, or violence done to others." (Peter Marin. Harper's, January 1987, p.4).

101 Though a small minority, like hermits they renounce all forms of materialism including shelter and sometimes clothing as well. Such people on the footpaths cannot be housed because they *will* not be housed nor concede to it, so there is little sense in forcing the shelter issue on those incapable of accepting it. They have no home, no place, no one, nothing---and want it like that.

102 According to Ramchandran (1972), at least one in ten of Bombay's pavement dwellers had no desire for better accommodation but "had a preference for the pavement", citing satisfaction with it, in deliberate renunciation of formal housing.

locating their small street-hawking or vending business is greatest, ignoring that they disrupt city movement, pedestrian and vehicular alike, encroaching the roadways as they camp beside, beneath or on top of their means of livelihood.[103] Though their frequently sizeable earnings are well nigh within the cost of formal housing, they abjure it so as not to lose their profitable locale if left unattended at night.[104] Other income-maximizers include professional beggars[105] and the exploiters or pavement dwelling strong-arms called *adadas*. They earn a living by ensuring street 'rents' are procured from the poorer class of pavement families by threatening the use of violence or police harassment if people don't cooperate by paying.[106]

Though pavement dwelling is synonymous with absolute poverty, the fact of voluntary homelessness tends to license neglect of the far larger majority who are houseless **in**-voluntarily, who do not wish to live as they must. The public and private duty to redress inequity among citizens loses its sense of urgency when the voluntary forms of homelessness are played up. To claim "the homeless are homeless you might say, by choice",[107] is patent perversion. Despite the multifarious composition of homeless people, planners and policy makers have yet to recognize that neglect of the homeless poses a greater challenge to city planning than even the most appalling of urban slums, ghettos and squatter settlements---for those at least provide some form of shelter to inhabitants.

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103 Encroachment by hawkers, handcart-owners, or stall-keepers presents a problem different from that of the destitute pavement dweller because the former are comparatively well-off, often belonging to powerful, well-organized and connected groups capable of outwardly flouting the law through the assistance of influential patrons or friends.

104 In the heart of Calcutta's 'BBD Bag' (the business, financial, commercial and now pseudo-residential district) the stately, Colonial architectural edifices of the stock exchange and national banks have bodies sprawled along their broad stairways come dusk, rows of sleepers close to their day stalls to ensure they are not sequestered at night.

105 Depending on strategic locale and personal craftiness, 'professional' begging can be lucrative. Because of the popularity with tourists, begging in front of Calcutta's Oberoi Grand Hotel or Victoria Memorial can fetch Rs.100/ ($10) day if one has a convincing ploy. With that income, the incentive to employ oneself in work more socially constructive or economically productive vanishes---in the absence of vocational skills which, if work in the labor market were open to them, would hardly amount to Rs25 /day ($2.50).

106 Their numbers are negligible but they too choose to live on the streets, not because they are necessarily compelled economically, but because financially, and to a certain extent socially and politically, it suits them.

107 As quoted by President Ronald Reagan.

PART III) THE ROAD TO, AND LIFE ON, THE STREET

The process of becoming homeless is the fall from one preventable event after another from which marginalized persons and likewise ordinary members of the working class fail to recover. The sequence festers the original wound, consuming their energy, assets and resources. Things culminate finally with homelessness, which can amount to a few feet of floor space at Penn or Sealdah Station.

Lost work is lost income is reduced ability to pay rent or for housing; doubtless many of those who lost their jobs, lost their homes thereafter. For a large number of urban India's male houseless population, loss of income has been due to industrial transition,[108] just as industrial obsolescence and de-industrialization[109] in the U.S. contributed to the rise in homelessness there. High and chronic unemployment has hit hardest those marginally situated to begin with, the uneducated, unskilled youth and minorities. Irregular, subsistence wages from casual labor precludes all but a meal or two a day; the cost of housing is never within their paying capacity.

Life for the homeless is one based on leftovers: their sustenance comes from leftover jobs or throwaway tasks where full employment is but a dream; they squat on leftover space, build meagre refuge from the elements using leftovers that other people discard; they eat food leftover by others. Dispossessed of land, displaced from housing, cut-off from good jobs, income and social supports, the future for many unattached, adult homeless men and women is bleak: the longer they remain homeless, the likelihood of finding work diminishes accordingly.[110]

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108 Job loss occurs when manpower is reduced as product demand decreases, when the introduction of technology alters the mode of production, and by reason of plant closure, lock-outs or lengthy strikes, which make the working poor further impoverished.

109 Associated with the shift in emphasis towards a service-based economy (where non-professional jobs are mostly poor paying) de-industrialization has contributed to massive job loss, particularly among former employees of the steel industry in what is now called the 'Rust Belt'.

110 Equally true of both India's and America's homeless, Madeline Stoner notes, "they become less employable as they grow more dishevelled, anxious, depressed and their lack of an address creates the appearance of instability."

As aforementioned, sixty to seventy percent of the homeless are rendered indigent by economic exigencies external to their lives. These are people who are much like ourselves, by and large capable of gainful employment. But for wont of education, skills, experience, or a *chance*, work of remuneration adequate to meet minimum nourishment and shelter needs is either not open to, or is impenetrable by them. Among pavement dwellers in India, a higher priority is given to securing regular employment of at least subsistence wage than to being sheltered, a priority reversed among America's homeless who cannot sleep outside in winter and be certain to awaken in the morning.

Employment and Income

Street sweeping, metal recycling, cow dung-cake making, garbage scavenging, errand running, rag picking, paper bag making, handcart and rickshaw pulling, petty goods hawking, victuals vending, vegetable selling, casual construction work, housecleaning the homes of the well-off, baggage porting and supervising lavatories at railway stations are but a smattering of the jobs pavement dwellers undertake. In addition to auto-rickshaw drivers, service workers, clerks, and a few skilled tradesmen, a number are also engaged in traditional and semi-skilled vocations which are often caste-based, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, cobblers, tailors. Though their jobs are peculiar and eclectic, unemployment is a luxury they cannot afford, but the economic reality of many.

Although migrant rural families have managed to further their survival potential with such work, it can scarcely be deemed progressive or befitting the city's relative advancement over backward villages. In the city they are still victims of exploitation similar to that of the rural sector, since market logic dictates that employers and proprietary classes make no concessions to accord them bargaining power while abusing their productivity for profit gain. Excluded from protective labor legislation or a guaranteed wage base, pavement

dwellers have had little choice but to accept the low rate of pay they do.[111] And though the city demands their labor, it does not reciprocate by apportioning either housing units or the space upon which housing self-built within their means will be authorized.

Whereas most of India's pavement dwellers are at least marginally employed, the vast majority of America's homeless (close to 80% it seems) have no earnings from employment whatsoever, and nearly as often receive no public assistance either. Job possibilities are fewer for the unskilled in a post-industrial economy, made worse because the casual daily-wage labor offices have ceased to be the dependable employers to whom the homeless on skid row once turned when times were toughest.[112] But like in India, the homeless in the U.S. are resourceful in reduced circumstances.

A little money is made by selling to second-hand stores clothes and junk acquired by rummaging through garbage or the municipal dump. Next to this American version of 'rag picking' are the can scavengers who sift through refuse bins for beer cans and pop bottles whose 5¢ return deposit will eventually add up to a meal. Dishwashing, delivering flyers, unloading trucks, dispatching messages, seasonal farm labor, shopfloor sweeping or janitorial work are all done in exchange for food or money. Now and then, benevolent merchants will hire some of the local 'residents' to do a few hours worth of spot work, or maintenance jobs such as painting or repair work for the shelter facility in which they stay will earn them a few dollars. What is made as pocket money, however, amounts to

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111 On income, as studies concurred for Bombay in 1985, three-fifths of the four to five member households living on the footpaths earned under Rs.18/day ($2.00/day or $650./annum), while roughly four of every five families earned below Rs.750/mth, the average being Rs.558 or less than $60. a month. Per capita pavement dweller income was Rs.159/mth. In Calcutta, wages were lower still: in 1983, average family income was Rs.250/mth or $300./year. Banerjee (1981) found that even when two or three members of a family were working, average family income rarely amounted to Rs.300/mth, most of which was spent to purchase rice and wheat in the open market because lacking an address, they do not hold ration cards for the fair-price shops. An interview with a Calcutta social agency revealed that in early 1987, some of the pavement dwelling families with whom the agency worked were earning no more than Rs.200/mth, about $20.00

112 Once the mainstay of the inner-city transient, these offices have been inundated by waves of skilled immigrants seeking any kind of regular work that would establish a landed job history, enabling a return to the vocations for which they have training. Competing with skilled applicants places considerable strain on the homeless individual's ability to find even a day job to pay the week's room and board, where still available.

nothing in the context of the opulence eddying around them.[113]

As regards income and employment then, this underscores a significant contrast between the majority of American homeless who are not employed, and the majority of Indian pavement dwellers who are, albeit marginally. The former are on more equal footing with the true destitutes comprising but a minority in India, who are totally without a job or earnings from employment. In as much as socially tolerated panhandling will recoup enough to satisfy an Indian beggar's stomach, America's homeless seem to think enough pride is lost by having to sleep on the street; to beg from it becomes too much.

Other damage results, namely injury to moral self-worth. Denied the identity as traditional provider of shelter, they instead become the perpetual 'unwelcomed guest'---or in the case of India, the 'illegal encroachment' for occupying public pavements.[114] Moreover, the societally defined role from which social utility derives is shaken; to reduce one's participation in society's overall economic functioning diminishes one's sense of social worth, which makes the tough climb back into mainstream society slower and longer. For those debilitated by the daily struggle of street survival, the climb is impossibly steep.

THE HOMELESS EXISTENCE

Residential Circumstances: India

To a pavement dweller in India, housing is a less important consideration than health since their very existence is predicated on food consumption and the cost of obtaining it.[115] The

113 Though little data documents their level of income, possibly because it is so negligible, evidence points to an annual figure of under $3000. or $250./mth. In relation to the cost of living in the U.S., the homeless live on less than a dollar a day, should they be employed at all. A dollar won't buy even a pack of cigarettes and a coffee, let alone more substantial nourishment.

114 The Indian Supreme Court in 1985 ruled that pavement dwelling is an encroachment on public property and that the pavement population can lawfully be evicted for inhibiting ease of passage for the general public.

115 A qualifier is necessary: housing is less important except when ill-health is further imperiled by the absence of a shelter's protective qualities, say during the monsoon.

nature of shelter among pavement dwellers is little else than an expression of total income less expenditures on food, scant clothing, the supplementaries of utensils, and possibly small investments in children's education or income generation.[116] Any residual constitutes the characteristics of their shelter, which may be as austere as a tree's overhang. Often too, shelter takes shape in accordance with an individual's expected future income level; recognizing that it will not be sufficient or reliable enough to capably pay for a permanent situation, people may not attempt entry into long-term housing arrangements.[117]

Along the length of the housing continuum, nothing is remoter than pavement living. Firmly at the end of the line, this species of non-housing is often no more than a patch of open pavement, at best, a poor excuse for the word 'shelter', consisting of rags suspended overhead, perhaps a building's awning or arcade. Because slum mudhuts or run-down *chawl* tenements are too expensive, and squatting on the urban periphery too distant from employment, the greatest percentage of those sleeping on the street do so without anything between them and the stars,[118] sleeping on a piece of cloth that doubles by day as a seat if they engage in palmistry, fortune-telling, selling of trinkets, snacks and the like.

In the absence of shady trees amid the city's cement, many make do with a gunny sac, old *sari*, a scavenged piece of tarpaulin or polyethylene (for which they must pay[119]) upheld by sticks and adjoined to a compound wall or high fence; the entire living space measures two, maybe three square metres, accomodating up to two or three adults with two to five

116 The basic prices of foodstuffs, cooking vessels or utensils, and other life essentials for warmth and hygiene, all give shape to the basic attributes of shelter among the poorest. In the short-run, little or no change in housing conditions is discernible when cost savings occur or food prices decrease, since people will devote that residual amount primarily to greater calorie consumption. (See Simon Fass (1987) in JAPA Spring 1987.)

117 Temporary or transitory pavement living if frequently preferred over something more perdurable not only because it is within their means, but because it is within walking distance to where they work, minimizing transportation costs.

118 Ramchandran (1972) noted that 3/5's of Bombay's pavement dwellers had only sky above them at night; 47% had only the open pavement to sleep on in Calcutta, (ISI, 1975) while 24% had a covered pavement and 22% had constructed a small shack.

119 Since nothing, not even garbage, is free anymore, the purchasing price of recycled cardboard, plastic sheets or canvas---another Rs.500 or so---renders even the cost of a street shack high.

children. Furnishing is largely absent, with the possible exception of their idol of religious worship, a cooking surface outside and accompanying utensils for food preparation. Whatever belongings they possess are rolled up in a corner and if they need depart for work elsewhere, these are left unattended and often, untouched.

Things can be left unattended because they are watched over. The local pavement dwelling 'strong-arm' collects for himself and his cronies front money from the pavement dweller occupying a stretch of walkway that is technically *un*rentable, as it is public property. The *adadas*[120] grant people the 'privilege' of being illegal squatters. That they are illegal, people are not apprised of, but nonetheless charged exhorbitant sums simply to alight there.[121] Furthermore, the cost of pavement living itself does not come free or as cheaply as one would think, for hard-earned cash regularly must go to rent.[122] Street people are not only exploited, they also are blackmailed.

Because their huts provide only a modicum of shelter, residents hardly live inside them but rather, live around them. For wont of space, children slumber underneath the *charpoi*[123] upon which parents cradling infants sleep, frequently outside. The only place for preparing and ingesting food is the open pavement where dust and dirt from the traffic swirls and descends into cooking pots. That same footpath is used for bathing, washing clothes and utensils from a water source for whose access they often must pay in exchange with work.[124] Alternatively, an intentionally fractured standpipe facilitates personal bathing and laundering, a now public ritual tolerated by complaisant Calcuttans who merely stroll past fellow citizens sudsing themselves in front of a smashed fire hydrant. The footpath is

120 tightly organized pavement-lords

121 As much as Rs.2500 for 'their' six feet of footpath is demanded and paid out, noted The Economist. ("Keeping them off the Streets", Nov 23, 1985.p.36.) Indicative of Bombay's extortionate 'low-cost housing' prices, these escalate to Rs.20,000 ($2,000) for 36sqft of mudhut in an abominable slum, Rs.100,000 and up if cement. (Tania Midha (1987) in India Today April 1987, p.99)

122 Complying with pavement-lords means the surrender of another Rs.50/mth. They exercise control by evoking fear through threats of violence or rescindment of the alleged protection they tender against the needling by police, the demolition squads and cohorts in political circles, all of whom, it is understood, are paid off to see that no further harm comes to footpath rent-payers.

123 the indigenous string bed knotted cleverly over a wood frame

124 In Bombay, more than a third of the pavement dwellers must collect water from private taps, for which they must pay approximately Rs.20/mth.

likewise used for answering the calls of nature.[125] Due to the dearth of public toilets, a wall or any urban space, preferably green, is sought for that purpose.[126] Owing to these natural bodily functions and life-sustaining activities of eating, sleeping and bathing, pavement dwellers are deemed a public nuisance and a threat to public health.[127]

Residential Circumstances: ii) America

Apart from the emergency shelter, 'dwellings' for the homeless in the USA are none the more sophisticated, if much less varied for the political and cultural blockades against informal squatting.[128] People conceal themselves beneath stairwells inside buildings and shiver in bus shelters in the northern states, while in the southern, homeless people on Los Angeles streets have erected countless shanties along compound walls in much the same way they have in Bombay. Along walls in the washrooms of public transport terminals in larger American cities, during the day one sees flat folded cardboard boxes that serve as beds to sleep on at night, or, unfolded, sanctuary to crawl beneath. The plastic bags they drag everywhere are used as a pillow. Because the contents of those bags contain all they own and all that's left of a past life better than their present, a person's larger sense of self comes to encompass those satchels.

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125 At a per visit cost of 25-50 *paise* to use the municipal or train station toilets, it makes no economic sense to use anything but the street; even the unschooled understand such arithmetic.

126 Women, not having it so uncomplicated, must discreetly relieve themselves before dawn and after dark, rarely in between. Because millions of people have nowhere else to go, these private functions done publicly are tacitly condoned culturally; that no one seems to do much about the fact that nearly half of Bombay's pavement dwellers *never* use a toilet, attests it.

127 While this is in part true, what is conveniently left out is that the allocation of infrastructure and municipal services is wholly inadequate for peoples' needs and, just as the deficiency of accessible housing forces them to make the street their home, so the deficiency of sanitary facilities forces them to use the street as toilet. If public conveniences have been installed by the municipal authorities, never is there provision for maintenance; invariably latrines are unswept and reeking, scarcely conducive to use, never mind public health.

128 There are few places the homeless can actually go where they will be free from the grip of the cold, police or public harassment, and criminal activity all at once; there are fewer still where they can obtain a moment's privacy.

Individual self-worth, somewhat distorted for having lived exposed continuously before a loathful public eye, is often contingent upon retaining the bags that carry their lives. Having the police confiscate them or finding a stranger rifling through them can be interpreted as a profoundly invasive act. Being stripped materially naked is tantamount to destroying their last shred of dignity, magnifying their sense of alienation. This frustrates a capacity for coping and heightens distrust, which makes reaching them harder---a fact no less true in India.

Survival

Adopting strategies of survival to cope in a hostile Indian city, where the threat of hutment demolition and appropriation of insubstantial materiality is constant, also entails a prudent guarding of their few possessions. People take to concealing cooked food, vessels and whatnot in artful hideouts nearby; lacking that outlet, they deposit them for a small fee with willing shop-owners for daytime safe-keeping if no pavement lord is present. Theft by miscreants and, more damaging, municipal demolition whereby everything gets lost including ration cards confirming their length of stay, suppress all hopes for acceptance into the city and furthers their sense of helplessness.[129]

Those who must make the street 'home', salvage their defiant dignity and self-determination only at the cost of immeasurable hardship. The immediate requirements of survival absorb most of their energy and consumes the better part of the day. Therefore if efforts to politically organize and mobilize the dispossessed are to be successful, the necessary first step for planning is to reduce the wearying drudgery of trying to make ends meet. Fetching water from a distance, waiting in lengthy queues to get it, preparing dung paddies for fuel to cook, feeding a family with next to nothing on hand and having little left over for

129 Simple uneducated people who assemble a roadside shack so as to be near where they earn a living do not understand the trappings of laws and regulations designed and imposed by professionals to arrest unauthorized housing activity. Naturally pavement dwellers are confused and exasperated when suddenly evicted by force and deported to the outskirts; they are traumatized by yet another displacement, the psychological, emotional and socio-economic impact of which, is incalculable.

oneself, rearing and sometimes bearing children on the pavement, laboring at a job long hours, endeavoring to keep tidy the area around which they live, despite the squalid filth of open drains and gutters, and trying to catch enough rest for the next day while passing the night in fear of drunkards or perverts---for women, life on the pavement is exceptionally arduous.

Whereas a man will sleep on the street with no roof above, it is a woman who organizes the space to create as livable an environment as is possible under antagonistic conditions. It is women who strive to make a home,[130] and often do so in places where they believe government or property owners are least likely to evict them.[131] Even so, the frail structures erected fail to guard against the climactic extremities of cold, heat and monsoon, not to mention the natural intrusions of dust, wind, insects, and rodents, all of which can increase illnesses and death rates.

Sickness and Disease

Pavement dwellers are pitted against uncompromising environments of every sort. Needless environmental hazards cause illnesses which could be easily prevented if the deleterious conditions around which pavement dwellers lived were accorded the infrastructural servicing that the rest of the city is privileged to. Water-borne diseases, sickness, high morbidity and malnutrition typically afflict those whose habitat is the street. Gastro-intestinal diseases result from the inadequate supply of potable water; unknowingly, puddles of bacterial contamination are used for cleaning the utensils from which they eat or drink. The foul ordure around them attracts flies, is pestilential, and with water, is ideal breeding ground for infectious epidemics, tuberculosis, cholera, jaundice among them.

130 This might be seen as "an effort on their part to hold on to the remaining vestiges of their humanity of which they have been robbed by societal forces that have condemned them to live in the dehumanizing situation of the pavement." [Nirmala Niketan Study (1985) p.36]

131 Calcutta exhibits extreme examples of the struggle for shelter. To earn an honest living rag picking, people situate themselves atop the city's pythogenic garbage dump, next to cesspools and amid unspeakable stench and toxicity, where they believe they can avoid being bothered by the authtorities.

These, coupled with inadequate and inaccessible health care services contribute to the abnormally high infant mortality among street sleeping families.

For a nation of highly advanced health care, the medical problems plaguing America's homeless are shocking. Prevalent especially are skin infections, a variety of respiratory ailments, stress-related disorders such as hypertension, duodenal ulcers and depressed mood, brain abnormalities, heart and severe dental problems, lice, hepatitis and tuberculosis.[132] Life expectancy for homeless women was found to be as much 30 years below average in one study,[133] while the mortality rate for the homeless mentally ill is three times the normal rate.[134]

For a healthy person, it is physically and mentally wearing enough to be deprived of adequate nourishment, sleep and warmth (or refuge from the heat) for even short periods of time; being homeless for any duration can magnify that langorousness to the point of enfeeblement.[135] Abiding by social norms while combating the stresses of marginal survival enables the younger, stronger, and mentally intact to manage reasonably well, but for the less well-equipped, they scarcely scrape by at all.[136]

Lastly, there are of course, the comparatively healthy who live out their lives on the footpath, sometimes right from birth on the roadside. Decades, literally 30 to 40 years of pavement living[137] and people eventually accept that will not be able to reverse their

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132 See Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper. "The New Mendicancy: The Homeless in New York City", p.402; and Constance Holden (1986) in Science, p.232.

133 Rick Brundridge (1987) in City Magazine, Vol 9#2, p.16 Both men and women succumb to pneumonia, frost-bite, hypothermia and will freeze to death, while others expire owing to untreated recurrent diseases, drug or alcohol poisoning, and unnatural death, the cause of which may be suicide or foul play.

134 Charles Krauthammer (1985), in Time p.104

135 Constant vulnerability to sundry hazards suspends their lives in fragile balance because health deterioration is much more rapid when one is homeless than when one is appropriately sheltered.

136 This is particularly true among the diesased and mentally ill whose crumbling minds and bodies further threaten an already precarious existence.

137 One quarter to one-half of Bombay's pavement dwellers surveyed by SPARC (1985) and Niketan (1985) had been there for 30 years or more.

situation. It appears that the homeless in America are also beginning to spend years on the street, not unable to break free from their poverty either.

Coping Mechanisms

A good part of the observed aberrant behavior and inappropriate communication that is frequently interpreted as indicative of psychiatric dysfunction should instead be understood as protective defense mechanisms. Living on the edge of desperation, with their subsistence needs unmet, all private comings, goings and doings typically reveal themselves in public places during broad daylight and at night under streetlamps. Although many bizarre behavioral patterns are a product of the ordeal of homelessness, some people defend themselves through consciously and intentionally staying filthy and odoriferous.[138] Obviously managing to keep oneself clean and clothes washed is problematic in itself,[139] but these personal repellent tactics are frequently employed by women as self-defense to ward off harassment, sexual or otherwise.[140]

More often than not, however, a 'normal' existence is attempted when and wherever possible. Rather than drawing attention to themselves like the fetid group above, many of America's homeless successfully contrive to pass themselves off in ordinary enough ways, trying to look as if they are people they are not, or were once but are no longer. They endeavor to fill up long empty hours in ways not immediately noticeable to the general

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138 Snow et al (1985) call these "adaptive responses to the arduous nature of life on the streets or patterned manifestations of a subculture or way of life different from the larger normative order." in Social Problems, p.421

139 Keeping clean is duly difficult when so few places exist where people can furtively manage a wash-down or quick launder, if, during which, they own clothes enough to change into, and can also afford the costs of coin-operated laundrettes. Having to pay to use otherwise inaccessible water or toilets is little different among America's homeless than it is among India's: in Santa Barbara, many homeless people "pay to use the bathroom and kitchen of someone's house." (in Rosenthal et al. (1986) in Center Magazine, p.33)

140 Another possible reason: like their homeless brethren in Calcutta who beg for a living and manage to do acceptably well by appearing less than acceptable, the tattered and reeking veneer of America's homeless may win over the sympathy of passers-by who part with a dollar by telling the panhandler to get a shave, seeing that the hand before them is from one so poor as to be totally unkempt.

public by falling into routines, befriending fellow street people, attempting to conduct as 'regular' a day as circumstance concedes.[141] Among the few stronger, healthier and astute, some patterns are fool-proof.

A Night and A Day in the Life

If homeless Americans stayed in a public or private shelter facility the night before, their day begins early, having to vacate by 7am after a shelter-provided breakfast of coffee and a day-old doughnut. Perhaps they will proceed to the casual day-labor office if there is hope of getting work; if not, they shuffle about, poking in here and there on the look-out for anything salable to make a few dollars. They will have planned out their route such that by noon, they reach the local church-run soup kitchen, or at least the garbage bin of a restaurant likely to have thrown away something edible the night before. From there, they may wander on to a park but if cold outside and if they appear vaguely respectable, they may gain entrance to the city library for the afternoon, then use up what's left of the day at the train station where rush-hour crowds render them less conspicuous.

With the day nearly over, the tough part begins: where to sleep that's warm, safe and free from both cost and harassment. Depending on their knowledge of a city's shelter system, the number of cots available and allowed consecutive night's stay,[142] they try to arrive early enough so as to be assured of a cot or mat, and join the queue awaiting the facility's evening opening, upon which form-filling, de-licing and possibly a small meal follows. Crowded, dangerous, lacking in security, cleanliness, comfort and devoid of privacy and social supports, the conditions[143] at most shelters exemplify a derivative of English Poor

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141 Like America's homeless and despite the adversities of hunger, helplessness, loneliness, disease, moral and physical torment, India's pavement dwellers attempt to consolidate a 'normal' existence with regular routines and rituals that make coping a bit easier. There is for many, after all, the abiding hope of a better existence in the next life if one 'does good' in this one.

142 Most shelters limit the number of consecutive nights to 7, at best 14, after which they must leave.

143 Scant public resources and even less concern have placed many of them, particularly the public ones, in a deplorable state: toilets and showers are either out of order or too dirty for use; if a sleeping surface and bedding are made available, almost without exception they are louse-infected. People sleep in all their clothes because of bedbugs, no storage space, and the risk of awakening with some article of clothing, shoes or belongings stolen, thus robbed of both warmth and dignity.

Law.[144] That notwithstanding, shelters are filled to capacity each night,[145] ever turning away late-comers, but during the severest blizzards, operators resort to letting people sleep on hall floors, chairs, "even table tops".

Shelters

For all the shelter facilities in the U.S.,[146] they are insufficient in number, despite having increased manifold in the last several years. Even if the environment inside them was rectified,[147] a symptomatic response as this does nothing to address the root causes of the problem; none alone or combined constitute any kind of a housing system, least of all one offering a permanent solution. Although the assurance of an adequate, nourishing diet, humane moral and social support, and several nights of sleep in safe, secure surroundings would surely have an impact, it would be injurious to think that food, warmth and rest would be sufficient redress for the injustice they've incurred throughout their lives. Society owes them more than that.

If American shelters have a dank and decrepit feel about them, India's are no less despicable. The night shelters or *Ran Basera* in Delhi are huge warehouses for the destitute and merely indigent who sprawl cheek to jowl, toe to nose, over every available inch of musty dusty floor, looking like a sea of gaunt, bedraggled bodies. Dark, smoky and far from peaceful, these rather oppressive repositories whose urinal fumes are over-

144 The principle of "least eligibility" ensures that shelters be sufficiently unpleasant and not be so desirable as to attract those who could otherwise make do someplace other than a shelter where the threat of being beaten, robbed or rolled by other guests is constant.

145 Though they are filled, Mostoller (1986) in Habitat International states that as few as 10% of the homeless are sheltered in these facilities, while HUD (1984) says that perhaps 1/3 on any given night are in shelters. These are the *last* resort of many, and some believe the risks to be lesser on the street.

146 Including the barn-like municipal hostels, skid row flophouses and Salvation Armies, dorm-style emergency shelters are set up in old armouries, barracks, schools or closed psychiatric hospitals (from where many of the mentally ill homeless formerly received asylum) and make-shift arrangements in church or synagogue basements.

147 This would not only prove greatly beneficial to clients, but it might bring some shelters in conformity with the municipal fire regulations and federal standards for prison cell dimensions---of which many shelters are in contravention for their matchbox cubicles deemed 'adequate shelter'.

powering and whose number of users are doubtless beyond the capacity stipulated in municipal public health guidelines, are only a notch or so cleaner than the trash-laden streets surrounding Old Delhi Railway Station, where one such shelter is located.[148] Uninviting as they are, people seem to prefer them to the street cacophony adjacent, judging by the perpetual crowds who pass in and out the door.

Indeed, the arguments against shelters[149] are difficult to invalidate, in light of their capacity and unhygienic conditions. Shelters must be seen however, not as permanent accommodations for the indolent to grow dependent upon, but instead for what they were designed: as places that offer people a less undignified option to the road verge, a measure of security against the policeman's lathi outside, a little comfort and mainly warmth from the December frost for the interim period while either looking for a decent paying job or saving towards more permanent housing.

In Calcutta though, the shelters which sought to bring people in off the pavements have not accomplished what Delhi's have, in terms of acceptance by those for whom they were intended. Although the vagaries of the monsoon drive a good many to seek shelter, pavement dwelling Calcuttans have generally repudiated the shelters in their trial stages by not using them to any significant extent.[150] We proffer several possible explanations for this.

Firstly, that it is their desire or preference for the familiarity of outdoor night air, having been accustomed to sleeping outside formerly in their villages which makes the shelters less

148 Apart from protection from the elements that make things quite uncomfortable outside during the four to five months of winter and monsoon, for 50 *paise* (about 5¢) the old rail shed offers its male population public conveniences, however foul, in addition to a wall-mounted new 26" color television. A better use of the money spent on the television might have been towards providing adult literacy courses or job training for its unskilled, illiterate audience.

149 Opponents claim that such facilities only encourage more people to rely on dole, that they will attract more impoverished rural migrants to a city because its shelters will more or less freely house any newcomers; eventually, they argue, demand for shelter will reach unmanageable levels.

150 Lutheran World Services (LWS) had set up a night shelter that received very poor response from the pavement dwellers in the Entally community of Calcutta, as did other shelters elsewhere in the city. It seems that people were more content in their tiny hutments on the street, preferring the relative independence they afforded.

than attractive. Add to this the fact that invariably they are ill-ventilated, airless and crowded, a confined and above all, impersonal space---and they lose appeal altogether. Thirdly, the red tape, lengthy questioning, form-filling and bureaucratic restrictive rules are too overwhelming and off-putting for most people who simply want out of the rain or escape from the malarial mosquitoes. Fourthly, people might not have any faith in government institutions and non-government agencies: these are viewed with disdain owing to their historical lack of concern, thus people still harbor doubts about the ulterior motives of such agencies and believe that they themselves will be once more trespassed against if they move to accept something for free. Lastly, people are so preoccupied with just surviving that they don't even know about available shelter and have no way of finding out either.

The shelters that do appear to 'work' in Calcutta are those for whom help has come too late, for their living is near over. Daily, bodies more corpse-like than life-like literally are scraped gently off the streets of Calcutta by the workers of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. Moving stealthily about the city, they pick up the bits of society that don't fit, fell apart, or failed for one reason or another, and who are then transferred to the Home for the Dying and Destitute, *Nirmal Hriday*.[151] Although it and the other homes do not provide treatment of even an intermediate medical skill, they offer warm attention and whatever comfort is within reach, qualities not cultivated elsewhere. Apart from these functions, the homes perform another important role: they serve to relieve some of the pressure on the public conscience to take action.[152]

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151 There, people who would otherwise have perished unseen and very alone on the footpath of teeming Howrah Bridge are instead granted the grace of a rather more dignified death, amid tender ministrations in possibly the only sanitary environment their lives have known. Several other homes, notably *Prem Dam*and the leper colony of Dhapa, and orphanages for children deserted by parents incapable of affording to feed them, are operated by the Missionaries, but there is always of handful of young foreign travellers voluntarily devoting some time to both help out and ease their conscience.

152 Both government's and the general public's opinion of the work of the Missionaries is mixed: while some are in full moral and financial support of their efforts, many are infinitely more skeptical, asking what social good is served by mere charity, the figurative application of band-aids in the absence of major social rehabilitation. Critics, though rarely harsh, contend that superficially treating the revolving door of indigents does little to raise Calcuttans up from their squalor---an unarguable point. But in so denigrating that which is charitable but not rehabilitative, the public conveniently absolves itself of first, duty to act, then, of guilt over their passivity because the work of the Missionaries is not held to be socially positive. We wonder how socially constructive is hollow disapprobation, when more people are being attended to by charitable means than by no means at all.

HIGHLIGHTS

The aetiology of the homelessness pathology has its roots in vast territory. We know homelessness to be synonymous with low income, whose economic determinants from top to bottom are likewise vast. We know that an imbalanced international economy begets inefficient national, regional, and urban economies which weaken productivity, induce high unemployment, stultify job creation, causing widespread and often longstanding poverty. Moreover, "deficiencies of cognitive and occupational skills within the labor force",[153] owing to inadequate or nonexistent education and vocational training, reduce another large segment of a poor country's population to penury. Devoid of both education and knowledge of birth spacing methods, but needful both of hands to help with the work and the security of care in old age, parents produce several offspring, sometimes more than they want, fearing loss of children to ubiquitous disease and high mortality. Unstoppable population growth places pressure on rural and urban lands and housing, inflating their prices as decreasing wages of the labor surplus inhibit easy access to housing; keeping one's home presents an even greater challenge. In addition to the alienation of residential and spatial dislocation, the aetiology of homelessness is rooted in cultural and social deprivation, and to a lesser degree, in impaired physical and mental health. To reiterate, the deficiencies in economic, educational, occupational, social, cultural, infrastructural and health care systems which give rise to homelessness, are all partly interrelated.

However much this lengthy descriptive analysis lends insight into the problem, little is divined which is suggestive of where to go from here. If we accept Rittel and Webber's (1972) contention that to adequately describe a problem, (especially a "wicked" one like homelessness) is to thereby supply its solution,[154] then we already know what must be

153 Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning", Working Paper #194, University of California, Berkeley, 1972. p.12

154 Rittel and Webber. Op.Cit. p. 11-12 The authors persuasively argue that, "The process of formulating the problem and of conceiving a solution are identical, since every specification of the problem is a specification of the direction in which a treatment is considered. Thus, if we recognize deficient mental health services as part of the problem, then---trivially enough---"improvement of mental health services" is a specification of solution."

done if we are to "solve" homelessness.[155] What is not known, however, is the crucial missing link: *how* that is to be done.

Vital as this profile has been, we shift now to a discussion urging us to re-think our ineffectual outlook, in order to approach more socially constructive responses than achieved hitherto. Toward that end, we hint at what underlies our neglect of the homeless population and why so little headway has been made in addressing homelessness. On the basis of our analysis and a thorough literature review, it appears that we as a people lack not only the compassion, will, resources, and proper understanding of homelessness to alleviate it, but more importantly, we lack a directive, a didactic theoretical construct to guide our initiatives---the *how* in the equation. In short, there is neither the social ethic nor social theory from which to effect change, least of all, betterment. The subsequent chapter comments on this oversight and points to the vacuous areas in paradigmatic theory, sorely needing developing.

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155 From this, as Rittel and Webber convince us, is inferred a set of "solutions" aimed at offsetting the economic disparities between and within nations, strengthening their economies to invigorate productivity, stimulating the job market while enhancing wages and augmenting economic opportunities through the extension of credit, all of which is intended to reduce people's impoverishment and increase their standard of living. No mean feat, achieving the latter is possible only with the guarantee of access to schools, learning and vocational skills acquisition for better employment opportunities, not to mention educating people in life skills such as nutrition, reproduction and contraception. Affordable, accessible health care, with facilities to tend for the mentally and chronically ill, are as much a part of the "solution" implied by the problem as are the needs for land, housing, sewers, clean water, sanitation, and essential urban amenities.

Rural Migrants camp out on the platforms of Bombay Central Railway Station, saving earnings to send remittances to their families

Street sleepers permanently occupy the steps of mosques, as happens here at the *Jami Masjid* Mosque in Delhi

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

"The only way you can solve the problem of homelessness is to simply give the man on the street a rupee, then walk away. If you stop and ask questions, he'll only tell you he has to live on the pavement because he has no money, no job, no home, his wife is sick or pregnant, his kids are hungry and uneducated, and that as an untouchable, he'll never make anything of his life. You see, homelessness is but the tip of the iceberg. The problem is too huge, too complex, too expensive and too overwhelming for even you city planners from the West to find solutions. So just give the man a rupee and carry on. What more can you do?"

interview with G.C.Mathur, Director,
The National Buildings Organization, New Delhi , 1986

"There exists for many of us, at the heart of our relation to the world around us, an ethical tension or a sense of moral ambiguity. In the first place, we are aware of the nature of the world, the kinds of suffering and injustice at work in it; and, in the second place, we more or less dimly sense the ways in which our own roles and station amount, at best, to a kind of unintentional complicity with much that we abhor."

Peter Marin,
"Body Politic", Harper's, 1986

SUMMARY

This cross-cultural comparative analysis of homelessness as obtains in the developing country India and in post-industrial America has examined some of the contextual, historic,

demographic, spatial, residential, and vocational aspects of the problem. Having identified who the homeless are and what their lives are like, provides an essential tool of recognition if planners are to competently design policies to halt the descent to homelessness.

Being existentially indistinguishable from one locale to the next, homelessness exemplifies the lowly existence of absolute poverty. While global attention has begun to focus attention on the circumstances surrounding the tens of millions who are ultra poor, little impact on the magnitude of the problem is in evidence. For, the emergence and persistence of homelessness relates to the larger system governing society and the values which underlie it, being both national and international in scope, scarcely isolated to pockets of under-development or relentless poverty.

It is determined more by macro forces than the pathology of individual homeless people and should be viewed not merely in the sense of not having a house or home, as a physical or emotional construct, but in the fuller sense of deprivation, emerging as the culmination of deficient opportunities (including those in education, occupation, infrastructure, housing and health care) and systemic inequities in society's political, economic, and social constituencies. The causes are at once numerous and complex, interconnected all. We contend that it is the interaction of these constituencies---the dynamics of the polity, its economic ethos and value system that open up or close off opportunities---and the marginalization they produce, which contribute to the persistence of homelessness.

Historically, homeless people have existed as long as the concept of home, with acceptance or rejection of them fluctuating between concern and contempt, our policy actions still influenced by centuries-old habits and conditioned attitudes. Occupying the bottom-most rung of the economic and social stratification hierarchies, the homeless comprise a marginal population compared to the total, though that in itself is a sizeable, if inconclusive number in absolute terms. We know its incidence and growth to be most acute in rapidly growing metropolitan centres, and since cities are resource short, the latter unevenly distributed, the

stress of accommodating the population manifests in unauthorized settlements like pavement living.

A salient feature characterizing the contemporary homeless is heterogeneity, encompassing people from a variety of racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds and social classes. Another is susceptibility to crisis, a succession of which severs them from regular socio-economic structures ranging from family and friends, to the workforce, educational and vocational institutions, religious associations to political and electoral privileges, limiting choice and rendering them socially powerless and economically weak. In addition to socio-cultural deprivation, homelessness is rooted in the alienation of residential and spatial dislocation, and to a lesser extent from poor care of impaired physical and mental health. The majority are homeless not by choice and seek escape from street existence but lack the wherewithal to do so, their lives severely constrained by the demands of just surviving.

Judging from their relatively and comparatively minute incomes, the degrading nature of the work they are relegated to perform, the indignities they suffer, and the unconscionable conditions in which they must live, the homeless of both India and the USA personify the ultimate in societal neglect. Patently, few unbonded human beings are worse off than they who have nowhere humanely acceptable, legitimate, and *theirs* to call home, except where a public space obliges a private life. Cross-societally and intra-nationally, this subpopulation has been rendered subhuman. Extreme injustice as that before us, where people impoverished to the degrading extent of street subsistence can not access even a restroom let alone decent shelter, makes abundantly clear the need for and role of planning.

THE ROLE OF PLANNING

Lest we forget that the majority of these people are really only ourselves under another name, merely born in less kind circumstances and bereft of the supports many of us complacently take for granted, the role of planning for they and others in like situations is

twofold, based on the premise that planning is, we are persuaded, motivated by the tenet that equity for all citizens is desirable. Corollary to this is the broad rule that our fellow citizens should not be driven to the streets in the first place, therefore suitable, alternative employment and residential arrangements should be in place to forestall it entirely. Against that, planning's role is not only to firstly, hasten the period of transition from initial arrival on the street to final departure from it and into permanent housing,[1] but planning efforts should secondly, have a strong orientation toward diversifying healthy and accessible housing environments for all. In that way, more than but one choice, the street, would be open to people for whom choice is otherwise uniformly limited. Ultimately, the aim is to work towards a fuller integration of this group into all societal spheres so that the contributions many seek to make are neither beyond their reach nor beyond society's acceptance. Because fundamentally, the guiding principle should be this: that no one should have to live like they do. Quite simply, it's not right.

This issue is clearly a moral one, of fairness, justice and equity. Because homelessness and pavement dwelling are inimical to human life, a threat to public health, anathema to systematic urban functioning, and above all, an affront to conventional norms of society's moral obligation to its citizenry, city streets can not be lined with one sleeping torso after another. Sanctioning this is the nihilism of public sensibility. It is appalling to civilized man, and antithetic to the signed social contract of the liberal democratic tradition. It is an issue demanding redress---but also one planners persist in neglecting, largely because our outlook towards the homeless today is not unlike the antagonism directed at slum and ghetto dwellers of 25 years ago that manifested in summary clearance.

If there is to be a future for the homeless, then the planner's role must assume some relevance. Planning relates little to the complexities of modern social and economic life,

1 Because growing numbers of people, the more unfortunate, disadvantaged and ill-equipped than most of us, are spending an increasingly longer duration on the footpaths where their frailties are made more pronounced and lives more endangered, the goal is to shorten this "process of consolidation" (Turner, 1976). The objective is plain: a path unencumbered by barriers must be carved by which the necessary conditions for prompt, successful consolidation into both proper shelter and mainstream sociey are facilitated.

often because planners lack adequate insight into how the urban economy works, particularly the housing market. Policies and programs are employed which are inconsistent with planning's stated goals, being, to make positive impacts on people's living conditions and facilitate greater choice for them, while ensuring the efficient and effective use of available resources. Furthermore, an imperfect understanding of the larger structural and systemic dimensions, a perfunctory grasp of the implications, underlying causes, and ramifications of both the problems and response given them, plus self-protective and élitist preferences, all have served to perpetuate and further the adversities facing the homeless.

THE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM

The extent to which social, housing, and urban planning agencies are allowed to bring about meliorative changes in the quality of life for the disadvantaged or lessen social-economic inequality is subject to society's predominant value systems, their underlying assumptions and the ideology of the state. These prevail upon the emergent theoretical and conceptual frameworks from which a course of action derives. How and what we think or feel about "wicked" problems, as well as which competing interests tend to dominate, determine the response accorded such problems. For the most part, society remains far from acknowledging that "street people are victims of a social system which has failed them and a political economy which spawns them."[2]

Fears borne of the need to safeguard the mundanity of life, (usually the 'good life') perpetuate the harmful attitudes that most of us harbor unwittingly. What's more, the ways in which most of us think about the homeless is to not think about them: in America, the homeless are suspect in the context of the stable middle-class moral order which they so precariously reside outside of; in India, the pavement dwelling poor are considered a liability and their habitats of little consequence; together with human inhabitants, all is apparently expendable.[3]

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2 Madeline Stoner. "The Plight of Homeless Women", Social Science Review, Vol 57 # 4, Dec 83 . p.4

Failures in Planning and Policy-Making

As we saw in history and see still today, blame for widespread poverty and urban atrophy often goes to the poor.[4] The convenience of blaming the destitute for a measure of society's failings caters to several interests, political ones primarily.[5] Consequently, not only is the urgency to address socio-economic failure removed, but ascribing fault to the poor provides an excuse to dislike them and ignore their conditions, no matter how 'needy and deserving'. Indifference serves as protection from the kind of moral injury encountered when having to step over motionless forms on the pavement or dig into one's pocket for coins to pacify panhandlers. Indeed, repressive responses are legitimized, and the status quo preserved, by perpetuating stereotypes and myths about the homeless, slum and pavement dwellers. But the failure of professional planning exercises to provide choices, and the failure of social, economic, and housing policies to accommodate a city's

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3 As the Indian Express (16 July 1985) noted, because it meant that the public purse would not be touched by 'the undeserving' but that the latter could be evicted from view, the Supreme Court verdict (ie. claiming that pavement dwellers did not have a right to occupy the public property of pavements designated for pedestrians) was received "with disguised glee and jubliation by the middle-class and upper-middle class citizenry who have always perceived the slum and pavement dwellers as a direct threat to their existence and as the main factor of the deterioration of civic life."

4 A diagnosis of homelessness that saddles blame where it does not rightly belong is what John Kenneth Galbraith (1984) would label "the convenient reverse logic". It "proceeds not from diagnosis to remedy but from the preferred remedy back to the requisite cause". ("The Convenient Reverse Logic" in A View from the Stands. J.K.Galbraith, 1987) Cleverly contrived and seemingly logical arguments transfer all responsibility to a cause more suited to its bureaucratic perpetrators and less disagreeable to their interests. In this way, the ruling classes let the system off the hook by victimizing those victimized by that very system, but under a profoundly discrepant context. Excuses of race, ethnicity, caste, social standing immorality, anti-social eccentricity, or a poverty mentality are the preferred and frequently targetted causes of economic inferiority cited by those seeking a convenient escape hatch from the need for action.

5 Firstly, political élites cling to power, in part, thanks to the stable base of the very poor at the bottom of the pyramid. Walker (1987) argues that "economic apartheid" characterizes the rigidity of certain political interests that are unthreatened by those who are often too busy just trying to survive and have less time for civil disobedience than do the higher-up working classes. The latter's increased political leverage, comparatively better income, and availability of leisure time makes more possible the staging of strikes, and where necessary, upheavals and insurrection---conscientious objections that the ultra poor can very rarely afford to indulge in. Secondly, the intent of many a policy is to appease certain inescapable parties in whose interest it is that things proceed along the lines they do. Keeping the poor impoverished as a dependent underclass may not be what is openly flaunted in a line of discourse by policy-makers, but it must not be forgotten that entire welfare bureaucracies require that poverty continue, for the very sustenance of the bureaucratic infrastructure.

poor population with shelter, services, jobs, and opportunities, is properly where opprobrium belongs---though no purpose is served unless such censure induces a radical change in the way we plan.[6]

Much is revealed about urban policy by the ways in which cities deal with the underdeveloped areas where the poorest settle, so in order to learn from our mistakes, all we need do is read backwards the process to see how little planning relates to the poor. Apart from the more general criticisms of Indian planning, some of the specific planning failures include:

1) Planning has done little to control urbanization or marshal its effects. There are no national or state level urbanization policies and no recognition in the way of action to stem the tide of poor migrants.[7]

2) Planning's "urban bias" has given greater attention to cities at the expense of the rural areas, exacerbating rural to urban migration. Rural development suffered while sophisticated and costly infrastructure went into cities.[8]

3) The Central Government is too heavily relied upon.[9] The inefficiency of excessive

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6 On the other hand, if accountability for inaction is to be placed somewhere, it may not belong with government. One should not be so naîve as to think that government owes anything to the poor or that it has any interest in bettering their lot; hardly. Instead, those who are more accountable are the educated, the thinkers and intellectuals who employ themselves with organizations that nobly seek redress for the oppressed---but confine their hard-line to mere printed text. Civil Liberties bodies, advocacy groups, and certainly some development agencies are the entities which possess some ideas, answers and knowledge of what is possible to achieve and how it to achieve it. In too many instances however, they have bowed out and abdicated the responsibility to take action, despite their recognition and understanding of the problem, the issues and potential solutions---for they too, are self-interested. Upsetting the applecart is risky and conceivably detrimental to their own upward mobility, so a cautious conservative route is followed, behaving much like any government agency.

7 This negligence contributes to the magnet-like attraction of the million-plus cities, resulting in unplanned and haphazard city growth, burgeoning slums, infrastructure collapse and high unemployment.

8 The rural areas whence most pavement dwellers originate are neglected and remain primitive, with neither essential amenities nor economic opportunities. Planners have failed to facilitate either a decentralization of economic activity into smaller centres, or a dispersal of land uses and functions, which would enable people to work and remain in their villages.

government intervention impedes development of city-specific responses requiring localized policies or resources.

4) Planning has lost its *raison d'etre*, its true purpose and function. Because of the predominance of the market and the private sector, planners practise "indicative planning", an exercise in predicting the path ahead, rather than directing its course.[10]

5) Planning has failed to heed its own foresight. Nearly fifty years of recommendations have gone unimplemented so plans remain "declarations of pious intentions" [11] Funding for elaborate schemes is misappropriated or unavailable; the process of urban management, rife with stumbling blocks.[12]

6) Plans bear little resemblance to reality.[13] The tendency to not give the whole picture or an accurate reflection of the social reality[14] is partly why ineptitude in plan implementation is common.

7) Indian planning is approached from the top-down, so community-based participatory planning from the bottom-up is largely absent, omitting the poor from the process.[15]

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9 Because plans have primarily been oriented to the national economy and industrial sectors, with little emphasis afforded either region, state, city, or the poor sections, cities are not given their economic due as potentially self-sustaining entities.

10 With the urban spatial distribution of economic activity left to market forces, distribution goes largely unplanned and consequently, is uneven, concentrated in congested areas, inaccessible to the majority, and, lacking direction it is devoid of a long-term vision.

11 Registered not merely as warning but in anticipation of problems escalating, several reports called for changing the patterns and distribution of investment, employment and economic activity, to deal with overpopulation, congestion, insufficiencies in education, employment and in the housing stock--all which impinge upon homelessness. [The Barlow Report (1940), Modak and Mayor (1947), The Bhave Group Report (1959), The Gadgil Committee Report (1966)].

12 The multiplicity of planning, housing and development authorities are uncoordinated, have a variety of mandates, and in rarely reaching consensus, cause undue delays and thwarted plans.

13 The Town Planning Acts are based on idealistic, Western planning norms at odds with India's socio-economic context and the complexities of an inequitable distribution of wealth.

14 Moving towards an elusive ideal like redistributive justice, wherein everyone has shelter, is hopeless if planners can not transcend the inanity of elementary exercises in land-use coloring, when not one of the colors is apt to depict the gunny-sac brown of pavement clusters.

15 Save for the work of NGO's and other grassroots development agencies, who do their level best to integrate the disadvantaged into the planning process, the poor have little say as to what would be best for they themselves. Planning continues to be the under the purview of educated élites who have yet to embrace the resourcefulness, industriousness and rich contribution of the poor majority.

8) Planning is distinguished by lopsidedness: elaborately planned and developed communities for the well-off who can pay, and unplanned spontaneous settlements for those who can not. Planning's response to the poor is characterized mainly by paralysis, but also by sporadic, short-term and piece-meal actions of blight obliteration.

9) An inverse relationship depicts housing and planning since its inception in India: a third of a century of planned development and the nation's shortage of housing has tripled, the main problems being accessibility and affordability.[16]

10) Housing is low on planning's priority list. The absence of a National Housing Policy attests it and accentuates the housing crisis. Until only recently,[17] planning viewed housing as an uneconomic and unproductive activity, relying on the private sector, (contributing 93% of all floor space) who does not build houses for those who can't pay.

11) Planners set unrealistic criteria as building norms.[18] Caught up in aesthetics and the rigidity of their training, they advise demolition of viable though makeshift shelters and demand instead high quality construction, even if unfeasible, impracticable and unaffordable.[19]

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16 While one-fifth to one-third of a city's population resides in slums, the cheapest housing units produced by the public sector are costed in excess of what 35-40% population can pay so units go to upper-income groups who take advantage of subsidized housing. Planning has lacked vision to devise programs competent of meeting future housing needs, both urban and rural, as reflected in unwieldy statistics. In 1985, the housing shortage stood at 24.7 million units, representing the existing deficiency in housing production; by the end of the Seventh Plan period (1990), increments in population growth will require another 16.2 million units. Half of all existing dwellings had walls constructed of mud, bamboo, grass, leaves, reed, unburnt bricks, which increases to 70% if referring only to rural dwellings. Barely 7% of India's population has access to sanitation, but in the rural areas, 99% of the people have no sanitation.

17 National Plans and the Five Year Plans never mentioned housing until the late 1960's/ early 70's, because it was thought that investment in housing would slow economic growth and attract more rural migrants to the city.

18 The idea of the poor constructing their own shelter is inimical to planners, who claim such dwellings are badly designed, not large enough, use unreliable materials and are poorly located, making servicing difficult.

19 Planning's insistence on immoderate building codes contributes to higher costs, out-pricing homes

12) A conflict exists between those engaged in urban development and those who are not, but who suffer from its consequences. The artificially high price of conventional housing in the urban land market, coupled with the institutional and bureaucratic barriers of regulations, standards, red-tape and buck-passing, precludes entry by the poor into either that market or maze. Planners remain far from resolving this conflict, which continues to manifest in the proliferation of pavement colonies.

13) By not making provisions for adequate accommodation facilities or basic infrastructure and services needed for daily life, planning has been highly discriminatory against the poorest 50% of the population, including the informal sector working classes.[20]

14) By not acknowledging their presence, planning has not given due consideration to the lifestyles and workplaces of pavement dwellers.[21] Since minimal purchasing power prevents expenditure on transit or for commuting to work, their inevitable appearance has not been planned for by allotting sufficient space for stalls to be legitimately erected between roads and the commercial presence.

15) Planning's priorities and commitments favor the nonpoor classes. Luxury construction [22] has taken precedence over acquiring developable land for resettling evicted squatters and pavement dwellers or ensuring that slums are serviced and less threatening to public health.

16) Urban development policies are predisposed to powerful vested interests.[23] A

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for the poor.

20 Even "low-cost EWS housing" is out of their reach, owing to the lottery system for sites and services that effectively screens out the jobless, houseless, truly needy beforehand.

21 Planning has failed to adequately take into account the vital economic contribution to the urban economy made by pavement dwellers, hawkers and those whose business is conducted informally but competitively in front of formal structures.

22 Such as cricket stadiums, council and assembly halls, freeway flyovers in prestigious locales, and condominium-type high rise apartments.

23 Planning abets financial investment and privately-initiated urban development initiated by such interests, though it smacks of corruption, palms are greased, city coffers lined, and exploitation of the cheap unskilled labor that emerges ancillary to the formal labor force, continues.

staunch loyalty to the proprietary classes, with connections to politicians and bureaucrats, is ensured because the landlord-builder-investor-developer nexus monopolizes urban real estate property.[24]

17) Land use policies have benefitted the affluent, not the poor. State and municipal planning boards have failed to hold good their intent to reduce urban impoverishment through redistribution of land. Little of the acquirable land has been sought by policy-makers. [25]

18) Numerous planning and development strategies inadvertently maintain the country's poverty and backwardness by emphasizing the growth of luxury consumer industries.[26] This interferes with India's overall industrial development, whose primary concern should be with capital goods and on meeting the basic needs of the poor masses.

19) Social and economic policies are inarticulate,[27] lack direction, and planning's influence is negligible. Despite some signs of improvement in the economy,[28] the fruits of growth acceleration are not reaching the poor who are the main beneficiaries of economic growth. Job creation is left up to those who create their own.

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24 One study showed that more than 55% of urban land is owned by 5% of all landlords, while the Times of India reported that 3% of Bombay's landlords own 70% of the exploitable vacant land and some 20 builders control over 2/3's of all construction in that city.

25 The Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA 1976), which was to have been the vehicle for land redistribution, is riddled with deficiencies and loopholes manipulated by wealthy landowners. As the Supreme Court noted, "The reason why there are homeless poeple in Bombay is not that there is not land on which homes can be built for them, but that the planning policy of the State Government permits high density area to develop with vast tracts of land lying vacant." (Unnayan: "The Supreme Court View", 1985, p.5) One study estimated that the total land required to rehouse all of Bombay's pavement dwellers comes to 48 hectares, half of which goes to roads and open spaces, amounting to a paltry one-tenth of one percent of the area of Greater Bombay. (People's Union for Civil LIberties [PUCL] , 1985)

26 Rich industrialists who produce automobiles, electronics, refrigerators, and sundry other non-essential items for the 10% who make up the middle-class, are often assisted by likewise middle-class planners in the acquisition of urban lands or by blinking at by-laws.

27 With a strong physical planning orientation, social planning including welfare, education, literacy, and health care is minimal.

28 Real growth remains at 3.5% but should be nearly double that at 6%, taking into account the vast resources and manpower, claims Jagdish Bhagwati, one of India's foremost economists.

20) Population policy is sorely absent and planning .[29]

Policies and programs have been employed which are wholly inconsistent with planning's stated goals, being, to make positive impacts on people's living conditions and facilitate greater choice for them, while ensuring the efficient and effective use of available resources. But rarely has failure been attributed to misapprehension or a misdiagnosis of the malaise, for the reason that our interests have been at stake. So more of the same treatment is applied---somehow more is always better---rather than dispensing with that "remedy" and substituting another.

We observe a paradox. On the one hand, inertia borne of indifference on the part of policy-makers to confront the multifarious factors responsible for increasing homelessness contradicts, on the other hand, the reality of a few simple, basic, unmet human needs---for which there exists sufficient professional and lay expertise to overcome. To illustrate, compared to the population at large, the poor public does not ask for much. In their powerlessness, they are probably the least demanding of all citizens despite the array of unfulfilled needs before them. All they ask for is one or two square meals a day, clothing enough to meet climactic and cultural imperatives, a nearby source of potable water, a place wherein to bathe and eliminate bodily wastes, some decent shelter from hostile natural and anti-social elements, and a job or opportunities for earning a livelihood enabling them to live independently. Add to this, their requests for elementary medical facilities and the availability of drugs, but most critical, access to schooling to educate their children, offering them an existence less delimiting than illiteracy with no skills promises. Beyond that, all else logically follows: the standard of living of the poor will measurably improve and their quality of life will be more befitting that of 20th Century civilization.

The homeless poor don't expect to get what the rest of us have---for that would be wishing the moon---but they are, by virtue of being human, entitled to not starve, go thirsty, naked,

29 Although there is an urgent need for planners to assist in the development and promotion of methods to equip people with the competence to undertake family planning, its unpopularity remains a decade after the widespread forced sterilizations, and planners have evaded the issue since.

dirty, or unschooled. They should not have to go homeless, jobless, or without dignity either. So if the needs of the homeless poor are so basic, then why are we so far from achieving them? Why, when the needs are so fundamental and the goods to be delivered so few, have our attempts to seek successful redress been even fewer?

Possible Explanations

There are several possible explanations to the questions posed above. Firstly, the cyclical and multi-faceted causal chains pre-empt us from finding both "the" cause of the problem, in the sense of a single independent variable on which the whole sequence of events is predicated, and also "the" answer, "because there are no ends to the causal chains that link interacting open systems."[30] Although the answers to the basic needs of homeless people seem fairly simple and straightforward, the complexities inherent in homelessness flout simplistic resolution.[31]

Secondly, it is instructive to reflect on Ritner's (1961) ideas on "weave problems". These, he argues, are crises that are 1) "not susceptible to 'cause and effect analysis' but would require 'mutual dependence analysis'; [2)] not composed of easily detachable elements but of hundreds of co-operating influences from dozens of independent, overlapping sources."[32] As could be expected, efforts to untangle the web and rectify the circumstances are too often stymied just *getting at* the scope, nature and magnitude of the problem. To formulate and implement strategies of attack appear insuperable by contrast.

Another insight into our ineffectual outlook is inferred by Rittel and Webber (1972).[33]

30 Rittel and Webber. Op. Cit. p.14

31 For example, it is often mistakenly believed that a single policy prescription---like putting people in shelters or physically removing them (an eyesore) from sight---can solve the homelessness issue. By implication, this says that if a person is homeless, giving him a home will solve the problem. This is patently naîve. Symptomatic treatment as narrow as this makes no discernible dent in homelessness the societal *pathology*. While housing a homeless person may get an individual off the street for a while, at least until his unaddressed destitution makes staying there impossible, such a panacea offers no remedy for the endemic socio-economic ills constituent to homelessness. These are interconnected with, and resultant of, society's underlying unsoundness.

32 Peter Ritner. The Society of Space. New York: Macmillan. 1961.

Because planning problems are inherently ""wicked", as in "malignant"...or "vicious"",[34] with homelessness among the most incorrigible of wicked problems, it is possible that no solutions can be found because it is believed that few, if any, solutions can be incorporated into a plan.[35] Certainly synthesizing even a few of the preferred resolutions into a plan (as listed in the final footnote of Chapter 3) takes on momentous proportions. Implementing them, especially in the present climate of neglect and disregard, is held to be impracticable. Thus, and in accordance with such rationale, we opt to *not* plan.

It would appear that to ask what is "the" cause leading to the persistence of homelessness may be the wrong way of wording the inquiry. Likely, it's the wrong question altogether, because there is *no* singular cause to which "a" solution can be applied. Without dismissing causation however, it is necessary to probe deeper still and consider arguments other than the notion that homelessness is 'too huge, too complex, too expensive and too overwhelming' to bother doing anything about. Even if the problem in the final tally *is* insolvable, that in no way should hamper attempts to mitigate it with workable options in the interim. Besides, whether homelessness is permanent and without resolution is untestable as a theory, so long as public policies continue to fail to address the conditions of the homeless. There is, after all, a cure for hunger and famine---beginning with political will. However complex, expensive and slow in coming is a cure for homelessness, it too must begin with political will---the will to achieve a decent standard of living and an acceptable quality of life for every human being, and not just the privileged.[36]

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33 They assert that the kind of societal problems facing planners are unlike the more "definable, understandable, and consensual,...tame or benign" problems that say, engineers or other applied scientists encounter.

34 Rittel and Webber. Op. Cit. p.11

35 This is owing to 1) logical inconsistencies in the planner's perception of the problem, 2) thwarted attempts to develop appropriate ideas to follow through with action, 3) potential solutions either too narrow or too broad and sweeping to be feasibly implemented, and 4) the absence of criteria against which we can prove whether all solutions have been identified. (Rittel and Webber. Op. Cit. p.16)

36 The will to take action manifests in many contexts. While the Government of West Bengal shuts off the air-conditioning in Calcutta's Writer's Building where the government administration resides, in an act of solidarity with the poor sweltering masses, the Government of Marharashtra behaves as if its solidarity rests with the movie stars in Bombay's glittering film industry, having sanctioned the building of a $128 million hostel, a posh facility complete with swimming pool---for the exclusive use of governmemt MLA's.

Even so, the dynamics of a "weave" or "wicked" problem like homelessness have bewildered and confused those implicated on the policy-making/planning side of the tracks. The 'how to' of tackling this problem through policy development is not necessarily for lack of technical expertise and financial or human resources. Rather, what we see lacking is a philosophy by which planners and policy-makers can be guided, a paradigm of homelessness from which they can work when devising strategies for change. Because the recently flourishing literature on homelessness remains devoid of an action-oriented theoretical foundation,[37] formulating approaches to cope with the problem has meant relying on the prevailing----if staid---schools of thought, instead of evolving anew. What we call 'paradigms for poverty' are borrowed extrapolations applied to homelessness;[38] otherwise none specific to homelessness are in evidence. Having thoroughly scrutinized both Lewis' (1966) 'culture of poverty' and the Social Darwinist 'natural law' paradigms, as theoretical constructs for understanding the complexities of this egregious form of urban poverty, neither of these are adequate; as frameworks for guiding social change, both are ill-suited. It is the contention of this thesis that much of planning's dismal response to homelessness stems from our reliance on these paradigms, which is also why social change remains elusive. The aims of planning are at odds with the implications of the paradigms and for that reason, the latter should be discarded and new directions sought.

PARADIGM CHANGE

37 Subject material focusses almost solely on interviews with homeless people or other descriptive analysis, to the exclusion of theoretical development. Both because documentation is so spartan, owing to the alleged 'newness' of the issue, and because addressing the problem still seems so remote, theories and paradigms remain absent.

38 Underlying the persistence of homelessness resides misguided theoretical paradigms which have outlived their usefulness in the present dynamic period of change, but more, the 'natural law' and 'cultural of poverty' paradigms have ensured the neglect of disadvantaged groups and further catalyzed homelessness because of their ethical and practical imperative to *not* act. Moreover it is pointless to try fitting the heterogeneity of human nature and contemporary society into a tidy reductionist view patterned after the sciences, as is the 'natural law' concept. Planners are social not applied scientists, so we can not readily or easily "solve" urban social problems as if they were merely challenging mathematical equations. As for the 'culture of poverty' concept, though many of its observations on the poverty existence ring true, what undermines it is how it is used, manipulated to exploit the exploited and let the system off the hook.

There comes a time in the disquieting affairs of the human condition when we must question the fundamental ideology, values, concepts and paradigms from which our public policies are given design, in order that planned managed change can redress the disagreeable aspects. As regards housing, shelter and those for whom the attainment of either is not promising within the current politico-socio-economic realities of both First and Third Worlds---that time is now.

This issue must be addressed not so much to resolve it, if such is possible, but to reverse the process leading to homelessness. To do so, the necessary but by no means sufficient condition is for paradigm change to take place.[39] Although we know *what* needs to be done, (ie. which resolutions are essential if we are to reverse the process leading to homelessness) conspicuous for its absence is a theoretical framework denoting *how* that might come about. This middle phase, between recognizing the task ahead then fulfilling what's required to achieve it, is where, we submit, we are at now. Admittedly, this void in philosophical underpinning also offers the best explanation into why addressing the sources of homelessness eludes us so. For if we have nothing constructive to work from, how can we expect to achieve constructive end results? In the absence of theoretical guidelines, to where do we look for direction? The critical issue before us is this: how can the emergence and persistence of homelessness be arrested, and what will it take to achieve this? What would the guiding principles to effect social change look like?

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39 En route to such change are several phases through which anomalies in conventional thought, theories, or paradigms generally pass, and if looking to Thomas Kuhn (1962), contemporary reality is characterized by the latter stages of paradigm change, owing to the reliance on the culture of poverty and natural law paradigms. Galloway and Mahayni (1977) sum up Kuhn thus:

"4) The extension of the post-paradigm period in which anomaly occurs and is reflected in "natural violation of the paradigm"; the scientific community attempts to modify the paradigm in order to explain or "make law-like" the anomaly.

5) The period of crises, which is generated when the existing paradigm cannot accomodate the anomaly, the paradigm is intensely scrutinized and the parameters of research are broadened, leading eventually to paradigm substitution."

Thomas Kuhn. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. (as cited in Thomas D. Galloway and Riad G.Mahayni. "Planning Theory in Retrospect: The Process of Paradigm Change", Journal of the American Institute of Planners Vol 43#1 Jan 77, p.64)

These are questions of significance. In order to reconcile the apparent gap in theory between problem definition and its resolution would necessitate research considerably more extensive than that required by this thesis. To do justice to the development of a new paradigm and theoretical model for the meaningful redress of homelessness, one would have to consult the professional and academic expertise of a political scientist, economist, sociologist, planner, and an authority in homelessness, all of whom would have to have knowledge in comparative political systems. For if the intents of a didactic paradigm are to enlighten, they must more usefully, inspire action.

Notwithstanding the difficulty in approaching this, the remainder of this thesis supplies the groundwork for further research, proffering the basic structure of what, based on the previous analysis, a paradigm of homelessness and a paradigm of social change should contain.[40] The following two models are preliminary, in need of greater refinement, and though they do not purport to be exhaustive, their elements (or constituencies) are drawn directly from the thesis' findings: that homelessness is the marginalization resulting from the peculiar dynamics of the liberal polity, its economic ethos, value system, and the opportunities these negate. Below are sketches of the rationale underlying the paradigms developed and the models themselves. With the knowledge that they require a great deal more work, they are submitted nonetheless, in the hope of stimulating thought, efforts, and most of all, action.

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40 Lesson-drawing from the paradigms of poverty posits that reductionist concepts, which attempt to simplify the myriad determinants of poverty down to one or two elements, are illusory, misrepresentative and a prevarication of reality. Since there is no single factor attributable to the emergence and persistence of homelessness but rather many are responsible, these must figure in the model. From this, in order to more closely parallel both reality and causation of homelessness, the new paradigms must be multi-dimensional, comprising several overlapping constituencies and reflecting the elaborate, complicated and sometimes confusing nature of the problem.

D A PARADIGM OF HOMELESSNESS

To establish conditions favorable to arresting the growth of homelessness, it is vital to first understand what is wrong with our present value system, its underlying assumptions, and prevailing ideology. For if we accurately pinpoint the failings or weaknesses that give rise to the problem, we stand to correct it by addressing them.

Historically, we noted in Chapter 2 that as long as man has been free from enslavement or living in democratic societies where the actions by citizens of the polity are not controlled by an authoritarian state, there has been evidence of the existence of homeless people. As in liberal democracies like India and the United States, minimal is the state's control over the actions of its people, the latter's inclinations (eg. to mobility, to participation, to fraternization, creativity, and other such choices) unrestrained save for the moral and ethical imperative to not injure or curtail another's freedom.[41] Likewise, the state rarely interferes with individuals' freedom to conduct their lives and affairs as they see fit, a *laissez-faire* approach that spills over into the economy. Free market economics of competition reinforce the salience of the autonomous free agent and places the interests of individuals above those of the collective. The latter is assumed to be capable of caring for itself because individuals, comprising the collective, are similarly counted on to care for themselves, albeit few are their ties with the larger moral ecology of community, and negligible is a committment to the common good. In the economic arena, emphasized less is cooperation---valued more is competition, that individuals compete against other individuals. Though it is expected that all compete, not all are afforded equal opportunities to enable them entry into competition, or that all be as equipped as others competing. Those unable to tow the line of 'the norm' for reason of inadequacies in the opportunities of education, skills, employment, or status, are marginalized and neglected rather than accorded the necessary tools. Opportunities appear in decreasing frequency, furthering the

41 Robert N.Bellah et al (1985) in Habits of the Heart, claim that "In asserting a radical pluralism and the uniqueness of each individual, [Americans] conclude that there is no moral common ground and therefore no public relevence of morality outside the sphere of minimal procedural rules and obligations not to injure." p.141

marginalization leading to impoverishment. The irony of freedom at this level is that it is replaced by effective compulsion, so the survival existence amounts to non-freedom. The people squeezed out and displaced from these dynamics have nowhere to fit in, with final outcome being homelessness. (See Diagram 1)

That homelessness is the fault of individual pathologies is largely myth; that homelessness is the result of systemic failing is fact. Consequently, we must begin thinking about the causation of poverty and homelessness as being not the fault of some defect in he who is poor but rather, as the fault of defects in society and malevolent attitudes of the nonpoor.[42] Admittedly, for causation to be accredited to the politico-socio-economic arena, the likelihood for intervention vastly improves; when constituent to the public belief system, neglect will be less tolerated, intervention and planning more readily advocated, but most importantly, advantage may accrue to the disadvantaged and eventually, we will alleviate the conditions limiting their potential to advancement.

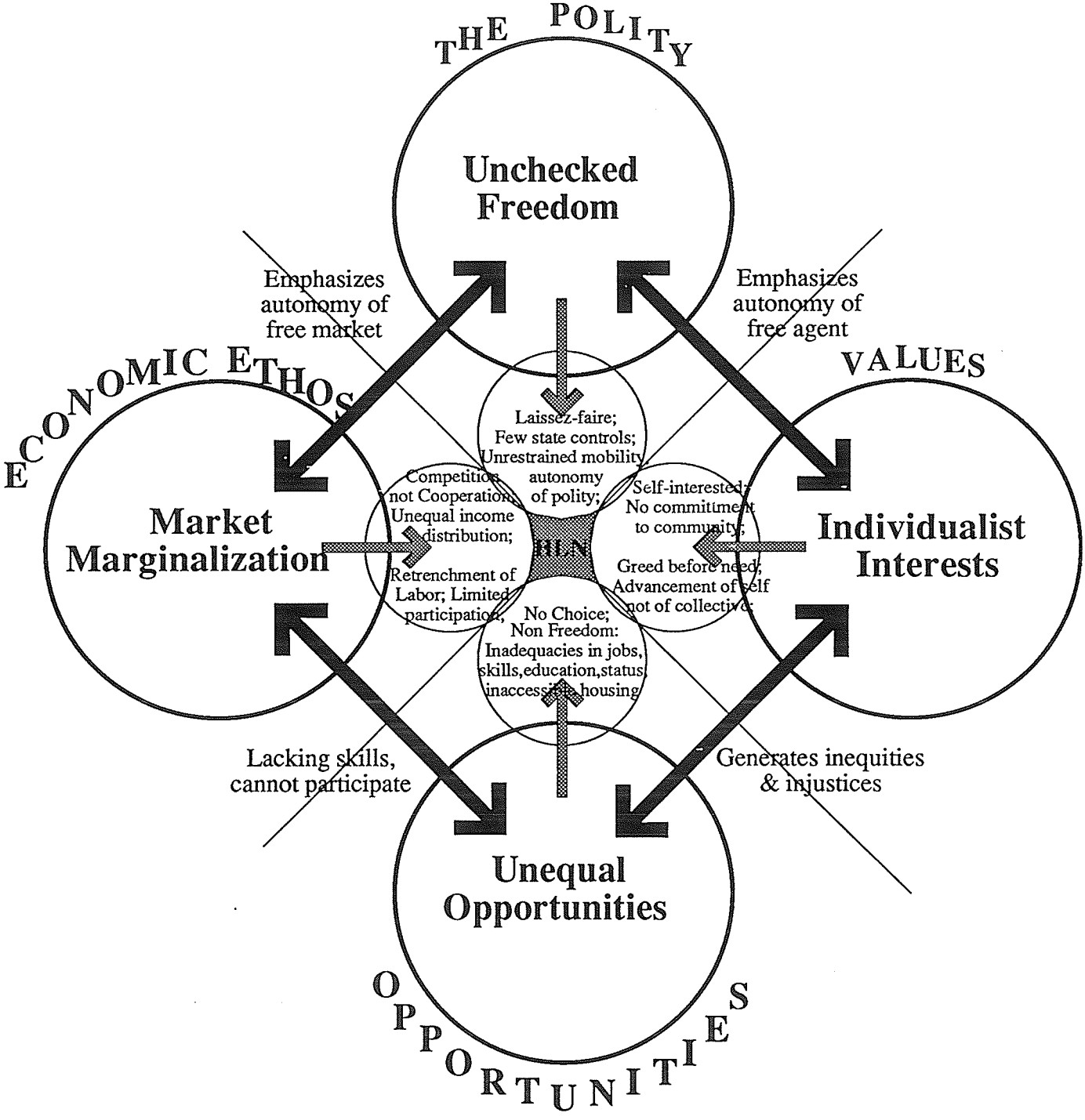
II) A PARADIGM OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Laying the theoretical groundwork necessary to initiate positive change is, for us, the crux of the homelessness issue. It is not enough to create a model that captures the essence of 'what is'; we must move toward 'what should be', which means developing an action-oriented paradigm intended to give shape to theory and direction to policy, intended to motivate the establishment of a set of guidelines instrumental to an appropriate planning response. The isolation of an instructive paradigm which is more progressive than the present theoretical framework demands the displacement of our ineffectual outlook and performance while persuading planners to take up this cause. The status quo, after all, is undesirable as a present; as a future, it is wholly unacceptable.

Breaking out of established and conditioned modes of thought to embrace fresh thinking is

42 To do so gives a more accurate portrayal of social reality, which lends itself to greater potential for social change since what needs changing becomes clearer.

DIAGRAM 1



A PARADIGM OF HOMELESSNESS

(HLN=Homelessness)

a long process, particularly if the new mode is antithetical to the old. Attitudinal acceptance of a new paradigm is paramount if that shift is to have any meaning. Moving toward paradigm substitution not merely requires rethinking and unseating of customary responses to homelessness, it necessitates a redefinition of societal values, norms and roles, and displacement of the prevalent conduct of benign neglect---by reason that the aforementioned societal pathology engendered by these values and norms is that which is responsible for the emergence and persistence of homelessness. In theory, by addressing the root cause, we address the systemic malaise and in turn, reduce homelessness. By redefining such values we address the root cause.

To neutralize the forces militating against the ultra poor, we should embrace a philosophical domain that makes possible accommodating their needs. A guiding principle we judge worthy of pursuit is to ensure that the needs of those who can not easily provide for themselves be made reachable. Choice should be broadened for those whose options are few.[43] To approach this, instead of individualism, we could seek humanism. Instead of survival of the fittest, we could aspire to the fitness of society and culture to promote both sustainability and longevity. Rather than pursuing maximum good for the maximum number, we could aim for maximum opportunity for those of minimum privilege. We could give emphasis not to self-interest, but to the interests and well-being of community.

The goal of a new paradigm would then be simply, caring; the justification for intervention, that it benefits people otherwise disfavored. This requires removing the negative constraints that inhibit the target group from full participation in employment, institutions and organizations, be they social, economic, political, educational. This, and bringing down the barriers to access that delimit human potential, will prove to be significant steps toward reducing inequities, injustice, human indignity, and should facilitate improvements in living standards among the needy. To overturn conventional thought and practice, we propose a

43 All that is necessary to the attainment of livelihood sufficient to meet adequate nutrition, health, shelter, learning, personal growth and advancement could be accessible to the weakest, disadvantaged, and minorities.

move to adopt the following variables: 1) an exhibited commitment to social change on the part of the state polity; 2) a greater emphasis on cooperation---not merely competition---in the economy; 3) espousing the values of humanism and caring; and 4) efforts to increase opportunities toward social reconstruction. (See Diagram 2)

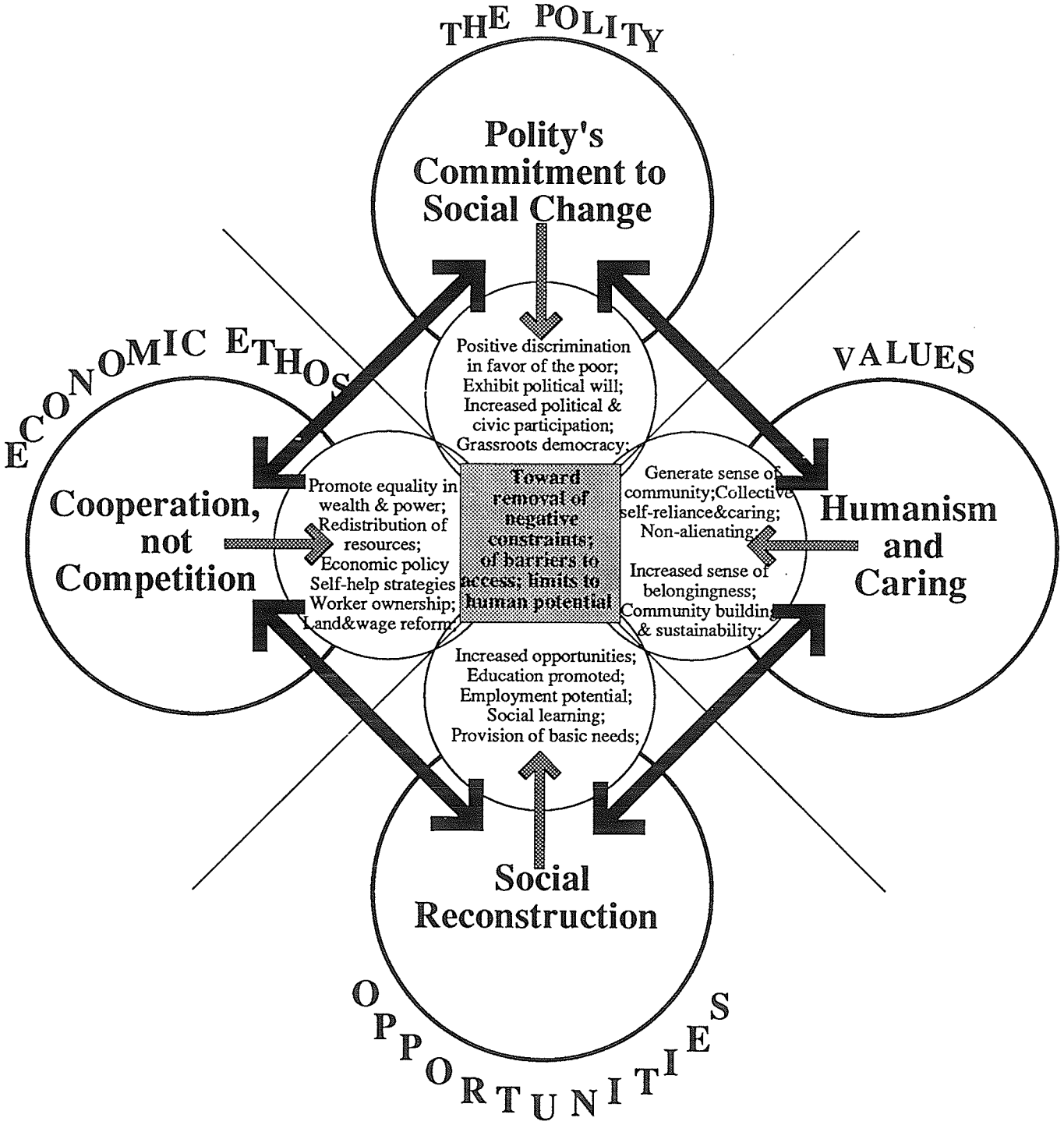
To garner the financial backing and institutional commitment to arrest the growth of homelessness and lessen socio-economic inequities requires raising the level of public consciousness of the issue, strong citizen participation, and pressure to motivate political will, for these are fundamental to any process of social change. Recognizing how the dynamics of systematically entrenched factors are executed gives professionals a better idea of at what point an otherwise inevitable fall to homelessness could be stopped. Thus, city planning and housing policies should be designed with a specific orientation to attenuate the inherent inequities among peoples; if assured of implementation and careful monitoring, marginalization of the homeless poor might then be mitigated.

So, unless we look beyond our immediate interests by repudiating them and acting in spite of them, suitable and efficacious solutions will continue to elude planners and policy-makers. Until we begin implementing strategies that,

1) take as their starting point the recognition that shelterlessness is primarily the creation *not* of those it visits upon, but of those it doesn't;
2) seek cogent theoretical guidelines and paradigms which promote social change and reconstruction, fresh ideas that replace our stale ways of thinking about society's poor or homeless; and
3) translate into action the necessary dismantling of all that perpetuates and aggravates the poverty condition, beginning with the attitudinal and systemic barriers to entry presently upheld by élitist value systems;

until such propositions find currency in policy, we hold no optimism that the situation will dramatically change or even improve for homeless people by the milestone year, 2001. Admittedly, conditions can only get worse if we insist on planning with outmoded concepts, methods, techniques and especially, in the absence of sound theoretical guide-

DIAGRAM 2



A PARADIGM OF SOCIAL CHANGE

lines vis-à-vis homelessness.

CONCLUSION

To say that homelessness is simply a lack of affordable housing or the fault of poor individuals is at once superficial and misleading. As a complex economic and social planning problem, it arises out of a variety of direct and indirect causes, some creating it, (eg. the structural and systemic organization of societies whose narcissistic values are less than attentive to the welfare of disadvantaged members) others contributing to the rising numbers of street people (eg. failures in planning, development, health and social welfare, economic and housing policies, owing to a lack of political will to carry out needed social change). Much as we blame the homeless for city unsightliness, they are the most visible symptom---not cause---of a greater societal malaise.

Today it is the destitute who are regularly displaced and dissociated from society. However, there is growing evidence that homelessness, which has begun to infect those who once believed they were immune to it, is causing a stir among the middle class.[44] Skills reduced in value by competitive, selective urban markets, unexpected but lengthy bouts with unemployment, education inadequate to be assured of a good income, reduced circumstances---to make ends meet while struggling to stay sheltered amid escalating housing costs and shortages, renders the slide from middle income to poverty, from there

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44 In India, the middle-class who fear loss of their position in society have taken to rioting and staging long city-wide strikes in education institutions, because they perceive unfair treatment when females and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes are favorably discriminated by being allotted enrollment quotas or preferential treatment. In the U.S., a survey by Working Women found that one in two women whose mean income was $37,940 (almost *four* times the mean earnings of American women in general) worries about ending up destitute. They suffer from 'bag lady syndrome', a combination of "the painful overload of well-justified economic anxiety" and fears of the 'feminization of poverty'---an example being a divorce that ousts a woman out of her house and into the welfare office. Muses Barbara Ehrenreich in Ms. (p.34): "We, in our current infatuation with 'free enterprise' and 'self-reliance', know only that a few blips of the stock market, an out-to-lunch lawyer, or a stack of medical bills can be enough to propel someone from a $50,000 condo to an address in Grand Central Station...The effect of the 'bag lady syndrome' is to make us craftier, meaner, and more desperately greedy of our little nest eggs."

to destitution, then finally to the street---shorter and swifter. Against growing disparities between the poor and the nonpoor,[45] both land and home ownership are increasingly out of reach.[46] Patently, the situation for even the middle class is getting worse. Conceivably, until the prescribed changes commence, homelessness will insidiously creep into higher socio-economic strata than it presently does. Continued neglect of this very fundamental human need for shelter guarantees traumatic consequences for all cities and their people. Of this we can not deny.

Proposals to deal with these problems are necessarily many and will not be undertaken fast enough. But social and economic well-being for the ultra poor can not come about through mere charity. The charitable act of giving housing to the homeless without also enabling them to procure for themselves a fair and adequate livelihood means little; facilitating the potential for independent economic security must be the hallmark of all efforts. The sole addition of more residential units will constitute but a symptomatic reduction, not resolution, to the problem of homelessness, leaving its deep-rooted determinants untouched. Not before structural changes to the socio-economic climate are conducive to meeting one's own basic needs will we begin lessening inequities among peoples.

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45 In India in the mid '70's, the richest 20% of all households enjoyed the fruits of one-half of the country's total disposable household income. Meanwhile, the bottom quintile of the hierarchy made do with only 7%. (World Bank, 1983) Recent figures (S.K.Ray Op.Cit. 1987) show that the lower 40% of the population shared barely 16% of the national income. The disparities in the developed, industrialized U.S. are no less pronounced: in the late 60's, the top two quintiles held 62% of the national income, while the poorest two-fifths had a 20% share. By the mid 80's, the gap had widened to 67.7% and 15.5% respectively. (New Society 1987) The top quintile of the American population controls 43% of all disposable income, whereas the poorest quintile garners a mere 5%; the cleavage has progressively grown every year since 1980.

46 As the population swells and rural parcels are subdivided to the extent of diseconomy, land ownership in India is possible only for the well-off who may have cashed in on the gains when speculation was rampant after the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA 1976) was legislated. Owing a house is even more rare; mudhut ownership maybe. And as David R.Mosena laments: "The American Dream is in trouble. The possibility of owning a single-family house on an individual lot has collided hard with the unpleasant economic realities of the '80's, putting it out of reach of the large majority of newly formed households...Housing costs, including land, labor, materials, and especially the cost of borrowing money, increased at more than twice the median family income during the last decade...the value of existing houses also appreciated at an unprecedented level during the 70's."("Downsizing Gracefully", APA Magazine, Jan 84.)

As a habit of human behavior, least of all as a course of public action, compassion for the poor has ostensibly no place. On the one hand, it is the most discomforting and least popular suggestion, particularly as re-emergent conservatism creeps round the globe. On the other, because compassion continues to be the sole option compatible with a life entirely civilized, we must become sensitive to the human dimension of homelessness and desist from seeing pavement dwellers as obstructions and encroachments.

So when we plead for a higher priority for housing, especially those in dire wont of it, this must be placed within the context of our desire for more integrated and equitable socio-economic development that goes beyond mere shelter. At the very least it should guarantee the basic minimum needs to each and every member of society, in all societies of the world. Development decisions which contribute to reductions in poverty, inequality, disease, unemployment and ignorance are decisions conducive to a society's economic well-being and its citizen's economic independence. Of tantamount import, such decisions will help realize the full social, intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic potential of human beings. In areas where amenable socio-economic circumstances are created through planning in terms of affordable housing, accessible servicing, the opportunities of schooling, and ensuring labor of a just minimum wage, the dignity of human beings is respected. Accordingly, the economic health of society is promoted, because the social welfare of its people is advanced. A pursuit as this we judge worthwhile.

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