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Strategies to Help Homeless People in Lisbon City Area



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Introduction

This exploratory project was born in the aftermath of the meetings held with the town councilor responsible for social action in Lisbon's City Council. Throughout those meetings, the councilor's interest in collaborating with E-GEO regarding the in-depth revision of the current framework of social policies adopted by the municipality became apparent. Therefore, it is this project's intended purpose to work further on an issue of major importance within local social policies and, simultaneously, obtain profit and economies of scale and time, considering how this work will benefit from the collaboration between E-GEO and Lisbon's City Council.

First of all, it seems relevant to notice, as it was an important first step in the present investigation process, the three week stay (of Professor José Lúcio, the project's coordinator) in the Department of Sociology of the University of South California (USC) in September, 2007. It was through the research opportunities provided by that Institution, during the above mentioned visit, that the current project started to take its shape and context. For all the support and inspiration granted during that period – where the pioneer contacts to the American homelessness reality, and the first surveys concerning the strategies and politics to help homeless people in the United States of America (USA) took place – the authors would like to take this opportunity to thank Professors Tim Biblarz, Michael Messner and Elaine Kaplan.

This first step proved to be of great importance, permitting a more accurate definition of the objectives and methodologies that were to be later applied in the present work.

On a different note, Professor Elliott Sclar, from the Earth Institute/Columbia University, is the external consultant to this project. The consultancy's purpose was to ensure that this investigation project would have the best conditions for success and also the possibility of access to the scientific and academic resources of an internationally renowned institution in the field of poverty and exclusion. It is important to mention the adequacy of Professor Elliott Sclar's academic record and professional curriculum vitae to the profile of external consultant in a project devoted to this theme area. Moreover,

the project will include a comparative analysis of the US situation regarding support strategies directed to the homeless population. This option has two rationales:

- a) The US vast tradition on investigation and action in the field of exclusion from the formal housing markets related problems; and
- b) Lisbon's City Council intention to seek for inspiration, up to a certain point, in the US experience of support to the homeless population, namely in the philosophical and organizational principles of the so-called "Ten Year Plans".

Therefore, the choice to establish an international liaison with the Earth Institute/Columbia University, within the framework of this project's execution, was considered appropriate and beneficial to best fulfill the proposed objectives. To that effect, four trips have been made to the USA during the elaboration of the project: twice in 2008 and twice in 2009. The purpose of those trips was to do bibliographic research, to debate over the materials produced with the external consultant, and to interview researchers and leaders with responsibilities and interests in this field¹.

This report will sequentially approach the following issues:

- a) The theoretical perspective of the concepts of poverty, exclusion and homelessness;
- b) The analysis of the strategies pursued in the US to support the permanently homeless population;
- c) The quantification of the homeless people phenomenon on a nation-wide basis (Portugal) and, in further detail, within the city of Lisbon; and
- d) The study of former and current strategies developed by Lisbon's municipal authorities to help the homeless.

This investigation Project aims to determine how the philosophical basis of the strategies developed in the US, particularly those set in New York's urban area, can be adjusted to the reality of our country's main city. This analysis will consider the features,

¹ Namely: Elliot Sclar; Martha Burt; Carol Canton; Sam Tsemberis; Tony Hannigan; Aaron Levitt; and Kim Hopper.

typologies, history and causal links of the homelessness phenomenon in Lisbon. For this reason, the project report includes a detailed study of the quantification of the phenomenon and of the recent history of the strategies implemented by the municipality in Portugal's biggest urban agglomeration.

We thus expect to contribute to the future recasting/repositioning of strategies of support to the homeless population in the city of Lisbon.

Chapter I

Theoretical Conceptualization on Poverty, Exclusion and the Homelessness Phenomenon

1.1. Poverty and Human Rights

In the year where we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the signature of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights² (2008), the World Bank published (in August of that year) a new world report on poverty, in which they alerted to the existence of approximately 1.4 billion poor people in the world, meaning an increase of over 40% concerning the reference value (930 million) of 2005. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the number of poor individuals more than tripled (from 7 to 24 millions) between 1981 and 2005. In Sub-Saharan Africa we face an even more dramatic situation. If it is true that the relative rate of poor individuals stood firmly in the proximity of 50% of the whole population of that macro-region, it is also of disturbing veracity that in absolute terms this meant an increase of almost two times³.

“As mortes sem sentido em Bombaim, os milhares de pessoas em fuga do conflito na República Democrática do Congo, as centenas de milhares de pessoas encurraladas em condições extremas no Darfur, em Gaza, na zona norte do Sri Lanka, e uma recessão económica global que pode empurrar muitos milhões para a pobreza, criam uma plataforma premente para a acção no âmbito dos direitos humanos”⁴.

Even in the European Union (EU), an important part of the population is still living under severe social exclusion situations. Still, one of each five Europeans live in a degraded dwelling; each day, approximately 1.8 million people seek help and/or shelter

² The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written in 1948 by Eleanor Roosevelt and two juriconsults. Its thirty articles are organized in four important dimensions: *i*) The one concerning the personal prerogatives of all individuals (e.g. the right to life; the right to not be held in slavery or servitude; the right to not be subjected to torture; the right to be recognized and equally protected before the law); *ii*) The dimension of the rights concerning life in society (e.g. the right to not be arbitrarily interfered in what concerns one’s privacy, family, home or correspondence; the right to freedom of movement and residence; the right to a nationality; or the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution); *iii*) The one concerning the importance of the role of public freedoms (e.g. freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; and the freedom of peaceful assembly and association; it is clearly explicit in the Article 21 of the Declaration that *“the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government”*); and finally *iv*) The dimension of the economic, social and cultural rights, where the rights to work, to a just and favourable remuneration, to social protection, to rest and leisure, as well as the rights to a standard of living adequate to the health and well-being of each-self, to special care and attention, to free education, and to the participation in the cultural and scientific lives of each community, among many others, are proclaimed.

³ Banco Mundial (Agosto, 2008).

⁴ Words by Irene Khan, the Secretary General of the Amnesty International phrased in a speech in December 10, 2008, during the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the signature of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (translated in Portuguese).

in homelessness specialized centers; 10% of all Europeans live in a house with individuals facing unemployment issues; long-term unemployment in approximately 4% in the EU territory; about 31 million workers (something like 15% of the European labour force) face extremely low remunerations; even maintaining a job, almost 8% (17 million workers) are facing low-income and poverty issues; the premature abandonment of school programs by the young population (earlier than completing the basic education studies) is proximate to 15%; digital exclusion rates are also very high (almost 44% of the EU population is still not able to operate the Internet, or even a computer)⁵.

In a moment where we are in front of an overgrowing financial crisis, there is a strong and tangible risk that many individuals, especially the poorer and the ones living in marginalized communities, will have to face even worse living conditions than the ones they are presently “surviving” in. Poverty is, at the same time, a source and a consequence of human rights violations. For many people, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is still nothing but an unfulfilled promise, reflecting the low political will and the small degree of commitment to these issues portrayed by many of the world’s States, (regrettably) far below the scope of its promises.

Nowadays, there is a lucid notion of the countless failures concerning the human rights promotion⁶. Although governments from different countries have signed treaties, letters of intent, agreements and other kinds of documents, it has been difficult, throughout the six decades ranging from the official signature of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to fight poverty and to establish equal opportunities for everyone. The statistics seem to constantly warn us that the “rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer”. So, we are here explicitly talking about inequalities and it is unquestionable that *“a desigualdade é uma questão de direitos humanos. O Artigo 1º da Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos estabelece que todos crescemos livres e iguais em dignidade e direitos.*

⁵ European Parliament Resolution of 9 October 2008 about the promotion of social inclusion and the combat to poverty, namely child poverty in the EU (2008/2034(INI)).

⁶ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights considered *“que o reconhecimento da dignidade intrínseca a todos os membros da família humana e o da igualdade e inalienabilidade dos seus direitos são o fundamento da liberdade, da justiça e da Paz no mundo”*.

Para os pobres esta afirmação é uma enorme fraude” (Sané, 2007:18)⁷. The economic, social and cultural systems are globally impregnated with flaws and “addictions” that completely undermine the individual, institutional and even political efforts to overcome poverty, and the constant threats to human rights.

The human rights’ economic, social and cultural dimensions have been particularly neglected. Global (social) concerns such as healthcare, housing or food production and distribution are clear examples of the previously stated. And as we are aware of, the different dimensions of human rights (e.g. individual, political, cultural, economic or social) establish close causality relationships among themselves. Together, they are able to “*criar sinergias capazes de contribuir para que os pobres assegurem os seus direitos, desenvolvam as suas potencialidades humanas e escapem à pobreza. Devido a estas complementaridades, a luta pela realização dos direitos económicos e sociais não deve ser separada da luta pela realização dos direitos civis e políticos. E elas devem, as duas, ocorrer em simultâneo*”⁸.

Several studies have demonstrated the existence of significant co-relations between human rights, such as the right to freedom of expression or the right to participate actively in the political life of the community/country, and the prevention of social catastrophes. Amartya Sen, in his vastly acclaimed work, is one of the authors that drew attention to the great importance of fulfilling the political human rights of the populations, not only in the pursue of political answers to their economic needs, but also to the conceptualization of those same necessities. Those works seem to show that, even with its many imperfections, Democracy is still one of the political systems that guarantees to a greater deal the right to a public individual participation.

Amartya Sen, in his analysis of the “Famines” states that this phenomenon’s existence proves to be harder before the values of democracy, since the presence of a political opposition would not sustain such a situation. The democratic governments are therefore more concerned with the well-being of their people, especially the ones with lesser power and greater needs. Hence, the existence of democracy and freedom of press

⁷ Ribeiro, E.; Oliveira, I.; Silva, M. (Org.) (2007) – Pobreza, Direitos Humanos e Cidadania, Comissão Nacional de Justiça e Paz, Lisboa.

⁸ Relatório do Desenvolvimento Humano (2000:73) (portuguese version of the Human Development Report, 2000).

are fundamental issues to prevent the famines, forcing the governments to act more quickly and thoroughly. Amartya Sen compares the example of the past non-democratic India⁹, of Sudan and of Ethiopia with democratic countries such as Zimbabwe and Botswana, where the famines were avoided merit of fast and efficient public policies. According to the same author, food production faced heavy problems during the 1973 droughts in Madras, but the elected government's reaction was effective enough to prevent 5 million people to strongly affect by a famine.

Democratic systems also contribute to a country's political stability, creating a great possibility for political opposition and changing of institutionalized authorities. Between 1950 and 1990, public manifestations were more commonly organized in democratic countries; but even in a smaller number, their effects created far more instability issues in non-democratic regimes, commonly turning into armed revolutions with enormous social, political and economic impacts.

A democratic government can, therefore, unleash a virtuous cycle of development. Political freedom is empowering for the people, making them more aware and participative. It permits to build an increased pressure in favour of the establishment of politics designed to guarantee the same social and political opportunities to every individual and community, and it maintains an open debate for a community-based development. From Indonesia to Mexico, there have been in the last decades several initiatives promoting political openness and the instauration of truly democratic regimes, helping to create a (increasingly) global virtuous cycle of freedom of press, and social and political activism.

The growth and networking of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) is also another important feature in the global transition to democracy¹⁰, helping to expand a world solidarity network concerning the accomplishment of human rights. These organizations are increasingly scoping their activities to issues such as the civilian and political rights, and the economic, social and cultural rights of the populations, especially

⁹ Country in which the last famine, in 1943, killed over two million people.

¹⁰ In several countries governed by authoritarian regimes, NGO's have been frequently responsible for the more intense and organized political oppositions to those established powers.

of those with greater vulnerability issues. For example, in Argentina a group of NGO's filed a request to the Argentinean Ministry of Health, disapproving the lack of healthcare and medicines to the HIV/AIDS infected individuals, basing their statements in the government's violation of the country's Constitution, which establishes the right to equal social protection to every Argentinean citizen. Another example is the world renowned international movement "*ATD – Quart Monde*" whose work in the issues of human rights; cultural freedom and equality; and the social, economic and political participation of the poor and marginalized populations, has made possible to fight and decrease poverty and social exclusion in several parts of the world.

1.2. Poverty

There is a currently established perception of the existence of an extreme dichotomy between a "Developed World" and an "Underdeveloped World", which is built upon the acknowledgment of severe differences and inequalities in what concerns these two worlds' economic growth rates. The equation that led to this "gap" (and to its progressive enlargement) is complex and fed by multiple possible explanations, variable through time and space (e.g. the specificities inherent to each regional context). Nevertheless, the temporal roots of this reality can be traced back in time until the advent of the Industrial Revolution, whose consequences in all sectors of society are academically well-known and understood. "*A Revolução Industrial e o crescimento económico moderno que se lhe seguiu mudaram a existência das pessoas em todos os aspectos fundamentais: onde e como vivem, que tipo de trabalho ou actividade económica desempenham, como formam famílias*" (Sachs, 2006:75).

As stated by Sachs (2006) this historical "moment" was more than just a technological revolution with great and noticeable impacts in what concerns to the increasing of the industrial production and in the newly industrialized countries' economic growth rates. It also meant a deep and perpetually notorious change of social paradigm, once it "*criou uma desigualdade global em termos de riqueza e poder*" (Sachs, 2006:79). From that point on the global order started to be

established at different growth rates which by multiplier effect subsisted until our days. Conclusively, it appears that we can say that the “*grandes desigualdades actuais de rendimento reflectem dois séculos de predomínio de crescimento económico extremamente desiguais*” (Sachs, 2006:67).

These inequalities are nowadays much more perceptible, either in result of their own global dissemination and of the worldwide diffusion of knowledge and information, that contributed to the decrease of the differences between the “real reality” and the “perceived reality”. Due to both these factors, this problem (of the social and spatial inequalities) is nowadays globally known and an integrant part of the world leaders’ political agenda.

The spatial and social disparities between countries and world regions, created and widened throughout the last two centuries, are not only perceptible in terms of the unequal distribution of income (either at a national or at an individual level). They are also shaped by the existence of extreme inequalities in what concerns the population’s opportunities to access healthcare, education, or food; essential assets for the achievement of a truly dignified and fulfilled citizenship (resources + rights), which would ultimately be translated, at a regional or national scale, in a higher level of human development. According to the previously stated, we are now able to conclude that those goals would only be achievable through a global and concerted eradication of poverty and its consequent improvements in the population’s life-standards.

So, poverty is nowadays a spatially generalized social phenomenon, target of discussion and analysis by several scientific fields of knowledge. As noticed by (Ferreira, 2000:11, quoting Hoeven and Rodgen, 1995) XXth century’s last decade witnessed the renewal of the concerns with the extension and persistence of poverty.

The characterization of poverty is faced with a high spatial and temporal variability. It is extremely difficult to universally define, quantify and classify this phenomenon. Hence, the concept of poverty should be perceived in an open

manner. Each society has its own vision of what poverty means, built upon the influence of its specific life-standard and of its citizens. Ultimately, poverty can even be approached at the individual's level. In the words of Ferreira (2000: 12) "*o problema da pobreza é pois um problema velho como o mundo, assumindo sempre novas configurações e constituindo sempre um desafio para que as sociedades criem mais justiça e solidariedade entre todos os seus membros*".

Expressing all the previous complications, it is now possible to affirm that the conceptualization of poverty shows itself as an extremely intricate task. This consequently leads to the existence of profound difficulties in the implementation of programs and "solutions" to fight poverty, at various levels of decision.

There are several theories and approaches to this problem. Some are more complex than others and some focus deeper on social issues while others focus specially on economical issues (income).

Luis Capucha in his PhD thesis – "*Desafios da Pobreza*" ("Challenges of Poverty") – led us to the two "classic" scientific theoretical approaches to this issue. The first one is named by the author as the "*perspectiva culturalista*" ("culturalist perspective"), settled through the understanding of the central concept of "*cultura de pobreza*" ("culture of poverty"). Sustaining this "academic tradition" we can find several investigation-action studies, reliant on the utilization of intensive work and investigation methodologies and conceptually based upon micro-sociological terminologies, such as the notions of "way of living" and "life history". Subjects such as the depopulation of depressed rural sites, the lifestyles of the urban dwellers, or the life-trajectories of socially marginalized groups (like homeless people; delinquent adolescents; ethnical minorities; drug addicts; among many others) are in the center of this perspective's concerns.

The second theoretical approach to the poverty issue presented by Capucha (2005) is the "*perspectiva socioeconómica*" ("socioeconomic perspective"). The authors whose work has been developed under this academic approach have been especially concerned with terminologies such as "absolute poverty", "relative poverty" or "subjective poverty". Methodologically more extensive, this approach aims at counting, explaining,

and understanding the specificities intrinsic to the so-called “target-groups” of the active social policies. According to these theorists, every definition of poverty should be designed under thoughtful concerns with the existence and permanence of a “deviant” social condition in which an individual or a social group lack access to a more or less vast set of social services (e.g. healthcare, education, social security, minimum income), with great destabilizing effects to his/her well-being and subsistence.

Crain and Kalleberg (2007) also point out two perspectives, the first one referring to the fact that people are poor due to their individual characteristics, placing the *“focus on the socioeconomic attributes and individual behavioral tendencies of the poor, emphasizing the «culture of poverty» (...)* [and, according to the second one, poverty can be considered] (...) *as a structural feature of a capitalistic economy that is rooted in the institutions of society”* (Crain and Kalleberg, 2007:4-5). The author also asserts that the attribution of the causes of poverty solely to the individual characteristics of poor people is a clear way to “blame the victims”; thus, poverty cannot be credited uniquely to the insufficiencies of each individual but above all to socioeconomic factors.

One can still find another important theoretical line of thought with great concern for the poverty issues. The Marxist Geography theorists insist in the previously referred premises stating that social inequalities and more specifically poverty are inevitable products of the capitalistic societies. What is “new” about this theory is that it adds the idea that these problems have an imminent socio-geographic cause, assuming that poverty and inequalities can be transmitted from “fathers to sons” through the social environment of (in)existent opportunities at the moment of each individual’s birth.

Considering the great amount of literary work produced concerning the theme(s) of poverty since the 1960s, one could assume that it would not be difficult to find a simple but precise, synthetic, and universal definition for that problem. Unfortunately, the opposite seems to be closer to the truth. The above mentioned vast bibliography does little more than create an infinity of rules and regulations that turn the achievement of a concise definition of poverty an extremely (if not impossible) task.

Two great questions should be posed at the beginning of every investigation about poverty: “What is it?”, and “How should one define it?”. The criteria available to

answer these questions are remarkably excessive due to the intrinsic complexity of the poverty reality issues. Maybe it should be universally sufficient to categorize poverty as a situation in which people are deprived from the means to ensure their survival and to fulfill their basic need, such as the accessibility to food, clothes, housing, and healthcare. So, according to the previously stated, should we consider a poor individual the one that is not able to satisfy its basic and natural needs?

Trying to answer this question, some researchers consider two different approaches, based on a set of two key-concepts – “absolute poverty” and “relative poverty”. The first one is commonly associated with the ideas of “subsistence” or satisfaction of each individual’s basic need (e.g. food, clothes, shelter). People who crave for these assets can be categorized as facing a situation of poverty. Most authors seem to agree that absolute poverty is a quite universal definition. No matter where in the world it is a poor individual the one who lives below these patterns of subsistence.

Nevertheless, for a human being, “subsistence” tends to mean more than just “staying alive” through the simple and plain satisfaction of his/her physiological needs. It also implies the notion of “decency”. As a concept with a very subjective meaning, decency cannot be analyzed outside each specific context. Jean Labbens¹¹, with great pertinence, notices that the *“l’évaluation des nécessités ne peuvent pas être fait seulement sur les nécessités purement physiologiques. Ne c’est pas uniquement une matière de subsistence, mais surtout une subsistence décent. La décence est une matière social”*¹².

As previously described, “decency”¹³ appears itself as clear sociological notion. When drawn in circumscription to the issues of “subsistence”, it enables us to acknowledge the existence of different representations of poverty, according to each

¹¹ Member of the association “ATD – Quart Monde”, he has developed an important work in pointing out (at a worldwide level) the social injustices and several political/economic interventions that tended to neglect the ones “forgotten by the economic progress” (especially the unemployed and the ones with low incomes).

¹² LABBENS, Jean – *Sociologie de la Pauvreté. le Tiers Monde et le Quart Monde*, Gallimard, Paris, 1978, pág. 78

¹³ According to Gerry Rodgers “for everybody and everywhere, decent work is about securing human dignity. The expression of these goals will be different if you are an agricultural laborer in India or a high tech worker in Silicon Valley, but there is a common underlying idea, that people have aspirations which cut across and bring together these different domains” (ILO, 2001, *Reducing the decent work deficit*, Report of the Director General to the 2001 International Labour Conference, Genève).

society's specificities and, in the same social context, to the multiple historic scenarios¹⁴. Therefore, it is of the greatest importance to consider each context's specificities. Even doing so, there will still be room for multiple unanswered questions inherent to the establishment of theoretical and analytical boundaries to the problem in hand: for example, should one try to define poverty at the scale of a specific community, of a poor and/or marginalized region, or at a worldwide level? Should one try to quantify the level of poverty according to local or international measures? Whatever are the answers to the previous questions, we can now assert that absolute poverty is directly associated to the idea of "biological survival", meaning the satisfaction of the so-called "social minimums" necessary to the reproduction of life with a "least of human dignity". According to the Brazilian author Helio Jaguaribe "*embora este 'mínimo de dignidade' esteja parcialmente sujeito a determinações culturais, supõe-se que os requerimentos impostos pela mera sobrevivência física sejam razoavelmente universais, permitindo assim o estabelecimento de uma linha de pobreza coincidente com esses requerimentos mínimos*" (Jaguaribe, 1989:64).

Following the above mentioned complications, and based on the premise that individual and societal poverty is mostly determined by cultural aspects, some authors state that it is more adequate to use the concept of "relative poverty", once it translates the capacity of satisfaction of each human's necessities in relation to its social contexts' life-standard and patterns of development, rather than try to explain poverty solely based on an universal model of socioeconomic deprivation. Therefore, the notion of "relative poverty" allows the researchers and/or policy makers to understand and try to overcome the problems inherent to the existence of distinctive outlines of human necessities across the world: for example, in developed societies the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables is understood as an essential feature to a healthy life; on the contrary, in the least developed countries, these nutritional concerns are obviously not (yet) seen as priorities.

¹⁴ According to Amartya Sen: "*Há dificuldade em traçar uma linha num sítio qualquer, e as chamadas 'necessidades nutricionais mínimas' têm uma arbitrariedade inerente que vai muito para além das variações entre grupos e regiões*" (SEN, A., *Pobreza e Fomes*, Terramar, Lisboa, 1999: 28); and to David SHIPLER (2008:8) "*The American poor are not poor in Hong Kong or in the sixteenth century; they are poor here and now, in the United States*".

The drawing of a “poverty threshold” for a specific social/spatial context allows the researchers to calculate a poverty rate. If it is true that this procedure enables a better understanding of the number of poor people living in that pre-defined social and/or spatial context, we cannot forget that we would still not know “how poor are the poor”. The “intensity of poverty”, meaning the amount of differences that can be found among the ones living under that poverty threshold is not portrayed by the establishment of a simple line of poverty or by the estimation of a poverty rate.

The creation of the “indigent poverty line” came to overcome the previous issue, by means of separating the ones living between this line and the poverty threshold (considered as the individuals who do not amount sufficient income to buy themselves and their families several first necessity goods such as food, clothes or housing), from those who simply do not have enough earnings to access food facing, for this matter, extreme and recurrent situations of famine. These last ones are the so-called indigents.

The establishment of a difference between the two above-mentioned classes of poverty revealed great political relevance, allowing the decision-makers to develop more specific measures to help the poor populations of their territories. It also brought them new doubts and concerns: should they benefit first the ones living under the indigent poverty line, giving them a chance to survive? Or should they concern primarily with helping the ones closer to the poverty threshold, which would prove to bring important results in the reduction of that territory’s poverty rates? These are intricate questions, with important socioeconomic and even ethic aspects to be taken under a very particular, reflective and insightful consideration.

Following the previous concerns, a more adequate and truthful-to-reality way to quantify the poverty levels of each specific context was created. It is the so-called poverty gap which can be defined as the mean statistical distance between the average income of the poor people (over the whole population) and the average distance of income below the poverty line (necessary to reach that value). The poverty gap is, therefore, a way to clearly evaluate the population’s income shortfall from the poverty threshold. It has been establishing itself, from the moment of its creation on, as a vital instrument for the development of poverty mitigation programs, able to more

satisfactorily account for the several sub-groups existent inside the poor population of a given geographic framework.

We are aware that the economic presuppositions are insufficient to truthfully quantify and classify the poor peoples. However we are also alert that the studies of poverty are far from being exact. Thus, we understand that it is necessary to develop some analytical procedures in order to achieve at least a small amount of generalization in the poverty research and policy-making; nevertheless the attenuation of the risks inherent to that simplification process should always be a reigning condition in each local or regional study/policy concerning poverty.

Since we are speaking about poverty we could not overlook to mention a recent phenomenon (that appeared in the 1980's) – the urban poverty – deriving from the current expanding tendencies of urbanization from all across the world. Cities are increasingly looked at as attractive places, with greater labour possibilities and access to social services than most of the rural sites. But, this dream is not always real. The excessive urban concentration of population and economic activities has brought up, in several parts of the world, the awakening of severe poverty and social exclusion problems.

Once it affects various (and new) sorts of individuals, for example the working population (proving that having a job is not anymore a deterministic mean of escaping poverty), immigrants, or the elderly population; urban poverty is considered as an uncharacteristic form of poverty. The profile of the so-called “urban poor individual” is far more diverse than the one of the traditional poor person. This brings great challenges when it comes to their quantification and understanding, and the development of policies to reduce their incidence.

A better knowledge and information about this specific reality is still underway; great progresses in this field of study are expected for the next years, particularly in complex topics such as the so-called “working poor”, or the employed individuals whose salary is no longer sufficient to acquire all their first necessity goods.

In many cases, these working poor individuals, unable to pay their rents and/or mortgages are forced to leave their dwellings, “falling” into a situation of homelessness.

1.3. Social Exclusion

The concepts of poverty and social exclusion are often (mistakenly) used to describe the same kind of realities and problems. Even though, when correctly applied, they enclose different theoretical and analytical objects. The existence of a large amount of complementarities between them is undeniable. Social exclusion seems to implement some dynamism and thematic broadness into the definition of poverty, by means of incorporating the notions of human and social development. “*A eliminação da pobreza enquadrar-se-ia na dinâmica do progresso social, ou progresso na equidade, definido como o incremento do conjunto de necessidades acessíveis a todos numa base igualitária. O desenvolvimento, não meramente o desenvolvimento económico mas o desenvolvimento humano, aumentaria ainda a procura da equidade*” (Ferreira, 2000:39, quoting Scitovsky, 1986:7). Currently, social exclusion is manifested through multiple and diverse aspects. It is a universal phenomenon, present all across the world in every continent, region or country. Once it affects virtually everyone it is vital to lay some attention to the specificities inherent to this sociological concept.

Social exclusion is, therefore, a complex¹⁵, heterogeneous, multidimensional, and universal phenomenon. Its massive dissemination in the economic, political, academic and, specially, media discourses has caused it to gain a dubious and evasive nature, transforming it into a really hard concept to be objectively worked upon. That stated it seems to be unequivocal that it is always decisive (to try) to build a complete definition of social exclusion, faithfully adapted to each framework.

Social exclusion does not concern solely to people, but also to territories and social institutions. A given place “*destinatário de medidas e acolhedor de cidadãos*” (Rodrigues, quoted by Miguel, 2007) can function simultaneously as an excluded and excluding

¹⁵ “*A noção de exclusão social é saturada de significados, não-significados e contra-significados. Pode-se fazer quase qualquer coisa com o termo, já que ele significa o ressentimento daqueles que não podem obter aquilo que reivindicam*” – Commissariat General du Plan, Governo Francês (1993).

reality for the individuals. Clear examples of this reality are the well-known *quartiers difficiles*¹⁶, socially marginalized territories where we can find a high concentration of “de-structured” families, unemployed or underemployed individuals, and youth delinquency rates, among many other sociological problems. As noted by Serge Paugam “*les individus ont conscience d’hériter d’un statut dévalorisé lorsqu’ils résident dans un ensemble d’habitations (...) dont la réputation est mauvaise (...) se sont inscrits dans la conscience social de ses habitants, à tel point que les nouveaux locataires héritent d’un statut dévalorisé et font l’expérience de la disqualification social*” (Paugam, 2009:157 e 161).

So, it seems that the notion of social exclusion bears an implicit idea of social disaggregation, perceptible either at the economic, political, cultural, social, or even environmental levels. Anthony Giddens understands this phenomenon as “*as formas pelas quais os indivíduos podem ser afastados do pleno envolvimento na sociedade*” (Giddens, 2008:324). Therefore “*exclusão social significa «exclusão da sociedade» (...), considerando que cada uma das esferas da existência social – da mais pequena à mais ampla, da mais simples à mais complexa – constitui um sistema social. A Sociedade (local, nacional, regional ou global) será, então, constituída por um conjunto de sistemas sociais, alguns dos quais poderão ser considerados como básicos ou essenciais*” (Costa *et al.*, 2008:64-65).

So, the process of social exclusion has clear repercussions in the weakening of the individual’s social and family linkages. Its denial towards an effective and peaceful participation in the communitarian and societal dimensions of his life is known by Robert Castel as “disaffiliation”, meaning that the mentioned individual does not recognize his/her place in society¹⁷. Disaffiliation can lead to serious “de-linkages” between the individuals and the established social order. If we consider that “*a exclusão resulta das dificuldades de assimilação, de inserção ou de integração, a situação assim definida permite efectivamente definir uma lista de populações diferencialmente excluídas*” (Xiberras, 1996:27).

¹⁶ To know more about the “excluded and excluding” places see Jordan (2003:173, quoting Parkinson, 1994:7-8) which states that “*social exclusion is not confined to particular groups but is concentrated in particular areas. In particular the most disadvantaged have been increasingly concentrated in areas immediately adjacent to the city center. (...) They are also the areas where ethnic minorities (...), unemployed people, single mothers, disabled, (...) living on minimum income concentrated in a limited number of problem neighborhoods (...). Economic growth has gone hand-in-hand with social exclusion*”.

¹⁷ Castel, R., (1998) *As metamorfoses da questão social: uma crónica do salário*, Vozes, Petrópolis.

This is why social exclusion is frequently related to marginalized groups that constantly jeopardize social security, *“indicando uma falta, uma falha no tecido social”* (Rosanvallon, 1995:204). As a matter of fact, *“a temática do conflito permite, em muitos casos, explicar o ponto de partida de um processo de exclusão que começa por uma derrota dos futuros excluídos que serão, pouco a pouco, rejeitados pela sua não conformidade com o modelo dos vencedores”* (Xiberras, 1996:17).

To Robert Castel, if not taken care of, every social exclusion situation would end up to degrade itself to an extreme point of multiple ruptures, building up from “inside” the excluded individuals and publicly manifesting itself through their reactions towards family, affective relations, the labour market, and many other personal contexts of socialization. Gladly, it is very hard to find such a situation of exclusion leading to a total absence of relations. Normally, *“não há ninguém fora da sociedade, mas um conjunto de posições cujas relações com o centro são mais ou menos distendidas”* (Castel, 1998:569). Concerned with these issues, some authors advise that *“a relação (laços) entre a pessoa e cada sistema social seja graduada, pelo menos, em «forte», «fraca» e «em estado de ruptura»”* (Costa et al., 2008:77) building for that purpose a set of “statistical” indicators allowing for the establishment of clear and adequate boundaries to each situation.

As observed by Jordi Estivill *“seria errado pensar que a realidade expressa por este conceito não tem um vasto antecedente histórico. Pois (...), pode-se afirmar que exclusão e excluídos sempre existiram desde que os homens e as mulheres vivem de forma colectiva e quiseram dar um sentido a esta vida em comunidade. O ostracismo em Atenas, a proscricção em Roma, as castas inferiores na Índia, as várias formas de escravatura, de exílio e desterro, de «guetoização», de excomunhão, são manifestações históricas de rejeição, com as quais cada sociedade tratou os indesejáveis”¹⁸.*

Following the Second World War, and roughly until the late 1960’s, re-housing the houseless population (that have fallen into that situation because of the armed conflict) was one the biggest social concerns of most European Governments. We witnessed the development of gigantic urban renewal projects, many of them built upon the scope of vast social housing programs (for example, the *“Habitation à Loyer Modéré”*

¹⁸ Estivill, J., *PANORAMA da luta contra a exclusão social – conceitos e estratégias*, Genebra, Bureau Internacional do Trabalho, Programa Estratégias e Técnicas contra a Exclusão Social e a Pobreza (2003:5).

(HLM) in France), accompanying the gargantuan industrial and economic development initiatives of some of Central Europe's urban sites. This historical period also gave birth to several social movements and associations (many of them founded under catholic principles) aiming at providing help to those "not swift enough to catch the industrial's society train". A well-know social catholic movement that rose during the 1950's is the "*aide à toute détresse*" group, led by the inspiring Father Joseph Wresinski.

In the 1970's, the increasing prominence and visibility of the social problems generated by the previous phenomena led to renewed concerns about the ones "forgotten" by the economic progress. This is the scenario responsible for the genesis of the concept of social exclusion (at least, in Europe). One of the most prominent and pioneer documents devoting its attention to this notion is the book "*Les exclus: un Français sur dix*" written by René Lenoir¹⁹ in 1974, in a socioeconomic context where it was still very infrequent to consider some groups of excluded individuals, such as the physically impaired, the mentally-ill, the alcoholics, among many others.

As portrayed by the book's title, Lenoir established a set of calculations that enabled him to announce that one out of each ten French citizen's were living at the margin²⁰ of the two previous decades' economic growth results, a fact for which he showed great concern. The author pointed out the idea that the wealth crescendo of the latter years was not being actively applied in the reduction of the poverty levels that were falling into the "*handicapés sociaux*". So, he defended that these individuals had to be benefited by specific social protection policies. He was talking about "*une autre France (...) au-delà de l'ordinaire (...) mais qui, malgré sa situation d'exception, est une (...) gangrène menaçant (...) tout le corps social*" (Lenoir, 1974:10 and 36).

Once introduced by Lenoir (and other important authors) the concept of social exclusion started to be extremely influential in the social policies of the subsequent French Governments, used as a conceptual reference to act upon a "*group of people living*

¹⁹ Former Secretary of State of Social Action in the Government led by the former President of France Mr. Jacques Chirac.

²⁰ Considering the time of the book's original printing, still at the dawn of the "Golden Thirties" (1974-75), this notion of "margin" must be read under the context of the crisis that was being undergone by the Western economies; in result of the 1973 oil crisis they were facing a transitional (and critical) moment of their economic development process.

on the margins of society and, in particular, without access to the system of social insurance” (Percy-Smith, 2000:1, quoting Room, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Burchardt *et al.*, 1999).

In the later 1980’s the academic community started to talk about the “new poor”. Poverty began to appear as a characteristic aspect of other than only the ones living at the margin of the social systems (including the labor markets). The (sometimes previously) employed individuals “living” in the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid started to be deeply impacted by phenomena such as unemployment or poverty; only the more qualified workers seemed to be able to escape this “new poverty”²¹. But, from the beginning of the 1990’s on, even the more specialized and educated workers started to show an increasing vulnerability to this hazard. Their auspicious careers, rightfully earned high-incomes, and prospects of a socioeconomic ascending mobility fell under this new poverty’s perfidious tentacles. In less than two decades the social questions turned from the “incapable freaks” to the “useless normals (Donzelot, 1996:59).

This new and rising conjuncture – where unemployment and underemployment, and the loss of social status and roots associated to a primary sociability (inherited from the absence of cohesive social and professional bonds) are common features – has been giving rise to new and diverse groups of “excluded” and “marginalized”. Consequently, social exclusion has become increasingly harder to define in the last years: *“quelles sont les frontières de groupes à l’identité incertaine (...) ? On ne peut appréhender le champ de la marginalité en l’absence d’une théorie (...) de l’intégration. (...) Sont «intégrés» les individus et les groupes inscrits dans les réseaux producteurs de la richesse et de la reconnaissance sociale. Seraient «exclus» ceux qui ne participeraient en aucune manière à ces échanges réglés”* (Castel, 1996:32). In the last years social sciences have shown great interest in these rising matters, producing many interesting works approaching these topics. We will now mention some of the most important and groundbreaking authors and documents.

For example, Pierre Bourdieu (1993:487-498) describes the physical and mental demise that results from a poverty situation, in what he thinks to be “living on the edge”. Gaujelac and Leonetti (1994:4) bring up the perceptions of “inferiority” and “wounded

²¹ Among other authors, see PAUGAM, S. – *La Société Française et ses Pauvres*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1993 ; and *La Disqualification Sociale: Essai sur la Nouvelle Pauvreté*, Paris, Presse Universitaires de France, 1991.

identity” characteristic of these new excluded; Serge Paugam (1991:6) points out to the “disbelief” that falls over the marginalized individuals; as previously mentioned Donzelot and Estebe (1991:26) talk about “useless normal’s”; and Robert Castel (1991:154 and 1993:145) speaks of the “destabilization of the stable ones”.

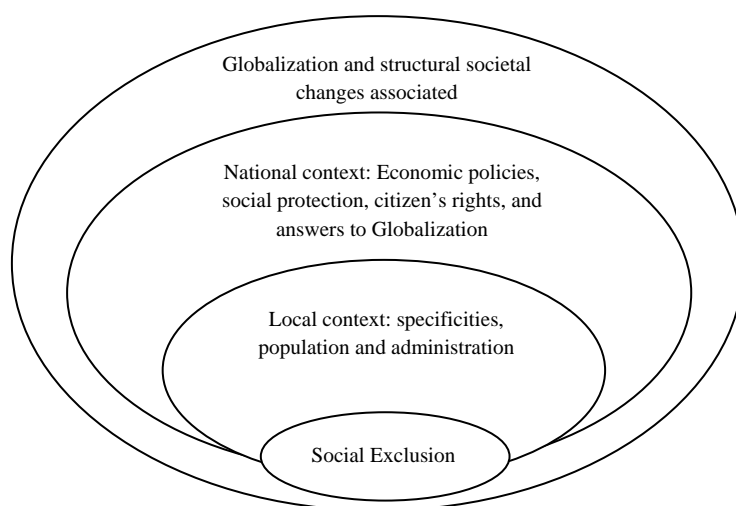
All the previous expressions lead us to the existence of a kind of “rootlessness” shown by these individuals towards their work, their community, or even their relatives and friends. The intensifying de-linkages will ultimately tend to lead them into a situation of social seclusion. It is in this theoretical context that Donzelot and Estebe (1991:27) mention the arrangement of the “non-social strengths, this class of disqualified”. Castel (1991) underlines the “absence of perspectives to control the future” and Rosanvallon (1995:203) expresses that *“os excluídos constituem, de facto, quase que por sua própria essência, uma não-classe”*.

The European Union has recently, under the influence of their social cohesion policies, adopted the following definition: *“social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services. It affects individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject of discrimination or segregation; and it emphasizes the weaknesses in the social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two-tier society to become established by default. The Commission believes that a fatalistic acceptance of social exclusion must be rejected and that all Community citizens have a right to the respect of human dignity”* (Percy-Smith, 2000:3, quoting the Commission of the European Communities, 1993:1).

Whether we choose or not to adopt the EU’s definition, we have to understand that it obviously reflects that institution’s vision of the social exclusion phenomenon, being, therefore, extremely influenced by its role as an international political and economic organization. This warns us to be aware that, at a global level, social exclusion is often considered as a broad-spectrum concept that gathers all the social aspects that deprive a full integration of an individual into his society. Globalization, and the changes imprinted by it in the structures of the contemporary societies, can be traced as one of its most prominent inducers (Picture 1): *“Social exclusion is seen in a wider context. In*

particular it is seen in the context of globalization and the structural changes brought about by globalization” (Percy-Smith, 2000:5).

Nonetheless, it is also extremely important to lay some attention and knowledge to the non-international contexts, filled up with their own intense and specific exclusion problems. Particularly, the local scale has been increasingly considered as the ideal spatial framework for the development and execution of programs to fight individual and community social exclusion. At the national, regional and local levels of political and socioeconomic decision, and in a social state of right, fully supporter of the accomplishment of every person’s complete citizenship, an individual is considered as socially excluded if he does not comprise the full access to his multiple societal rights, such as the civic rights (e.g. the explicit rights of women and children; the rights to freedom of speech and equal access to information; or the right to privacy), the political rights (e.g. freedoms of syndicalization and of political association; or the freedom to vote in fair and democratic elections), or the Human Rights (e.g. the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty; the right to have all guarantees necessary for defence in a public trial; the right to not be subjected to interferences with ones privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon one’s honour and reputation; or the rights to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries).



Picture 1 – Contexts of Social Exclusion²²

²² Reference: Adapted from Percy-Smith (2000:5).

As we have already previously noted, social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon. Some authors seem to support that education and labor are the most fundamental guarantees to social inclusion, since they grant the individuals a sense of inclusion, usefulness and belonging to a given society and/or community.

The basic and more effective way to address the problem(s) of social exclusion is by means of the promotion of everyone's inclusion. It is fundamental to identify each case specificity's, in order to best adapt the answers to every particular situation. It is vital to understand how the phenomenon manifests (normally, it is associated to a certain kind of social stigma), what caused it (understanding that low-income is not always the most important reason) and try to predict its consequences, in a way to try to anticipate (and thus minimize) its effects.

Given its ever-changing specificities and evolutions one must maintain an exceptionally pro-active and vanguardist attitude when addressing the issues of social exclusion, either at the scale of each individual (in order to best promote his inclusion) or in the ambit of the territory (territorial inclusion).

1.4. The Homeless

1.4.1. The Right to Housing

As it will certainly come to our perception through the following chapter, being a homeless ("sem-abrigo", in Portuguese) is undoubtedly one of the *"formas mais extremas de exclusão social e, por vezes, uma das mais visíveis, aquela em que o carácter de privação múltipla é patente e, por vezes, contrasta fortemente com o meio ambiente em que se apresenta"* (COSTA, 1998:80).

As we start to speak about the homeless people a clear thought comes to our mind: their greatest need is a home. But, if that seems to be an unequivocal fact, we

should not also forget that the lack of a regular dwelling works as a strong inductor for exclusion from many of our simple daily activities, such as the collecting of mail, or the possibility to maintain a bank account.

There has been an active production of academic and institutional bibliography concerning the “homelessness” and “right to housing” issues during the last decades.

One of the first documents that mentioned these subjects is the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, produced by the United Nations (UN), already cited during the present report. In the article 25 of the previously mentioned paper it is established that every person has the right to a sufficient life-standard to ensure himself and his family health and welfare mainly in what concerns to food, clothes, housing medical assistance and the remaining necessary social services.

Since the approval of the Declaration in 1948, the right to housing has been successively evoked as an essential human right through the publication of several other institutional instruments (international conventions, declarations, sets of rules and principles), many of them adopted by the UN²³. The “Declaration of Vancouver on Human Settlements”, commonly known as “HABITAT I” (1976) describes a set of the National Governments’ responsibilities concerning the role of the completion of the right to housing in the promotion of the each country’s human development and in the integration of socially and racially marginalized communities; the “Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000” also identifies the importance of the human right to an adequate dwelling, and entitles the National States with the duty of promoting better life-conditions to their populations living in irregular urban settlements, by means of promoting an integrative and effectively planned urban requalification of the critical areas; the “Agenda 21”, adopted at the “United Nations Conference on Environment and Development” (known as the “Rio Conference”) gives much attention (in its Chapter 7) to the relevance of “Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development” recognizing that, in the least developed countries, the National

²³ For example, the Pacts are international juridical instruments; this means that, once a member of the UN (or any other international legal institution) integrates himself as a “part” (by means of ratifying it) on one of these “Pacts” (this is also valid to several other juridical instruments) it is automatically obligated by the International Laws to respect the conditions imposed by that given document.

Governments dedicate only about 5,6% of their resources to housing, social protection, and leisure. This document also underlines the need to *“oferecer a todos habitação adequada [considerando que] (...) o acesso a habitação segura e saudável é essencial para o bem-estar físico, psicológico, social e económico das pessoas, devendo ser parte fundamental das actividades nacionais e internacionais (...). Estima-se que actualmente pelo menos 1 bilião de pessoas não disponha de habitações seguras e saudáveis e que, caso não se tomem as medidas adequadas, esse total terá aumentado drasticamente até ao final do século e além”*.²⁴

The “Program of Action of the World Summit for Social Development” (which took place in Copenhagen, in 1995) stated that being homeless and having an inadequate dwelling should be regarded as the most profound manifestations of poverty. The referred document also advises the various political institutions to the need of implementing severe and urgent measures to reduce world’s poverty rates and *“to protect the displaced, the homeless, street children”* (Paragraph 34).²⁵

“HABITAT II” (which took place in Istanbul, in the year of 1996; twenty years after its first edition, which has already been referred to in detail in the current chapter) maintains and renovates the economic, social and environmental principles of its predecessor. However, the human urban settlements’ situation has gone worse in the twenty years ranging between the two world summits. In the mid-1990’s, the official international statistics predicted that, by the beginning of the 21st century, something like three billion people would be living and working (or, at least, looking for jobs) in urban areas. It was expected that by then the biggest problems *“confronting cities and towns and their inhabitants [would] include inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness (...), increased poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor”*.²⁶ Further ahead in the same document (Paragraph 11), it is portrayed that *“more people than ever are living in absolute poverty and without adequate shelter. Inadequate shelter and homelessness are growing plights in many countries, threatening standards of health, security and even life itself. Everyone has the*

²⁴ Cited from: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Valley/5990/agenda21.html>

²⁵ Cited from: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N95/116/51/PDF/N9511651.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁶ Paragraph 8 of the Preamble. Available at: http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/1176_6455_The_Habitat_Agenda.pdf

right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate (...) housing, water and sanitation, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions”.

Summarily, the “Global Plan of Action of the HABITAT II Conference” confirms, once again, the international legal-status and importance of the human right to a dignified home. In this context, it establishes a collection of over one hundred compromises and six hundred proposals to promote international cooperation and unified action towards a global accomplishment of the right to adequate housing.

The “Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium” (2001), was adopted in an extraordinary meeting of the United Nation’s General Assembly. It revises the “Declaration of Istanbul on Human Settlements” (“HABITAT II”) and the “HABITAT Agenda” (both created in the 1996 Conference), and stipulates a new group of initiatives – designed to better achieve the commitments expressed in the two previous documents – closely influenced by the “United Nations Millennium Declaration”, especially by the ideas developed under the scope of its target “to have achieved significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers, by the year of 2020”.

Housing issues have not represented explicit priorities of the European Union’s policies, since its creation in the 1950’s. The right to a dignified housing is not even a constituent matter in most of this institution’s main treaties, especially in the former ones. Legally, the EU does not have special attributions concerning the establishment of housing policies in its territory. Even so, it is undeniable that virtually almost all of the Community’s policies (e.g. environment, energy, transports, and economic or social policies) have more or less direct implications in housing conditions and/or related policies in all of the EU’s Member-States.

Among the few European documents addressing the right to an adequate housing issue it seems important to elevate, for example, the “European Social Policy – A Way Forward for the Union. A White Paper” (1994: 12)²⁷ that entitles the European Commission (EC) with the task of *“propor um plano de acção (...) contra a exclusão social no*

²⁷ Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/calendar/calendar?APP=PDF&TYPE=PV2&FILE=19950119PT.pdf&LANGUE=PT>

âmbito de uma política global de luta contra a pobreza e a favor dos direitos humanos (...) e entende (...) que a Comissão deve ir mais além na luta contra as exclusões, atacando directamente, por exemplo, o problema da habitação”.

Another relevant document is the “European Social Charter”, a Council of Europe treaty, signed in Strasbourg in the 3rd of May, 1995. In its Article 31 it establishes a commitment towards the ensuring of a full exercise of the right to housing in the European territory by means of implementing measures destined to favour access to housing in a level that allows the prevention and reduction of homelessness, aiming at this phenomenon’s progressive elimination, and to make the price of houses accessible to people without enough resources to access them.

In 1999, the Committee of the Regions released an “Opinion: Housing and the Homeless”²⁸ stating that the presence of homeless in the cities is one of the most serious manifestations of social exclusion in Europe, and that should be a major concern first of all for the local and regional administrations. It invites the European institutions to deepen the principles related to the right to housing.

The “European Charter on Housing”, approved by the European’s Parliament URBAN-Housing Intergroup (26th of April, 2006), defines housing as a first necessity good, a fundamental social right, a basic element of the European Social Model, and as a crucial promoter of human dignity.

On the following year the “European Parliament Resolution of 10 May, 2007” on housing and regional policy²⁹ asserted that the lack of a dignified housing for an affordable price has a direct influence in the citizens lives limiting their possibilities to be socially inserted and their mobility in the urban and rural areas. It also recognizes that many European cities have serious housing issues such as the excessive or insufficient offer (varying according to the region and/or the country), homelessness, accentuated rise of the costs of acquisition and maintenance of that house; degradation, etc.. Therefore, it was advised that all EU Member-States should work together in the

²⁸Jornal Oficial n° C 293 de 13/10/1999 p. 0024, consultado em: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:51998IR0376:PT:HTML>

²⁹ [2006/2108(INI)] – Official Journal of the European Union – C 76 E/129

development of an integrated and holistic approach to Europe's complex housing issues, for example, by granting their citizens an easier access to adequate (and increasingly improved and renewed) housing.

In the last year (specifically in the 20th of March, 2008) a group of Eurodeputies released a Parliamentary Declaration³⁰ through which (Article 116) they acknowledge that access to a proper housing is a fundamental right and so is the access to a shelter being this last one, in many cases, the first step to an adequate and sustainable resolution of the housing problems of the people submitted to extreme social exclusion and poverty. The subscribers of this document appeal to the Council of European in order for it to adopt a European compromise in order to resolve the homelessness problems until the year 2015.

Most of the international and macro-regional treaties specifically concerned with the global accomplishment of the fundamental human right to an adequate and dignified dwelling have been massively ratified. Yet, before the 1990's there were few national Constitutions with specific references to this matter. The "Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" (1996) is a clear example of the new paradigm that rose in the 1990's, once it explicitly consecrates the South African citizens' right to housing, obligating the State to ensure the prosecution of universal housing to the country's population. It also forbids the execution of arbitrary evictions from one's house.

In Europe, the national Constitution's of countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Portugal, or Sweden have explicit references to the right to an adequate housing. Of the above-mentioned, only the Danish and Swedish Governments seem to actively guarantee this right to all the social classes. However, it is possible to find in all of them several programs destined to help the lower-income families that are trying or in need to access a residence. Though aiming at the same objectives, the housing policies of the referenced countries tend to prioritize different measures, inspired by each one's particularities, and socioeconomic inheritances, such as each State's tendency to intervene in the real estate and housing

³⁰ "European Parliament Written Declaration on Ending Street Homelessness" [P6_TA-PROV (2008) 0163]

markets, or to financially stimulate or tax the private housing sector (“Housing and Homelessness: models and practices from across Europe”, FEANTSA, 2008).³¹

The “Constitution of the Republic of Portugal” officialised in 1976 is still currently considered as one of the most progressive documents of such a kind in the entire World. In this legal paper the fact that everyone has the right to wish for himself and his family an adequately dimensioned house in proper conditions of hygiene and comfort and good enough to preserve each one’s personal intimacy and family privacy is a thoroughly recognized notion (Article 65. Number 1). The State has the responsibility to ensure the fulfilment of this right to all of the country’s citizens through the elaboration of a group of territorial planning and management instruments, to be developed either at the National or Regional levels (respectively by the State and the Autonomous Regions of Azores and Madeira Governments’) and at the local scale (by the local Municipalities). The Constitution also predicts the need to anticipate several responses to the upcoming housing problems of different socioeconomic strata of the population. Article 65. Numbers 2 b) and c) underlines the need to promote, in collaboration with the autonomous regions and the local municipalities, the construction of socioeconomically viable housing; and to stimulate private construction of general interest and the access to a proper or rented dwelling. The document also reveals notorious concerns with multiple other aspects like the need to adjust the rents according to each family’s income; the creation of public financing measures directed to the people that are trying to buy their own houses; and with many other topics related to the legislation of housing and the territorial management policies, such as the promotion of self-construction or the creation of housing cooperatives.

For the Portuguese citizens who recognize the existence of threats or any sort of incompleteness respecting their constitutional right to an adequate housing, there is a multiplicity of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional strategies and mechanisms for them to use. Among the first ones, we can elevate the existence of legally pre-determined financial (or other) compensations for the victims of all sorts of illegal actions, such as

³¹ Consultado em: http://www.feantsa.org/files/freshstart/Communications/Homeless%20in%20Europe%20EN/PDF_2009/Homeless%20in%20Europe_Winter2008.pdf

arbitrary evictions or demolitions; excessive, inappropriate and increasingly expensive rents; inadequate health conditions of the rented apartments; or discrimination in the access to housing. There are also various legal mechanisms directed to overcome the problems related to homelessness.³²

As we are about to see in the next chapters, many States have designed (at a national level) specific programs to address the homeless populations' problems. Nevertheless, especially in the last decades, these initiatives tend to function on a local basis, often presenting several permanent and temporary housing measures, together with other social support services (e.g. psychosocial, jurisdictional, or educational). Though displaying several specificities, according to their contexts they are normally developed in a way that enables the homeless individuals to acquire a stable economic and psychosocial situation, and to build an autonomous capacity to obtain and maintain their own housing.

1.4.2. The Problem of the Concept of Homelessness

The establishment of an unequivocal and universal definition of “homeless” has always proved to be a hard and intricate mission. *“La définition du sans abri n’a rien d’universelle: chaque pays développe la sienne propre”* (Thelen, 2006:12). Probably, the most effaceable way to try to grant some international standardization to the expression “homeless” would be to etymologically deconstruct the words *“homeless”*, *“sem-abrigo”* (meaning “homeless” in Portuguese) or *“sans-abri”* (the same word in French). In each of these cases, we can observe that the terms’ morphological construction is generally the same. For example, the Latin derivations *“sem-abrigo”* or *“sans-abri”* are built under equal rules, both of them created through the combination of two words, the preposition *“sem”* or *“sans”*, meaning *“without”* or *“excluded of”* (like the suffix

³² There are several examples of these policies, not only in Portugal but all across Europe. In France, the right to have a house started to be, at one point, demandable before the French courts. This measure was implemented after hundreds of homeless individuals (and many other social activists, in sign of solidarity with the cause) camped for two weeks (in March, 2007) in the sidewalks along the Saint-Martin Channel. As a result, the French Parliament approved a Law (that came into action in the 1st of December of 2008, contemplating the establishment of legal instruments to help the victims of the following situations: people in need of a house; victims of arbitrary evictions; people or families temporarily living in a third individual’s (non-related) house; people living in inappropriate, insalubrious or dangerous dwellings; vulnerable families (living in sub-standard housing conditions) with under-aged and physically disabled individuals.

“less”); and the noun “abrigo” or “abri”, meaning “shelter” or “home”. A “sem-abrigo” (or a “homeless”) is, therefore, a person who does not have a “home”, understood here both as a physical place and as an affiliating space to be identified with. Commonly it is someone who dwells on the streets; someone who faces severe “habitat” insufficiencies. Though being an extremely pragmatic and consensual approach, largely utilized with statistical purposes, it does not fully translate the real issues surrounding the homeless, once it accentuates the external and “physical” dimensions of the phenomenon, underestimating the importance of the socioeconomic, psychological and even pathological aspects.

It is possible to uncover the existence of a vast and historically inherited semantic field associated with the concept of homeless. On average, it tends to largely contribute to the stigmatized social understanding of the phenomenon.

As previously stated, the Portuguese word “sem-abrigo” has great similarities with the French “sans-abri” and the English “homeless” expressions. They all portray an idea of *“falta de habitat mínimo, que protegeria o ser humano do frio, do vento ou da chuva que da mesma maneira que a alimentação e/ou o vestuário, assegura uma necessidade essencial à sobrevivência humana”* (Thomas, quoted by Bento and Barreto, 2002:23).

Particularly, the English terminology (“homeless”), by including the expression “home” (and not just “house”) carries an interesting idea of disaffiliation³³. So, we can clearly distinguish between the “homeless” and *“houseless”*, which means nothing but the lack or loss of a physical habitation. For example (Anderson, quoted by Bento and Barreto, 2002:24), degrading historical terminologies such as *“bobos”, “tramps”* or *“bums”* still constitute emotional stigmas and burdens carried out by today’s homeless people in the United States. In France (Vexliard, quoted by Bento and Barreto, 2002:24) the same demeaning connotation can be found in traditional expressions like *“vagabond”* or *“clochard”* revealing the idea of the un-usefulness displayed by these individuals for a society that did not care for them: *“il est certain que l'on rencontrait autrefois parmi les vagabonds une plus grande quantité de malades mentaux, parce que nul ne se préoccupait d'eux. Ils étaient*

³³ A disaffiliated individual is the one who cut all or some of his affiliative bonds (either affective, or professional).

condamnés à l'errance comme individus non utilisables socialement ; en outre, ils n'entraient à l'asile que s'ils se révélaient dangereux pour l'ordre public" (Vexliard, 1957:196).

In Spain, as in most of Latin America's countries the common term is "*sin techo*" ("roofless"). In Finland, the word "*koditon*" (meaning something close to "homeless") was recently replaced by "*asunnoton*" (which carries a connotation similar to the expression "houseless") because the first one carried out a sense of "*having no established relationships – no-one to take care of them*" (Edgar *et al.*, 1999:47). The same conceptual switch happened in Norway from "*hjemløst*" to "*bostedsløst*". The Norwegian official documents also refer to the homeless people by using the expression "UFB" meaning "*uten fast bolig*", which can be literally translated as "without a permanent residence".

In Portugal, even though the current terminology is "sem-abrigo", the traditional concept was "sem-tecto" (meaning "roofless"), following its neighbouring country's (Spain) convention. This expression is still very influential at the academic and decision-making/political levels. Debasing terms such as "vagabundo", "mendigo", "indigente" "vadio", or "ocioso" still carry great social significance (Bento *et al.*, 2002:23)³⁴. As noted by Bento *et al.* (2002), the current predominance of the more broadly significant word "sem-abrigo" should be elevated as the beginning of the institutionalization of a new perspective towards the homeless people, particularly noticeable among the political classes: "*Se contrastarmos esta definição [sem-abrigo] com as anteriores de vagabundo, vadio, mendigo, verificamos que ela revela uma profunda alteração do discurso oficial sobre estas pessoas. O sentido pejorativo e responsabilizador dos primeiros é substituído por uma definição que acentua as causas externas do problema*" (Bento *et al.*, 2002:26).

But, truthfully, the negative content patent in all the previously mentioned humiliating terms still survives in (almost) everyone's common sense. We can even risk saying that, up to a certain point, the social notion of homelessness carries an imprinted stamp of individual and social "un-accomplishment", alluding to a kind of socially-produced good bearing one or many kinds of imperfections. Following this line of thought it is not surprising that in the self-exalting totalitarian political regimes, the

³⁴ One of the few books written in Portugal explicitly concerned with these subjects.

homelessness reality (as it is a sign of poverty and social and political flaw) has always been hidden and persecuted. For example, the Russian Social Encyclopaedia defines the “homeless” in a rather repulsive and revolting way: “*The most destitute and hopeless segment of the homeless people...beg, rummage through rubbish, steal, become carriers of infectious diseases and originators of fires and create moral discomfort for the members of the public* (Mirsagatova, 2000:34)” (Stephenson, 2006:4).

It seems to be (by now) clearly understandable that the definition of homeless can be applied to everyone absented a physical shelter. However, this absence should also be analyzed and characterized through its repercussions in the individual’s social exclusion from several other “shelters” or protections, either social, professional, economic, psychological or family related. Ultimately, a homeless is someone facing a socially disrupting situation, explicitly perceptible by not having the necessary connections to himself, nor to his society.

The home, seen as a metonymic territory of every individual, is a determining aspect in the construction of each person’s character; in contrast, the street, as a public space deconstructs one’s individuality. The conflicts between interiority and exteriority, and appropriation and disappropriation are full of consequences, whose results are, in our opinion, imprinted in the dialectics separating social inclusion from social exclusion being, therefore, aspects to be thoroughly taken into account when we are attempting to define homelessness.

We are not trying to say that the inaccessibility to a dwelling is not important. But the problems of the homeless extend far beyond the housing issue and it is crucial that we are all aware of this fact. This is why it is essential to draw a clear line between “houselessness” and “homelessness”: It is very serious to not have an accommodation with the minimum housing pre-requisites and conditions; but it is far more complex to be a homeless, because that situation implies a loss of family and other affective bonds, either in consequence of unemployment, physical violence, or mental-illness, which “obligate” people to dwell on the streets (Bulla *et al.*, 2004:113-114).

We are talking about continuous ruptures, frequently associated to alcohol or other addictive substances abuse (sometimes not only by the homeless individual but by

his family members). Snow and Anderson (1998:77) get to the point of stating that the social world of the homeless can be sometimes perceived as a kind of sub-culture, even if a limited or incomplete one. It's a "world" not created or even chosen by the ones living in the streets (at least in an initial basis), but a reality to what they were pushed against, without any chance of control. These multiple situations' victims have an equal destiny: to dwell and survive in the streets and alleys of the most important world cities.

1.4.3. Definitions for Homelessness

Due to its multiple causes and consequences, the homelessness phenomenon is a very complex one to approach. Such a conceptual complexity excessively exacerbates the number of existing definitions of homelessness. The attempts to explain and describe this reality often respond to political ideologies or purposes, rather than resulting from impartial, objective and scientifically oriented approaches. So, there is a vast and diverse sort of definitions of homelessness, some of which tend to converge to specific groups or themes such as the unemployed, the immigrants, the alcoholics, ethnic minorities, the victims of domestic violence, the war veterans, the street children, the mentally-ill individuals, among many others. Transversal to all these perspectives is their tendency to focus on subjective experiences and individual life-stories (sometimes even contributing to the group's stigmatization), rather than being built upon truly structural factors.

The achievement of a universal definition of homelessness would prove to be a remarkable attainment. However, that appears to be an intangible task, given the abundance and socio-cultural diversity of the causes and consequences associated with such a social condition, and the particularities existent within each of the identifiable groups. As we have already referred there is currently an attempt to universalize the distinction between homelessness and houselessness. This seems to be a very important conceptual contribution, making possible to separate not having a shelter/house from manifesting multiple disruptions, whose more prominent (but not the only) aspect is the lack of a physical shelter. Yet, several questions are still unanswered, for example: should the individuals living in "slums", refugee camps, or even the victims of environmental catastrophes be considered as homeless?

Springer, (2000:479) speaks about that infinity of homelessness definitions, concluding that *“there are as many classifications and definitions of homelessness as there are different points of views. A definition of homelessness might refer to a special housing situation, to a special minimum standard, to the duration and the frequency of a stay without shelter, to lifestyle questions, to the use of the welfare system and to the being part of a certain group of the population, to the risk of becoming houseless and to the possibility to move or not if desired”*.

The main thematic focus in virtually every country’s definition of homelessness is the existence of one or several housing market inefficiencies. Nevertheless, the way in which each situation is manifested varies throughout the different spatial and social contexts. According to a report prepared and presented by UN’s Center for Human Settlements (2000) (and mentioned in the Proceedings of the “2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research”) the world States can be classified into three “clusters” (Leginski, 2007:1-27)³⁵:

- *“high-income, industrial countries, including the United States, Western Europe, Canada, Australia and Japan,*
- *Other industrial countries with economies in transition, including Eastern and Central Europe and the Russian Federation, and*
- *Developing countries, including many in Africa, Latin America, and much of Asia”*.

For example, in India and Bangladesh we can find a great number of single individuals and even families sleeping on the streets and in garbage disposals all across these two country’s biggest cities. What seems to be surprising is that, in many cases, they are doing it willingly. It’s the example of numerous former rural dwellers that prefer to save most of their incomes and send them to their original rural “homes” and families (to which they intend to come back to one day) rather than spending it on an urban house for their own. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) attempts to describe the homeless as *“the floating population [they] are the mobile and vagrant category of rootless people who*

³⁵ Historical and Contextual Influences on the U.S. Response to Contemporary Homelessness, *in Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*, USA, September 2007.

have no permanent dwelling units whatever” (BBS, 1999: 3). This is the official (and therefore, the one guiding all the statistical studies about homelessness) definition of the homeless in Bangladesh. It is closely associated to the ideas of mobility and migration (*“the floating population”*), showing that these homeless often have a dwelling, which they temporarily (or so they seem to think) left for a few months or years.

The Chinese regime does not tolerate street dwellers. The closest thing to being a homeless in China is to be *“blindly floating”*, term applied to the unregistered individuals or to the ones with no statistical record of a house. Normally, these people tend to occupy abandoned or low-quality buildings in the poorest areas of the most important Chinese cities (Zhang *et al.*, 2003). Beavis *et al.* (1997) studied the incidence of homelessness amid the Australian Aborigine population. The authors distinguished between the *“temporary homeless”* and the so-called *“chronic homeless”*.

In Egypt the quality of each one’s habitation is a criterion to label them (or not) as homeless. People living in marginalized and inadequate dwellings (called *Iskan gawazi*) are considered homeless. In South Africa (as it happens, for example, in Indonesia) it is very common for the street people to occupy the main cities’ abandoned buildings. Ghana is currently facing an escalating incidence of homelessness, especially due to the ethnic conflicts happening in that country’s Northern areas. In Peru, the urban populations without any sort of vinculum to their houses are officially considered as homeless. The same thing happens in Zimbabwe (Kamete, 2001; Tipple e Speak, 2005). As underlined by Cooper (1995) it appears that the definitions of homeless ultimately reflect each State’s political priorities. These institutional visions are extremely influential in each country’s measures to mitigate the problems associated to homelessness.

In the *“61st Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights”* (Geneva, 30th of March, 2009) Miloon Kothari³⁶ declared that the worldwide number of street dwellers is estimated to range from 100 to 1.000 million individuals, of which 20 to 40 millions live in the world’s most prominent urban spaces. The notorious magnitude of the considered statistical intervals is due to the different definitions applied in the counting. As stated by Peressini *et al.* (1995) *“a definition is important because most researchers agree on one*

³⁶ *“Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing”*.

fact: who we define as homeless determines how we count them". Avramov (1999) thinks that researchers and decision-makers must be extremely careful when comparing data about the homeless. The inexistence of a single and universal definition of homelessness is the clearest warning about the problems surrounding the excessive simplification of the explanations about this phenomenon. So, a great solution in one place may prove to be a disastrous one in a very different context.

Trying to overcome the previous issues, the United Nations (1998:50) developed a statistical definition suitable only for the "homeless families": *"households without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters. They carry their few possessions with them sleeping in the streets, in door ways or on piers, or in any other space, on a more or less random basis"*. The latter definition clearly focus on behavioral aspects suggesting the idea of the homeless as an individual or a group of people wandering and sleeping in the streets, carrying out their few possessions with them; it is, therefore, a simplistic but (potentially) universal explanation of the phenomenon.

Numerous countries have developed their own definitions of homelessness. Some of those official formulations included both the institutionalized individuals and the ones lacking any kind of shelter. It is the examples of India, France or the United States of America. Particularly, concerning this last example, the definition of homeless as consecrated in the *Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987* includes:

"(1) An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence; and

(2) An individual who has a primary night-time residence that is:

A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelter, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);

An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended

to be institutionalized; or

A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

(3) This term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained

under an Act of Congress or state law.

People who are at imminent risk of losing their housing, because they are being evicted from private dwelling units or are being discharged from institutions and have nowhere else to go, are usually considered to be homeless for program eligibility purposes” (USA, 1994: 22-23).

The two groups identified – the ones dwelling in the streets, and those sleeping in public shelters – are also mentioned in many European country’s definitions of the homeless people. The use of the word “adequate” in the previous classification points out the insufficiency intrinsic to many improvised houses; it is also applicable to the absence of reasonable social and affective relations inside the individuals’ former or current houses. Avramov (1996) presents a broader explanation where he still applies the word “adequate”: *“Homelessness is the absence of a personal, permanent, adequate dwelling. Homeless people are those who are unable to access a personal, permanent, adequate dwelling or to maintain such a dwelling due to financial constraints and other social barriers” (Avramov 1996:71).*

In the last years, influenced by US and European scholars, the United Nation’s Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS), now known as UN-HABITAT, reviewed its definition of homelessness. Other authors remember that this phenomenon represents the unfulfillment of a human right, which can be expressed through various forms. It is clearly the case of Edgar *et al.* (1999: 2) who discriminates between *“rooflessness (living rough), houselessness (relying on emergency accommodation or long-term institutions), or inadequate housing (including insecure accommodation, intolerable housing conditions or involuntary sharing)”*.

The last definition finds a great proximity to the one developed by FEANTSA³⁷. This European institution is devoted to develop spatially transversal ways to approach the homelessness issues in Europe. According to Brousse (2005 :52), the EUROSTAT (influenced by FEANTSA’s guidelines) has already managed to develop a rather consensual definition of homeless: *“une personne est dite sans-abri si elle n’a pas accès à un logement qu’elle pourrait raisonnablement occuper, que ce logement soit légalement sa propriété ou qu’il soit loué; fourni par un employeur; occupé sans loyer d’une manière contractuelle ou selon un autre arrangement. En conséquence, elle est obligée de dormir: à l’extérieur; dans des bâtiments qui ne satisfont pas aux critères reconnus communément pour l’habitation; dans un centre d’urgence dépendant du secteur*

³⁷ Fédération Européenne d’Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-abri.

public ou d'organisations caritatives; dans des centres de plus long séjour dépendant du secteur public ou d'organisations caritatives; dans un bed-and-breakfast; dans un autre hébergement de court séjour; chez des amis ou de la famille; dans des squats occupés avec autorisation”.

In 1998, FEANTSA presented the ETHOS³⁸ (meaning “European Typology of Homelessness”) classification, which recognized four main typologies:

- Roofless: They are the most visible and precarious individuals; it includes the people that are sleeping on the streets.
- “Houseless”: Referring to the situations in which, despite having access to emergency or long-term institutions, the single individuals and/or families can still be considered as homeless.
- “Living in an insecure housing”: Cases where: there is a situation of illegal occupation of a property, a house or an abandoned building; people are living temporarily in their friend’s house; there is an unstable rental system with consequential risk of eviction from the house.
- “Living in an inadequate accommodation”: Includes the cases in which the residential space has inadequate conditions for housing or is excessively used (too many residents for the accommodation’s characteristics); trailers and boats functioning as houses are also considered as inadequate accommodations.

Springer (2000) notices that these two last categories are coincident, meaning that an accommodation can be simultaneously insecure and inadequate.

Cooper (1995) discusses the notions of *relative homelessness* and *absolute homelessness*. The first one refers to the cases in which the persons have an improvised shelter that is not a consolidated house. Absolute homelessness can be applied to the situation in which the individuals have no access to a house, or even to a shelter.

³⁸ FEANTSA believed that this classification presented itself as a crucial way to promote a clearer comprehension and assessment of homelessness in Europe. The ETHOS four typologies were built around the concept of “home”. “A FEANTSA considera que existem três elementos que constituem uma casa, e na falta dos quais se esboça a situação de sem-abrigo. Ter uma casa pode ser entendido como: ter uma habitação adequada sobre a qual a pessoa e família podem exercer uma posse exclusiva (elemento físico); poder manter a privacidade, conseguir relacionar-se (elemento social) e ter um estatuto legal para ocupação (elemento legal). Isto conduz a quatro principais categorias conceptuais sobre sem-abrigo: sem-tecto, sem casa, em habitação precária e em habitação inadequada” (SPINNEWIJN, 2005: 22-23).

In Portugal, the use of the term “sem-abrigo” has been intensively debated in the last years. Seemingly, the tendency is to increasingly attempt to undermine the theories that position homelessness as a linear occurrence centered in the intrinsic flaws of the homeless individuals rather than in socio-political causes. It is urgent to promote well-thought and assertive explanations to this social phenomenon. According to Baptista (2005) these can (also) be found encrypted in each individual or family trajectory’s.

The previous debates involved a large number of actors and entities. Together, they have been working hard to identify the main problems causing homelessness in Portugal and to develop effaceable measures to inhibit this phenomenon’s increase. In this context it is extremely important to point out the creation of an Inter-institutional Group³⁹ (May, 2007), coordinated by the Instituto de Segurança Social, I.P. (which can be literally translated to English as the Public Institute of Social Security) and composed by several public and private key-institutions, whose most important mission was to develop a “National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People”⁴⁰.

The Group early understood the importance of developing a precise and concise definition of homelessness applicable to the Portuguese context, and capable to theoretically support the political instruments to be proposed and later implemented. So, the official definition of homeless in Portugal was developed considering the homeless person as the one whom independently of its nationality, age, gender, socioeconomical status and physical or mental health can be found in a condition of rooflessness (living in

³⁹ Entities represented in the Interinstitucional Group: Public: Health services-related institutions: *Alto Comissariado da Saúde (ACS)*; *Direção-Geral da Saúde (DGS)*; *Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública (ENSP)*; *Instituto da Droga e da Toxicodependência (IDT)*; Social Security-related institutions: *Direção-Geral da Segurança Social (DGSS)*; *Instituto da Segurança Social (ISS)*, *Instituto Público*; Social integration and social equality-related institutions (e.g. immigrants or mental patients): *Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e o Diálogo Intercultural (ACIDI)*, *Instituto Público*; *Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género (CIG)*; *Direção-Geral de Reinserção Social (DGRS)*; Defense and Security-related institutions: *Direção-Geral dos Serviços Prisionais (DGSP)*; *Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR)*; *Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP)*; Housing and Employment-related institutions: *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP)*; *Instituto da Habitação e Reabilitação Urbana (IHRU)*; Other institutions: *Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses (ANMP)*; *Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil (LNEC)*; and Private: Solidarity institutions: *Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade (CNIS)*; *Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza Nacional (REAPN)*; *Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML)*; *Federação Nacional de Entidades de Reabilitação de Doentes Mentais (FNERDM)*; *União das Misericórdias*; and *FEANTSA’s Observatory*.

⁴⁰ The strategy was presented by the Portuguese National Government in the 14th of May of the present year; it is expected to allow a more accurate coordination of the existing resources, distributing them according to three specific areas of action: prevention, intervention and monitoring.

the public space, an emergency shelter or any other precarious place) and homelessness (therefore living in a shelter).

The previous pertinent definition of homeless was developed according to the operational typologies proposed by FEANTSA (mentioned earlier), already internalized by other several European countries.

In conclusion, we can now state that the concept of homelessness is a spatially and temporally diverse one. It is normally a reflection of the political sceneries of each country/region and timeframe, rather than being expressive of an objective diagnosis of the deprivation status of these persons in that specific context. People who dwell on the streets, under the bridges, or in any other place not considerable as a “home” are transversally looked at as homeless. Yet, the distinction between homeless people and the ones living in inadequate housing conditions is still vague and inconclusive.

1.4.4. Why Are People Homeless?

Toro and Warren (1999) use two main criteria to define the variations existent within the homelessness phenomenon: *i)* the homeless people’s life standards; and *ii)* the period of time that the homeless individuals should be living in the streets to be considered as such. For these authors the definition of homelessness must include not only the ones living in shelters or in the streets, but also those dwelling in hospitals and prisons that when deinstitutionalized will have no residence of their own to go to. For example, Rivlin (quoted by Pereira, Barreto and Fernandes, 2000) classifies the homelessness situations into four degrees of vulnerability, intimately related to the length of these individual’s permanence on the streets:

- The chronic, who constantly and repeatedly dwell on the streets, normally with very few incomes; sometimes they are part of social networks or communities comprised of people facing the same situation;
- The seasonal, who despite having an accessible residence sometimes favor living in shelters or even in the streets;

- The temporary, who are facing a homelessness situation due to conjunctural factors. In normal conditions these individuals have the ability to maintain a stable housing of their own.
- Finally, the total considered the most dramatic of them all. It includes the ones sleeping on shelters, churches, abandoned buildings, or even the streets. The author talks about deeply traumatized and socially disaffiliated individuals, with no house or even social/human bonds.

The traditional explanations for homelessness were centered solely on the characteristics intrinsic to the homeless individuals. In the last years, the quantitative escalate of the phenomenon and the increasing heterogeneity of homelessness situations have begun to question these “individual-related” explanations (Pereira, Barreto and Fernandes, 2000). To Bento and Barreto (2002) the previously mentioned studies did nothing more than identifying the factors of vulnerability, neglecting the true foundations of homelessness.

Currently the privilege is conceded to more complex explanations (Anderson and Christian, 2003; Clapham, 2003; Sosin, 2003), able to count the myriad of factors (and the complementarities existing between them) that induce the homelessness phenomenon (Meert *et al.*, 2005, quoted by Miguel, 2007).

This is why today homelessness is not considered anymore as a socially distinct problem with unique characteristics and causes (Pleace, 1998). The most recent studies tend to conceptualize both the structural and the individual causes and to consider the multiple and diverse homelessness situations as the result of the interactions between the social and the anthropological dimensions (Anderson and Christian, 2003). The scope of these studies is the creation of a model combining all the risk factors (Committee of the Regions and Shinn, quoted by Tompsett *et al.*, 2003; Clapham, 2003), including each individual’s traumatizing and disaffiliating life episodes (Sosin, quoted by Miguel, 2007).

According to Shinn *et al.* (1998) (quoting Koegel *et al.*; and Rossi) one can find four main drivers to homelessness: persisting poverty; behavioural disturbances; social networks’ disaggregation; and loss of access to a house. The structural factors are

normally related to societal and economic disruptions (e.g. in the labor or housing markets) and/or inefficient social policies (e.g. health or social protection dimensions) (Clapham, 2003); the individual factors often concern psychiatric disorders, educational or professional deficits, or social and cultural disaffiliation problems (Piliavin *et al.*, quoted by Bento and Barreto, 2002).

Besides all the previous ones, it is possible to identify many other risk factors to homelessness like, conflicts, end of affective relations, physical and/or sexual abuse, lack of qualifications, unemployment, alcohol and/or drug abuse, mental health problems, legal problems (e.g. criminal records; unpaid debts), inexistence of effective social protection networks (Randall and Brown, quoted by World Health Organization [WHO] 2005, quoted by Clapham, 2003), or institutionalization or death of a progenitor during childhood (Nordentoft and Wandall-Holm, quoted by WHO, 2005).

We can still present another approach centered in the explanation of the nature of the problems affecting the homeless, which considers the following possibilities:

- Homelessness as a choice or as a way of living (when there is a conscious decision to reject the life in a conventional house);
- Homelessness as the result of pathological problems (mental-illness, drug or alcohol abuse, etc.);
- Homelessness as the consequence of earlier negative life-experiences (domestic violence; economic incapacity to secure a house, etc.) (*“Estudo dos Sem-abrigo”*, ISS, IP, 2005).

Koegel *et al.* (quoted by Sousa and Almeida, 2001) argues that the homelessness phenomenon is intricately related to welfare policies (e.g. tax, housing, labor, education, and health policies; these last ones, related to diverse subjects such as substance abuse or mental-health) especially the poverty alleviation and mitigation political strategies. So, the conceptualization and implementation of strategies to prevent homelessness must necessarily begin through deep changes in these political subjects' guidelines.

1.4.5. Ecological Viewpoint on the Approach to the Homeless

Ornelas (1997) asserts that Ecology is simultaneously a scientific paradigm and a set of human values that consider the existence of causality effects between the surrounding environment and the human behaviour dimensions. Ecology's scope is therefore the study of the relations that are established between all the living organisms (and not only the human beings) and the natural resources.

According to Kelly (quoted by Ornelas, 1997) the ecological viewpoint transmits the importance of focusing on the observation of the living individuals in their natural contexts. Given this, the author proposes that it is impossible to separate the two previous realities. This is an extremely valid approach to be used both in theoretical, empirical or socially-induced studies and interventions of any kind.

The ecological viewpoint is based on four principles generally transposable to the human and social science's fields of study, and more specifically to the homelessness issues. These four main principles are:

- Principle of the Adaptation:

It concerns each individual's capacity to adapt to his social and natural environments. It is intimately related to the specificities inherent to the natural resources and to their influence on that person's behaviour (Ornelas, 1997). This theoretical principle states that the social context must be structured according to various analytical layers, each one of them contributing to the comprehension of the effects imprinted into each individual's behaviour by the surrounding social and natural environments (Bronfenbrenner, quoted in Toro *et al.*, 1991). When applied to homelessness this principle clarifies the existence of several influences of adaptation to that phenomenon, respectively: *i) the socio-cultural influences*, suggesting the need to consider the way in which the social and the cultural factors influence homelessness; in one of their studies Toro and Rojansky (quoted in Toro *et al.*, 1991) suggest that the recent growth of the phenomenon in the US can be explained as the result of diverse and unique cultural manifestations intrinsic to that country's specificities; *ii) the local influences* elevate the importance of accounting the neighboring contexts; although the first type of influences

(the socio-cultural ones) allow the establishment of a more global approach to homelessness, the consideration of multiple levels of spatial analysis of the phenomenon suggest that the local contexts permit to understand some immediate and important constraints to the homelessness events; *iii*) the influence provoked by the way the organisms are integrated into their surrounding environments noticing that “adaptation” can be considered as the result of the interactions established between personal and contextual characteristics; according to this line of reason no policy, service or resource allocated to resolve or minimize the problems inherited from the existence of homelessness situations can be seen as the only solution possible, just because this phenomenon results from a complex myriad of intertwining factors (Toro *et. al.*, 1991).

- Principle of the Cycling of Resources:

As seen before the principle of the adaptation is predominantly based on a contextual vision of the homeless. The “cycling of the resources” is supported on a different look of the way the social system’s resources are defined, distributed and improved. To adopt this perspective in homelessness research means to constantly procure the best alternatives for the homeless individuals (and their communities) and to consider the way in which their non-explored resources and strengths can be more effectively utilized (Toro *et al.*, 1991). This perspective is therefore centered in a deep assessment of each individual’s elemental survival resources, which constitutes an essential aspect to clarify the way in which the communities distribute and share their capacities (Kelly, 2006).

- Principle of the Interdependency:

It is related to the existence of mutual influences between the various components of each community and to dynamic interactions established between them across time. It emphasizes the complexity inherent to the processes of social and individual change and points out the role of the community as the more adequate unit of intervention (Ornelas, 1997). As it happens with the other ecological principles, the rule of the interdependency can be applied in multiple analytical levels. For example, according to this principle, to become a homeless involves numerous individual and family changes,

such as the redefinition of one's family or social relations, or the increasing of one's health problems (Streuning and Padgett, quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991).

- Principle of the Succession:

This is a particularly relevant rule to be applied when one is studying the social environments once it warns the researchers to the importance of clearly assessing and defining the systematic changes present in the communities prior to the establishment of any real intervention (Kelly, 2006). With other words this principle states that the social environments and contexts should not be considered as static elements. Ornelas (1997) notices that according to this principle the main problems and limitations faced by the social researchers reside in their (in)capacity to envision and create new contexts. The author defends that the comprehension of the current features of the homelessness phenomenon must be assessed through historical and contextual approaches, able to promote the temporal comprehension of homelessness (including its foundations, main occurrences and consequences/reactions).

We believe to have proven that the ecological perspective can be extremely important in homelessness research, once it emphasizes the contexts in which the homeless are integrated and the complex interactions established between the social, economic and anthropological levels and the resources offered by the social and welfare services. Toro *et al.* (1991) assume that this "man-environment" approach is a valid alternative to the "man-centered" perspectives.

The ecological perspective suggests various lines of research and intervention. It involves the diversification of the objectives and methodologies used to understand the homeless, emphasizing the importance of extensive assessment procedures (Toro *et al.*, 1991). It believes that social research should be centered in two critical points, the first one being the compromise of taking the necessary time and accounting for the available resources to understand how the homeless express themselves and react to social and environmental changes imprinted in the ecological systems; and the second one the relevance of these persons' (and of the organizations working with them) empowerment (Toro *et al.*, 1991).

According to this perspective, homelessness prevention is also extremely important. For example, Rossi (quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991) elevates the need to develop social programs oriented to the people living in precarious housing conditions. This major risk group is approximately 20 to 30 times larger than the homeless individuals (Rossi; Rossi, Wright, Fisher, and DeWillis, quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991). Understanding the ecological causes forcing people to leave their houses is one of the best ways to prevent the increase of the homelessness cases.

Thus, the ecological perspective also encourages researchers and politicians to ponder the problems affecting the homeless as results of the various interactions established between these individuals (and/or families) and their social and environmental contexts. Implicit in the previous statement is the idea that the investigation and the political initiatives relating to homelessness should be implemented in different and multiple analytical levels (Toro *et al.*, 1991).

The epistemological development of an ecological certainty is noticeably based on the acquisition of collaborative skills, to be applied by decision-makers, researchers and any other professionals participating in community projects built to promote the empowerment of the homeless individuals (Toro *et al.*, 1991).

For the next years, it is expected that the ecological perspective can work as a stimulus to new and important breakthroughs in what concerns to homelessness research (Toro *et al.*, 1991).

Nowadays, it is already identifiable that this perspective's conceptual interest with the homelessness phenomenon has allowed great progress in the public and political answers to this problem. Homelessness is now recognized as a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, whose mitigation can only be accomplished through the development of articulate social policies, able to overcome the disabilities and flaws of the social protection systems and the overwhelming diversity of social and culturally-induced anthropological answers to the ecological contexts (Shinn and Weitzman, quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991).

Although the social actors operating in this area of intervention have a long history of reluctance and/or ineffectiveness in the development of profound answers to this social problem (Dewey, 1946; Fairweather, 1972; Lewin, 1951; Moleiro, 1969; Sarason, 1981; Seidman, 1988; Smith, 1990 quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991) the last years' numerous initiatives have enabled us to hope for great developments for the future.

According to Blasi (quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991) the vast majority of the social sciences is now aware of the homelessness phenomenon, and developing important *in-situ* research. The anthropological, the social and the natural contexts of homelessness are now being massively approached. The "environments" in which we live, we educate ourselves, and we establish our social networks are now being considered as extremely influential for the way in which we think or act. For example, many psychologists are now using the ecological perspective's postulates in their researches on homelessness (Milburn and D'Ercole, 1991, Morse *et al.*, 1989; Shinn *et al.*, 1991; Shinn and Weitzman, 1990; Toro, 1991; Watt and Milburn, 1987, quoted by Toro *et al.*, 1991).

Fernandes (2002) asserts that each individual, in order to assume its citizenship, must believe he is a part of a harmonious and cohesive community. So, he must feel socially and politically well-represented. He must also recognize the usefulness and feel rewarded by his public participation. Instead, many "citizens" do not identify themselves with their social, political and cultural surroundings.

As previously mentioned, the homelessness phenomenon is intimately related to the organizational structures of society (e.g. distribution of wealth and power). These can contribute to or inhibit the growth of homelessness and other poverty or social exclusion phenomena.

The way in which the natural and human resources are socially used in the promotion of each citizen's social, economic, and environmental welfare can be an inducer of social added-value, progress and human development. Ultimately, it is the way in which an individual lives in his society, and according to the lifestyle he adopts, that will influence his life path (Fernandes, 2002).

Chapter II

**Understanding Homelessness in the
United States of America:**

What is it and what is being done about it?

Opening note

Having presented some of the main issues, mostly of conceptual nature, that have allowed the introduction of the homelessness theme, setting it against a variety of studies related to poverty, social exclusion and human rights (namely the right to housing), it is now necessary to approach homelessness in the United States of America, an analytical reference essential to the fulfillment of this project's goals, that is, to trace "new strategies to help the homeless in Lisbon city area".

This opening note will essentially clarify the underlying goals in the corresponding chapter ("Understanding Homelessness in the United States of America (USA): what is it and what is being done about it?"), and also identify the importance and background of that particular work aspect in the investigation project "New strategies to help the homeless in Lisbon city area". This brief introducing note shall also include a short summary of the adopted methodology, structure and conceptual organization for the chapter.

For this chapter, the following goals were traced (properly contextualized in the more general purposes of the investigation as a whole):

1. To analyze the history of American social policies concerning help to the homeless population and to contextualize them within the social policies specifically aimed at poverty and social exclusion;
2. To understand the features, the main capacities and the evolution of the application of recent strategies in the mitigation of problems inherent to the homeless, paying strong attention to the so-called "Ten Year Plans" and to the approaches of the "Supportive Housing" and "Housing First" programs;
3. To facilitate the set-up of a platform that will enable a comparative study between support and assistance policies to the homeless in the USA (a country with vast experience and tradition in the work, investigation and intervention in this subject) and in Portugal, regarding nation-wide policies as well as local policies in the city of Lisbon.

The latter goal sums up in exemplary fashion the importance of this chapter about the situation in the USA to a study of the homeless in Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA), considering that, with more or less success and receiving more or less criticism, it is an undisputable fact that the homelessness issue has been a subject in North American society for many years. Therefore, performing the analysis and inventory of policies, academic lines of research and social work (for example, through the action of non-governmental organizations – NGOs) carried out in the USA, may consist in added value for the identification of good practices that can eventually be exported to the Portuguese situation – taking into account their adaptation to Portugal’s and the city of Lisbon’s special characteristics. Conversely, this approach to the American situation will also allow us to learn from the least successful experiences undertaken in a country (the USA) that possesses a vast tradition in addressing this subject, thus avoiding the repetition of mistakes that once occurred when trying to solve the individual and social problems inherent to the homelessness issue.

In order to fulfill these previously set goals, this chapter will address four main aspects, with the following titles and summarized contents:

1. *Modernization of the American Society and Modernization of the Homelessness Phenomenon:* Where we will make a brief introduction to the current state of poverty and social exclusion in the USA – with due contextualization of the homelessness issue in those subject matters – as a reflex of some aspects that are inherent to the transition process of the North American society towards “modernity”; we will focus on the importance of urban restructuring and social and cultural readjustment phenomena that have been deeply felt in North American cities since the mid twentieth century;
2. *“The homeless count”: counting and explaining the homeless in the United States of America.* We shall present some definitions of the concept of homelessness in the USA, as well as some relevant figures regarding the phenomenon’s current situation (including its spatial location and taking into account several types of analysis); we will also analyze in detail some of the main potential differential causes and consequences of this phenomenon;
3. *Brief note on the investigation on homelessness in the United States of America.* We will work on the main aspects of the civil society’s action (e.g., NGOs and other associations) and,

particularly the action of higher education institutions and investigation institutions, vis-à-vis the problem of homelessness in the USA. Also, there will be an introduction (to contextualize the next chapter) to the legislation and reports on political action regarding the prevention and resolution of problems related to homelessness in the USA.

4. *Strategies to help the homeless in the United States of America – diachronic perspective and a few current examples:* We will essentially focus (on an evolving basis) on the different approaches to homelessness in the USA, from ancient criminalization to the most recent methodologies, clearly enhancing the so-called “Ten Year Plans” and the “Supportive Housing” and “Housing First” programs.

Finally and thus ending this introduction, it is vital to make a reference to the main methodological goals considered in this study. The goals of the analysis that has been done, together with the specificities of the project as a whole, justify the preponderance of bibliographic research (enabled through selected literature gathered in the USA, in Portugal and on the Internet), of statistical data production and of the analysis of North American legal documents as the main methods of investigation used.

Nevertheless, such a research would not be complete without field work. Therefore, in spite of obvious spatial constraints, a set of interviews to selected experts and specialists (all of whom are profound connoisseurs of the spectrum of homelessness oriented policies and practices in the North American context) whose results shall be inserted (when the context so justifies, in a more or less explicit manner) throughout the chapter’s several topics, thus enriching the information that emerges from the above mentioned bibliographic research.

2.1. “Modernization” of the North American society and “Modernization” of the homeless phenomenon in the United States of America

The obvious process of economic development that has taken place in the last decades (to which the main cities in the world have been privileged stages) has not been detached from the appearance, rise and increase of a number of important symptoms of

social and environmental crisis in the main urban areas, on a worldly basis and in North American and Portuguese particular cases.

Although cities are currently the motors of economic development, they are also (in seeming contradiction) the focus of some of the biggest and hardest to solve social problems and social fractures. These problems express themselves in multiple ways, from the integration of the most vulnerable populations in formal labor markets (e.g., immigrants, internal or from other countries – usually peripheral countries), to the environmental degradation (e.g., the overexploitation of natural resources or the intensifying pollution of the soil, air and/or water resources) or the breach of basic and protected human rights such as education, health or housing.

So, now, from a social point of view, we see the progressive deepening of social dualism in cities, with the appearance and consolidation of growing cleavages and contrasts between the different sections of the population that share the same urban territory, and the intensifying social and urban segregation phenomena, with clear examples in the proliferation of illegally formed neighborhoods or the degradation of historical city centers.

Despite the homelessness issue being an obviously old phenomenon, its connection to the above mentioned urban restructuring processes that have been felt in the last decades is undeniable. The phenomenon gained more quantitative prominence since the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century (particularly in the USA) and also began to reveal its new and differentiated shape (see AMBERT, 1998; BLAU, 1992).

On a curious note, it was also in the sixties and seventies that poverty and social exclusion related issues (which have been approached in the previous chapter) began receiving institutional attention and gaining visibility to the academic world, to the political and institutional organs and to civil society in general.

Poverty and social exclusion, often considered one and the same, reveal some significant differences. *«A substituição do termo “pobreza” pela expressão “exclusão social” seria prejudicial, quer para a ciência, quer para os grupos desfavorecidos, mormente nos países em que a pobreza ainda reveste um carácter massivo (...) [assim, é necessário] estabelecer um conceito de “exclusão social” que abarca a noção de “pobreza” e inclui outras situações que, embora não sendo de*

pobreza, são caracterizadas por rupturas ao nível das relações sociais» (see BRUTO DA COSTA, 2004: 12-13).

This sentence shows that the concept of “social exclusion” – as opposed to social inclusion or integration – implies a breach of citizenship rights, which consist in the access to a collection of basic social systems. When regarding those systems, five domains can be identified and their non-fulfillment or non-accessibility reveals the existence of serious, deep social exclusion processes (see BRUTO DA COSTA, 2004):

- *Social domain*: refers to the group of systems that aim for the social inclusion of individuals (whether they belong to groups, communities or larger social networks) and reflects itself in several proximity levels or grades. It corresponds, in its essence, to the socialization and social integration factors. A clear example of this domain is the integrative quality that the participation in the labor market can present (considered here as a social factor and not as monetary inclusion factor);
- *Economic domain*: concerns the participation in: *i*) mechanisms that generate economic resources (for example, salaries in the labor market or pension systems); *ii*) markets for goods and services (for example, in market economies this is a basic condition to access essential goods); *iii*) savings systems that allow for the establishment of a certain degree of individual and social security, in the present and for the future;
- *Symbolical references domain*: is the group of psychological and identity related losses felt by the excluded persons as a consequence of their situation of exclusion. Examples of this domain are losses of social identity, self-esteem, initiative and sense of belonging in the society (amongst many others);
- *Institutional domain*: includes access to service provider systems (for example, education, health, justice and/or housing services) and also the importance of actual participation in some political and institutional entities, regarding the capacity or ability to effectively exercise established citizenship rights such as the right to vote);
- *Territorial domain*: its relevance is recent and it refers essentially to the cases where exclusion does not relate directly to persons or families, but to the access to a territory. That may include several different aspects, such as those connected to the fields of accessibility, housing, social equipments, economic activities or information and communication systems and technologies (for example, digital inclusion).

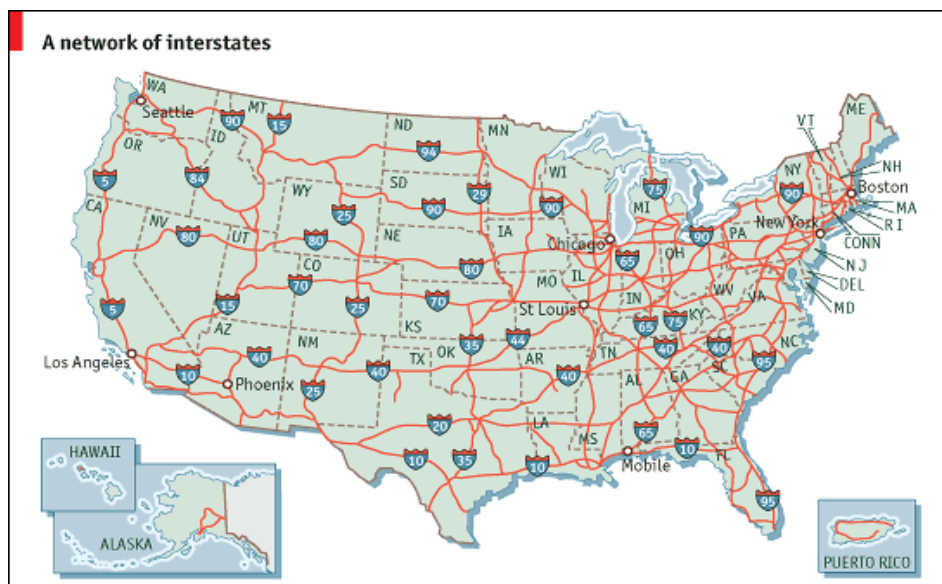
According to this, it seems unquestionable that the homelessness issue is one of the clearest examples of the existence of poverty and social exclusion processes in urban areas, reflecting severe social disruptions of individuals that can be vividly felt at the level of all previous domains. The problems connected to this issue extend beyond the mere housing related topics (which actually provide the name to this phenomenon) and incorporate different matters and situations of exclusion that relate to social, economic and territorial domains, as well as psychological and identity domains (as we shall see ahead).

Thus, having consolidated some theoretical aspects that connect the homelessness issue to a wider spectrum of questions related to poverty and social exclusion through the previous brief theoretical conceptualization and following what was revealed by the previous chapter of this report, it is important to focus the analysis of this relationship in the specificities of the North American case. In order to do so, a diachronic perspective must be adopted, taking us back a few years to the period after the Second World War when important structural changes were felt in a socio-economic, political, cultural and also urban level, worldwide and also specifically in the United States of America.

In this context, the year 1956 indelibly marked the appearance and evolution of the afore mentioned structural changes in the USA. That year's events shall permanently mark the appearance of significant changes in the manner in which North American urban space began to be produced (and consumed). That is the year of Dwight Eisenhower's reelection, the republican leader that put into practice (starting in the following year, that is, 1957) the American Federal Government support plan to the construction of a national inter-State highway network. This project, called Federal-Aid Highway Act, quickly enabled the construction of more than seventy-five thousand kilometers of highways, producing notable effects on road accessibility in the vast North American territory.

Apart from encouraging more American citizens to use road transportation (particularly individual transportation), the Federal-Aid Highway Act also had a huge effect on North American socio-economic landscape. The North American business sector quickly understood the clear logistical and economic advantages of the

“interstates”, mostly so transport companies and heavy industries. Road transportation became faster, easier and more fluid, which allowed production and transportation costs to be reduced, and enabled the productive fabric to function in industrial clusters, growingly larger and more specialized. Therefore, the years following the Federal-Aid Highway Act featured massive processes of business dislocation, essentially by heavy industrial units that left the city centers and settled along the afore mentioned inter-State highways (Picture 2).



Picture 2: Map of the interstates network in the United States of America

(Source: <http://www.antiwar.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/map.gif>).

However, the dislocation process didn't apply exclusively to production sites. Following the opportunities seen in industrial employment, soon the population (that formerly also inhabited the city centers) adhered to this dislocation process and gathered around access routes to the interstates, creating numerous new neighborhoods and districts in a process that geographer DAVID LEY (1983) called “an explosion towards the outskirts of the city”.

Naturally, not all of the population managed to accompany these massive waves of suburbanization. This centrifugal process was followed only by social groups with bigger economic mobility, leaving the city (center) in the hands of the less affluent, which usually represent the most vulnerable socio-ethnic classes.

This process of socio-ethnic segregation, that WYATT (2004) will very graphically call “white-flight”, simultaneously lead to the formation of the so-called “Whites Only Levittown Suburbs” in the new housing areas, and the formation of ghettos in the most central areas of the cities, which were socio-ethnic, underprivileged, and disqualified urban enclaves, mostly inhabited by individuals of Puerto Rican and black (Afro-American) origins.

Despite the warnings of several authors (namely, JANE JACOBS (1961), who warned about the present (at the time) and future consequences of the social and urban maladjustments that this process generated, this segregational movement that reflected the lack of efficiency in the planning of urban systems as a whole and, particularly, of intra-urban spaces (especially in city centers) lasted through the following decades and its effects are still clear today.

Apart from those previous aspects, other structural changes in North American society, dating from the same period in time, must be mentioned. Particularly the changes that occurred in the employment systems, in the growing polarization and social and geographic concentration of income, in the functioning of the housing markets and in the role of the so-called Welfare-State (not only in the support of housing, but in the generality of social services), came together to generate increased financial difficulties (in the acquisition of housing) to the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Also, the increase of the immigration fluxes (legal and undocumented) destined to the main urban areas caused growing pressure on the labor and housing markets, thus worsening the insufficiencies of formal housing access.

Together with the previous processes of social recomposition, motivated and clearly effective on the restructuring mechanisms of the urban spaces, the ninety fifties and sixties were also, in the USA, the stage for the rise of several activist movements, of which we should highlight the intense ethnically based activism. For different reasons and defending different approaches (that ended by converging in common goals), names like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton or Assata Shakur, amongst many others, became historical symbols of Afro-American activism in the USA from those decades on, with clearly recognizable and visible influence in the evolution of North American society still in our days.

In addition to the mentioned internal convulsions, during those two decades North American politics were agitated by external phenomena that produced vivid and, in many cases, violent internal impacts.

For ten years (1965-1975), the USA was involved in a violent war with Vietnam. According to HERRING (2001), that war must have caused around fifty-eight thousand casualties in American troops. Apart from the dead, an enormous number of wounded was registered, some of them mutilated and permanently incapacitated. The author claims their number exceeded three hundred and fifty thousand.

The social violence of this impact generated enormous and multiple difficulties in the reintegration processes of the men that had fought the war (called “war veterans”). Apart from the problems related to the reintegration of the mutilated individuals, many war veterans returned to the USA with severe mental problems. Added to all these factors was the fact that this was a period of social generalization of the use of heavy drugs in the USA, such as heroin or *crack*, to which the war veterans, physically and psychologically vulnerable, were increasingly exposed.

In short, the combination of all these aspects grouped, from the fifties to the seventies, in a collection of important risk factors, prone to the rise and perpetuation of serious social imbalances. Their combination acted, in many cases (as we shall see ahead) in such a way that it induced the rise and proliferation of new situations of homelessness in the USA, in a phenomenon for which different authors have come up with different names, such as “resurgence of homelessness” (see HOPPER, 1997) or “advanced homelessness” (see MARCUSE, 1987; ROSSI, 1996).

So, from those decades on, there was a “modernization” of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA that achieved new dimensions (in quantity and in the sharpening and diversification of the inherent social problems and consequences) as North American society itself transitioned to modernity.

As noted by HOPPER (1997: 21-22), summing up many of the previously mentioned aspects and introducing the next point in this chapter: *«today's homeless poor are a far more heterogeneous group than their immediate skid row predecessors. Indeed (...) homeless has undergone a transformation of a scale and complexity not seen since the Great Depression [and] is now widely recognized as the staging ground for a new kind of poverty (...). Today, the homeless population*

counts men, women, and children – alone, in small groups, and as families – among its ranks (...). Reflecting the changing composition of poverty at large, today’s homeless poor are younger and more ethnically diverse than their counterparts of the 1950s and 1960s. If certain of their number have been found to have problems of substance abuse or a pronounced degree of psychiatric disability, it is also the case that others are distinguishable from the settled poor chiefly by the fact of their displacement».

According to the previous motto and in the light of the conceptual evolutionary picture introduced in this topic, the evaluation of the current situation, that is, of the new and diversified contours of the homelessness phenomenon, shall be one of the main questions in this chapter, where we will also systematize in further detail the questions that have presided the consolidation and diversification of the types of “homelessness” in the United States of America in the last decades.

2.2. “The homeless count”: counting and explaining the homeless in the United States of America

The reflection on the definition of homelessness is common to a vast part of the existing bibliography about this subject. Having approached it in the previous chapter, we will now merely refer to the specificities of the North American situation.

The difficulties in finding a universal consensus to the definition of who is really homeless are obvious and transversal in space. However, these constraints do not diminish the importance of developing, politically and academically, the criteria that can guide the action of the various agents (political, institutional or socio-economic) involved in trying to solve and mitigate this problem.

Only a clear conceptual guidance of the homelessness phenomenon will enable the organization and implementation of effective and pro-active policies that will mitigate and diminish its incidence, whether through preventive action (trying to diminish or annul the risk factors) or through the mitigation of their (both potential and actual) negative effects on a social and/or individual basis.

Therefore, considering the previous need and the specificities of each particular context, each country developed, through the last few years, its own definition of homelessness. The variables inherent to each national context (which we will consider

here as the internal factors of the homelessness phenomenon) and the differences in the approaches that each political decision-maker adopts (which, in line with that reasoning, we will consider as the external factors of the homelessness phenomenon) have instilled great dynamics in the time and space evolution of the definition.

This allows us to understand the strong permeability of the concept of homelessness that reveals itself both in the specificities of each *locus* where this phenomenon develops and in facing external influences (on the making of decisions), whether political or ideological, related to the availability of economic resources (and the priority that each governing organ attributes to their allocation) as well as in the existing political and socio-economic expectations regarding the actions of the various agents relevant to the phenomenon. These agents are multiple and diversified and may vary from the organs responsible for the creation and implementation of public policies, to NGOs (whose field work has revealed to be tremendously important), to academic institutions that are responsible for a big part of the existing theorization and investigation on the phenomenon.

The American scenery constitutes no exception to that conceptual volatility. The questions about the definition of homelessness in the USA have been studied and theorized by numerous authors, some of which (due to the pioneering and/or the importance of their scientific work) will be mentioned throughout this text.

There doesn't seem to exist a true consensus in the USA about the definition of homelessness. Some authors prefer to use restrictive criteria; others admit a wider generalization of the phenomenon, to the point where they include in it, for example, individuals in risk of becoming homeless.

PETER ROSSI, for example, an experienced investigator who has created and published a vast amount of work on this subject, proposes the following conceptual definition: *«Homelessness, at its core, means not having customary and regular access to a conventional dwelling: it mainly applies to those who do not rent or own a residence»* (ROSSI, 1996: 10).

It is easily understood that this definition stands on the application of more restrictiveness to the concept of homelessness, highlighting the need to concentrate on the literally homeless population (see CORDRAY and PION, 1997; MONTAUK, 2006; NAEH, 2007f; ROSSI, 1996).

Thus, ROSSI (1996), in spite of his awareness of the several factors that endanger populations towards homelessness (such as socio-economic difficulties of some parts of the population regarding the access to the housing markets, or money constraints caused by the growing precarious nature of labor relations) chooses not to include them in his definition, considering that the individuals that possess such characteristics may be incorporated (with greater benefit to the conceptual containment of the phenomena), for example, in a different category, corresponding to the “extremely poor”.

On the other hand, other authors focus on the importance of including in the definition of homelessness factors such as residential or labor instability, thus allowing for a wider vision of the phenomenon, with obvious benefits (for example, wider coverage, universality and preventive nature) to the conception of political measures regarding the mitigation of this phenomenon (see HOPPER, 1997).

However, from an historical point of view, most part of legislative documents tried to adopt a perspective that is more restrictive and less responsibility-oriented or penalization-oriented towards public opinion in respect to (the lack or inefficiency of) the governmental performance and to promote actions that are more contained and less demanding monetarily and socially.

The *McKinney Act* (1987) – an important political and legislative North American document – constitutes a remarkable exception to this affirmation, adopting a wider vision of “homelessness”. *«The definition incorporated by the McKinney Act (...) adopts a somewhat broader view of homelessness. [According to it] the term “homeless” or “homeless individual” includes an individual who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence and (2) has a primary night-time residence that is (a) a supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), (b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings»* (CORDRAY and PION, 1997: 79).

Note that this second definition, aside from considering the aspects mentioned in the previous conceptions of “*literally homeless*” also includes other situations that may constitute risk factors to becoming homeless.

In short, it now seems perfectly clear (through the presentation of the former examples) that a great multiplicity of criteria may be adopted in the construction of conceptual definitions of homelessness. Anyway, it now appears consensual that, whatever the aspects considered in the phenomenon's definition, there is a strong necessity to adopt objective conceptual criteria, clearly benefiting a more adequate and effective operation of the public policies aimed at the homeless.

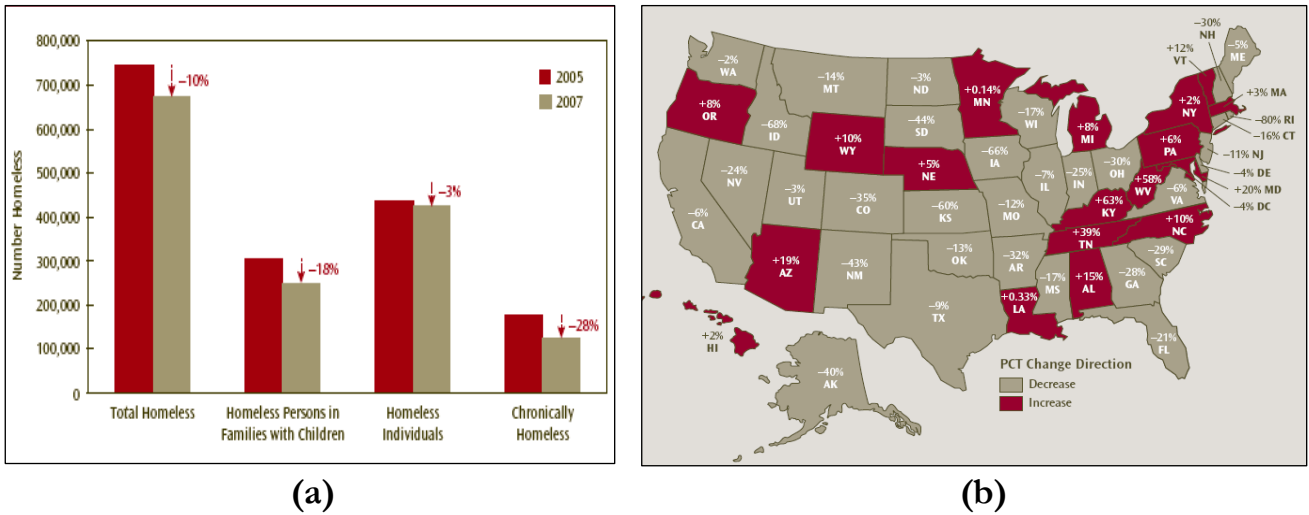
Whatever the adopted definition is, it will obviously condition the accounting of the number of homeless people.

Considering strict criteria (similar to ROSSI's definition, 1996), in 2005 there were an estimate 750/800 thousand homeless individuals in the USA (see NAEH, 2007a).

More recent estimates (see NAEH, 2009) reveal some encouraging results, pointing towards a 10% decrease in the total number of North American homeless people, between 2005 and 2007, claiming that in 2007 that value was slightly above 670 thousand individuals. The biggest lowering would have been felt in the class of the "chronic homeless" (whose definition will be studied further ahead in this chapter), with a 28% decrease, and in the homeless families, whose total in 2007 was about 18% inferior to the 2005 numbers. In spite of the success shown by these results, the reduction of the number of homeless people did not occur in a homogeneous manner in all North American states, showing important geographical contrasts in the phenomenon's recent evolution (Picture 3).

The same source also establishes an interesting distinction between the reduction obtained in the number of individuals that attend shelters (about 4%) and in the unsheltered individuals, with an important reduction of about 13%.

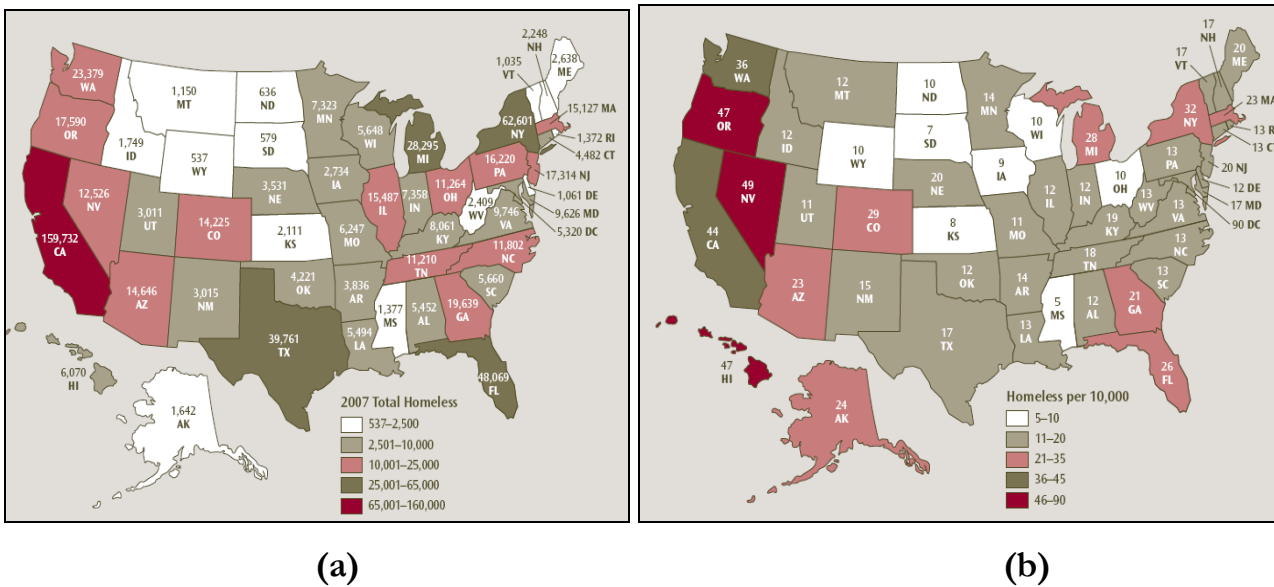
However, it must be said that all previously mentioned authors call out to the importance of facing these values with a certain amount of reserve, accepting the expectation of the possible existence of great seasonal fluctuations, especially when considering the individuals that live in the streets for shorter periods of time.



Picture 3: Evolution of the number of homeless people in the USA (total number and number by category) **(a)**; and variation according to the State **(b)**, between 2005 and 2007 (Source: NAEH, 2009).

Regarding the phenomenon’s spatial location, a (natural) correlation between the total number of homeless individuals and the North American states where the country’s largest cities are located seems verifiable. Therefore, following our previous line of thought, California, New York, Florida, Texas and Michigan are some of the states where the homeless phenomenon is bigger, in absolute terms (see NAEH, 2007a; 2009) (Picture 4a). The analysis of those values in relative terms (that is, the percentage of homeless individuals compared to the living population in each state) shows quite different results (Picture 4b).

In terms of big urban areas, according to BURT *et al.* (2001), Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle are amongst the cities that are more severely affected by the phenomenon.



Picture 4: Homeless incidence by North American state, in absolute terms **(a)**; and in relative terms, per 10 thousand inhabitants **(b)**, in 2007 (Source: NAEH, 2009).

Once we have understood the numbers (and their recent evolution) referring to the homeless people in the USA and framed their geographical distribution in the country, we must now try to present some socio-demographic typologies, aiming to establish a general profile of North American homeless people, albeit recognizing that the intense spatial and temporal variability of the phenomenon makes it very risky to excessively generalize about those data (Picture 5).

Even amongst the several authors we have reviewed, it is possible to encounter strong discrepancies in terms of the numbers presented (absolute and relative), so we recommend caution in analyzing, utilizing and crossing some of the numbers we will enunciate. In a final note, we will state that, except when expressly indicated in the text, the following data refer to the year 2005 or before (see NAEH, 2007a).

Several authors point out to the fact that over 60% of the homeless North American population tend to live alone. The same authors mention that, within the individuals that are “alone”, males are strongly more prone to become homeless, since almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of “individual” homeless people are of the male gender (see BURT *et al.*, 2001; JENCKS, 1995; MONTAUK, 2006; NAEH, 2007a; WONG, 1997).

An important part of these male “alone” individuals (1/3 of those individuals, according to the estimates that have been used) corresponds to old fighters of the

Vietnam war – the so-called “homeless veterans”. Some sources actually claim that in 2005 there were almost 200 thousand ex-veterans of the Vietnam War in a situation of homelessness (see NAEH, 2007a; 2007f).

According to NAEH (2009), the number of such individuals would have decreased in a quite intense way in the following years, amounting to a total of slightly more than 150 thousand individuals in 2007 (more specifically, 154 thousand cases).

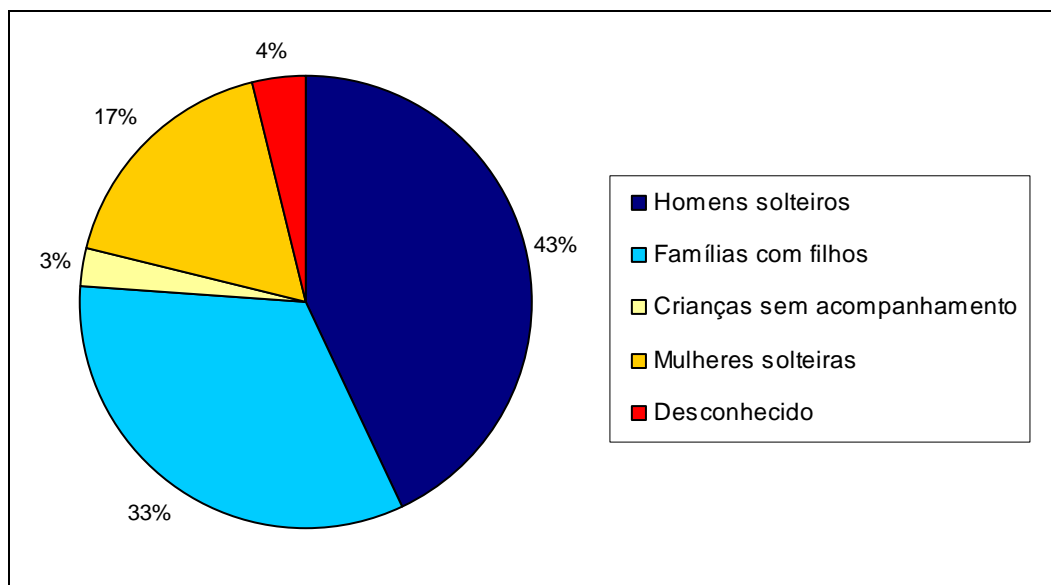
Usually, these individuals are older and more educated than the majority of the homeless population. They also usually show a bigger incidence of mental disease and drug and alcohol abuse when compared with the average numbers of the totality of North American homeless people. It is estimated that these individuals’ geographical distribution follows the general tendencies of the phenomenon, locating mostly in states where the absolute incidence of the homelessness phenomenon is also bigger, namely California (which presents the higher numbers on a national basis and that, according to NAEH (2007f), had about 50 thousand individuals), New York, Texas and Florida.

The majority of homeless individuals are white (about 52%, excluding Hispanics). However, and mainly amongst men, there is a big ethnical variability. Around 25% of homeless people are black (non-Hispanic), and Hispanics amount to almost 20%. The remaining percentage is fulfilled by individuals of different ethnic groups, such as Native Americans. Regarding the latter, we must mention that there is a bigger concentration of them in north-western states and cities (e.g., Seattle), which is clearly explained by strong historical and geographical determinants (see BURT *et al.*, 2001; WONG, 1997).

Finally, families with children presumably concentrate more than 30% of homeless peoples. Except for the important (and previously mentioned) decreases perceived in the last few years, there has been a considerable increase of the number of individuals in this category. Notice that most families comprise a woman and one or more children (her sons and daughters), often younger than six years old (see MONTAUK, 2006; NAEH, 2007b; WONG, 1997).

From what has just been said, one may conclude that children/teenagers are also strongly affected by the phenomenon. It is estimated that nearly 20% of the homeless are under 16 years old and that the majority is accompanied by their parents. Still, some estimates even point to the existence of around 20 thousand unaccompanied

children/teenagers (about 3% of the total of homeless people) (see MONTAUK, 2006; WONG, 1997).



Picture 5: Relative numbers of the homeless population in the USA, in 2005, and according to several typologies (Source: MONTAUK, 2006; Adapted).

Legend: Dark Blue: Single Men; Light Blue: Families with Children; Yellow: Children (Alone); Orange: Single Women; Red: Unknown.

It is now undeniable that the concept of homelessness involves a great multiplicity of factors and conditionings that impose different political and institutional actions oriented to its resolution. Therefore it is usual to group the homeless in the USA according to some of their more relevant characteristics. And this chapter will now focus precisely on those classification typologies and on their close relation with the several factors that explain the homelessness phenomenon in the USA.

As previously mentioned, the homelessness issue is not new to the USA. But in the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century (in a context of urban restructuring and social recomposition), the phenomenon had known new dimensions and proportions. We have since seen the rise, maintenance and worsening of a vast group of risk factors that exacerbated the contexts of impoverishment, social downgrading and exclusion in the USA. Several authors identify this as the post-Fordist period of the

homelessness phenomenon's evolution. ROSSI (1996) actually named it "advanced homelessness".

The multiple classifications currently accepted in the USA to categorize the main variants of the phenomenon emerge from this theoretical and conceptual basis.

One first big distinction may be drawn through the demarcation of a category usually named "chronic homelessness". The American Federal Government includes in this category all *«homeless individuals with a disabling condition (substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability) who have been homeless either: 1). continuously for one whole year, or 2). four or more times in the past three years»* (see NAEH, 2007a: 1-2).

In short, this definition is thus essentially based on two main aspects that are unanimously considered as the main characteristics of chronic homelessness: *i)* The homelessness is prolonged or happens on a regular basis; *ii)* That situation comprises some kind of incapacity, whether physical, mental or related to alcohol or drug abuse.

According to the "U.S. Department of Health and Human Services" the following five main characteristics associated to chronic homelessness may be considered (see CATON *et al.*, 2007):

1. An (almost) universal presence of incapacities (physical or psychological weaknesses);
2. The frequent and recurrent use of homeless assistance programs and other social services, particularly healthcare services;
3. The frequent and recurrent absence of connection with the communities;
4. Multiple health problems, usually mental disease, substance abuse or AIDS virus contraction;
5. The existence of fragmented social services that prove themselves unable to correspond to these individuals' multiple needs.

Official estimates point to the existence, in 2005, of approximately 150 to 200 thousand homeless individuals (probably around 170 thousand, more than 20% of the total number of homeless people) in this situation, spread throughout the entire nation. In 2007, their number was not superior to 125 thousand (see NAEH, 2007a; 2009)

(Picture 6). As previously mentioned, they respect mainly to unaccompanied individuals (corresponding, in 2007, to almost 30% of this fraction), of adult age and male gender (see NAEH, 2007a; 2009).



Picture 6: Evolution of the total number of homeless people and of the chronic homeless (in grey) in the USA **(a)** and according to various categories **(b)** between 2005 and 2007 (Source: NAEH, 2009).

Regarding these individuals geographical distribution, it is possible to verify that the states with higher incidence rate of chronic homeless, when compared with the total amount of homeless people in that state, are West Virginia (almost half of the state’s homeless are classified as chronic), Mississippi, California and Utah. Amongst the states with a lower percentage are Maine, Kentucky, Montana and Wyoming (see NAEH, 2009).

The “chronic homelessness” situation presents the particularity of being relatively transversal to numerous problems that affect the homeless. Hence the common association of this designation with other categorizations, namely “homeless veterans” or “mentally-ill homeless” (see O’FLAHERTY, 1998).

In fact, considering this transversal nature and the dimension of the problems they generate, chronic homeless are the category of homeless people that causes more effects and problems on social systems (for example, on the judicial system, on the healthcare systems or on the shelter or lodging systems), promoting their saturation or the inefficacy of the implemented policies (see CATON *et al.*, 2007).

Apart from that aspect, these are also the homeless that consume more public resources and funds. For example, for the so-called “mentally-ill homeless” (and it is

important to recall that mental incapacities are one of the very strong elements that induce chronic homelessness) an estimated 40 thousand dollars are spent every year, in New York city alone, on public financed shelters, on hospitals (psychiatric hospitalizations and others, and including the “US Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals”), prisons and other social resources and equipments (see CATON *et al.*, 2007; NAEH, 2007a).

So, in spite of representing a relatively small percentage of the total homeless population and considering the variety and multiplicity of the problems connected with the categorization of the chronic homeless, the majority of the homeless oriented resources and strategies in the USA are directed to them.

And it’s exactly on this intense political focus of the last few years that the responsibility for the reduction of the number (and relative percentages) may reside. However, in order to test beyond any doubt the actual efficacy of the implementation of the policies that have been directed over the last few years to this segment of the homeless population, we must wait for more up-to-date and time comprehensive results, considering a minimum interval of three to five years, that will allow for the more reliable identification of the evolution tendencies of chronic homelessness in the USA (see NAEH, 2007f; 2009).

In short, the application of programs specifically directed to the chronic homeless (this chapter will approach those initiatives further ahead) apparently allows for a big reduction of the number of such individuals in North American society.

If this proves to be a structural tendency, the decrease will present great benefits, on several levels, such as the reduction of public costs, the improvement of the communities’ life conditions and the social inclusion of these homeless individuals, for example, through the uplift of their physical and mental health, the increase of the possibility of job creation and the generation of independent income or the smaller tendency to judicial detentions, amongst may other aspects.

Another categorization that deserves particular attention in the investigation and in the homeless oriented strategies in the USA is the one that includes homeless families (including the parents and their children).

The so-called “homeless families” have been identified as part of a segment of the homeless population that experienced full growth since the nineties of the twentieth century. In 2005, they already constituted 33% of the homeless population and of those, almost 25% were children. Comparing with the total number of American families, one verifies that these calculations translate (at least from a statistical point of view) to a total of families equivalent to almost 2% of North American families, that would have experienced (if only for one night) a situation of lack of shelter (see NAEH, 2007b; ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

This group also witnessed an important decrease of around 18% between 2005 and 2007. In 2007, the total number of homeless individuals in this category was slightly under 250 thousand, corresponding to 84 thousand families. In 2005, the corresponding numbers were of 304 thousand individuals that constituted around 98 thousand families (see NAEH, 2007a; 2009).

When it comes to families, one of the main causes to the occurrence of the homelessness situation are the difficulties and shortcomings of the housing purchase and rent markets, for example, as well as the existence of rent systems that are unbearable to the financial capacity of the families (often single-parented families and with low income). Therefore, it is easy to understand this segment’s extreme vulnerability to economic fluctuations and other cyclical phenomena (see NAEH, 2007b; 2009; ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

Apart from the question (of the lack or insufficiency) of economic resources, there also seems to exist a tendency for the homeless families to belong to a minority ethnic group. From within these groups, there is a clear and special incidence of Afro American families (see NAEH, 2007b; ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

The risk for a family to become homeless appears to be even bigger when it comprises pre-school children. Finally, pregnancy, particularly in women in lower socio-economic classes also seems to constitute (especially when combined with other factors, such as housing and socio-economic vulnerability of families) an important risk factor (see ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

Unlike the chronic homeless, homeless families (mainly formed by women and their children) apparently show a tendency to remain homeless in a prolonged manner.

Mostly constituted by individuals of vulnerable age and social groups (particularly women and children), this category has also received great attention from the political decision-makers (and from civil society) and from the operation of several homelessness oriented programs in the USA. Everything indicates that the recent decreasing tendencies of the number of homeless families may be associated to this political and institutional relevance (just as with the chronic homeless).

However, also in the case of the homeless families it is necessary to analyze these results with caution, rejoicing with those that appear to be quite positive in the last few years, but also considering the provisional nature of the tendencies observed in those years. It will be crucial to comparatively analyze and contextualize the recent positive variations against the results imposed by the current context of economic and financial crisis that has been felt so severely in the USA, particularly in a group so vulnerable to cyclical socio-economic variations.

These are the two main categories of the homeless in the USA and the most accounted (both statistically and concerning the development and implementation of policies oriented to the homeless population). However, in the last few years another population segment has been individually considered, that of homeless teenagers and young adults (the so-called “homeless youth”).

«Homeless youth can be distinguished from two other homeless populations: single adults, who are predominantly male and do not have children in their custody; and homeless families, typically comprising a mother and her children. Homeless youth include runaways, who have left home without parental permission, throwaways, who have been forced to leave home by their parents, and street youth, who have spent at least some time living on the streets as well as systems youth – i.e., young people who become homeless after aging out of foster care or exiting the juvenile justice system» (TORO et al., 2007: 232).

Some authors have growingly considered teenagers and young adults that are, for example, highly susceptible to drug abuse or depression, as one of the social groups in greater risk becoming homeless (see TORO et al., 2007; MOLINO, 2007).

Cumulatively, homeless teenagers have been one of the most neglected groups in the investigation and in the implementation of explicit and specific policies directed to them. No doubt the growth they have registered in the last few years will surely cause an

inflexion of the previous tendencies, with an ever growing need for the development of specific actions for this group of homeless individuals.

The delimitation of the three previous categories tries to correspond to the main points of the analysis and action regarding North American homelessness in the last decade. In spite of being the current great divisions of this phenomenon, these do not exclude the hypothesis of diversification and categorization of the homeless oriented approaches. To those latter three typologies and to the previously mentioned categories of homeless veterans and mentally-ill homeless (see NAEH, 2007a; 2007f; O'FLAHERTY, 1998), many other classifications have been approached in the last years, representing important areas of intervention, of which we may underscore the questions connected with the homeless ex-prisoners (see METRAUX *et al.*, 2007) or with the study of homelessness outside the urban areas (the so-called "rural homelessness") (see ROBERTSON *et al.*, 2007).

In short, it seems to be understood, so far, that there are several typologies attributed to the homeless in the USA. Usually, they are gathered in three main groups, already presented. Regardless of the considered typology, the specificities of each of those classifications ends up reflecting the dominant causes that led the individuals' incurrence in the homeless situation. It is therefore important, in the light of the previously presented knowledge (about the numbers, the spatial location, the evolution tendencies and the classification typologies of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA), to resume the questions initiated in the first point of this chapter, trying to systematically analyze the main causes and explaining factors of the existence and consolidation of the vast contingents of homeless people in the USA.

Thus, as perceived until now, there are several explanations for the homelessness phenomenon. To many of those, we may associate a global character; others are more specific of the North American context. Whatever the case, we have understood by now that the presentation of a vague and single cause explanation, connected with the simple loss of access to housing (which is the aspect that gives the phenomenon its name), will quickly perish due to a lack of analytical and explanatory depth, resulting from the absence of a systemic vision able to enclose all the complexity associated to the homeless phenomenon.

So far we have understood that the above mentioned lack of access to housing must be considered as more than just a cause, but as the materialization of several socio-economic symptoms. In other words, as an effect (of not just one, but) of several situations of individual and social rupture. Following our previous line of reasoning, we may (and should) apply various explanations to the rise, emergence and consolidation of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA.

Although many of them have already been presented (in the first point of this chapter, and implicitly to the characteristics of each typology of homelessness), we will try to perform a conclusive and more organized systematization of those causes.

Briefly and in general terms, we may consider two types of causes for the homelessness situations: *i*) Causes that are endogenous to the (homeless) individual; *ii*) Factors that are exogenous to that same individual (see AMBERT, 1998; HOPPER, 1997; LEGINSKI, 2007; ROSSI, 1996).

The causes that are endogenous to the homeless are essentially based on factors or characteristics that are inherent to each individual. The underlying causes to this analytical perspective are centered on the spheres of individual responsibility for the (socio-economic) choices or options made or in the incapacities (the so-called “handicaps” or “disabilities”) of each homeless person. In short, it’s the analytical model that DAVID HARVEY (1985; 1991) refers to, explicitly, as “the mad, sad, bad explanation”. This includes such explanations as physical or mental diseases and the abuse of alcohol or other addictive substances.

However, there are also explanatory factors of homelessness that focus on the sphere of causes that (whether structural or cyclical) are inherent to the functioning of society(ies). This kind of explanations are usually associated to social questions that induce extreme poverty and housing vulnerability, tend to blame public and private agents and enhance the existence of serious insufficiencies in social protection public policies (the “crisis” of the role of the Welfare State) and in the capitalistic mechanisms of markets structuring.

In this matter, ROSSI (1996), for example, identifies the housing and the labor markets and the social security and support systems as the factors that more deeply and

substantially contribute to the decrease of the individuals' and families' socio-economic autonomy, making them more vulnerable to the possibility of becoming homeless.

HOPPER (1997: 23) approaches the exogenous factors similarly when he states that *«whatever personal quirks, ailments, or deficiencies may put individuals or households at increased risk of becoming homeless, the structural roots of the problem lie in the changes that have taken place over the past two decades in the labour and housing markets in the United States. The net effects of these trends are exacerbated by declining welfare, unemployment, and disability benefit levels (...). The upshot, terrible in its simplicity, is the contemporary delineator of homelessness: income insufficient to afford available housing»*.

In spite of the attempt of explicit simplification that these words enclose, KIM HOPPER's words implicitly show the existence of a big complexity of factors that explain the homelessness phenomenon in the USA. In the end, what seems to constitute one single factor (the insufficiency of economic and financial income of the families and individuals) is based on and constantly influenced by numerous nuances that emerge from different combinations of a multiplicity of endogenous ("ailments or deficiencies" and their inherent risks), and exogenous ("declining welfare, unemployment, disability benefit levels", amongst others) aspects.

So, it is currently accepted that the homelessness phenomenon in the USA may be explained (in general terms) by the existence of a complex descending spiral of deviating situations that build up to a certain moment of socio-economic rupture and culminate in the loss or rejection of physical housing and of the life forms associated with possessing or belonging to such housing. Obviously, these conclusions can be extrapolated with notorious scientific legitimacy to other spatial contexts, apart from the American case.

In short, it is currently considered that all variables (whether endogenous or exogenous) tend to be related and concur to create a complex group of risk and vulnerability factors whose combination may bring upon a moment of rupture that manifests itself through the incurrence in a situation of physical/psychological loss of access to a house.

WALTER LEGINSKI (2007), in an attempt to compile the main explanatory causes of the present homelessness phenomenon, tries to make a systemic and complex

approach, enhancing the fact that in order to explain the present incidence of the homelessness phenomenon, it is essential to consider the combined participation of several explanations (endogenous and exogenous).

So, in short, we may understand (in general terms) the present situation of homelessness in the USA as a result of the combination of the following factors (see LEGINSKI, 2007):

1. *Endogenous Factors*: These are more prominent amongst young people, war veterans and male adults from underprivileged classes and/or ex-inhabitants of marginalized neighborhoods. From within these factors, the following emerge: *i*) Mental illnesses; *ii*) Sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS); *iii*) Physically incapacitating diseases (here there is an intimate relationship with the issue of mutilated and physically incapacitated war veterans); *iv*) Alcohol and heavy drugs abuse (e.g., heroin or crack);
2. *Exogenous Factors*: Of which we may consider: *i*) Unemployment associated to the tertiarization of the economy and the restructuring of the urban spaces; *ii*) Incapacities and deregulation of the housing markets, particularly in social housing; *iii*) Deinstitutionalization and excessive bureaucratization of the access to social support services directed at the socio-economically underprivileged.

Having synthesized the main general aspects that preside to the explanation of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA, we will now conclusively approach with further detail the situations that are regularly pointed as explanatory of each of the three main typologies of homelessness previously considered.

First, regarding chronic homelessness, it seems possible to perceive the incidence of personal (endogenous) and social causes (exogenous). Briefly, we may consider that *«available information on the characteristics of those who end up homeless for long periods of time indicates that older age, persistent unemployment, poor family support, arrest history, poor functioning and coping skills, a history of placement in the child welfare system, and recent victimization are important factors in determining the risk for chronic homelessness (...). A longer duration of homelessness was [also] related to a lack of earned income [and] a history of substance abuse treatment»* (CATON *et al.*, 2007: 157-158).

BURT *et al.* (2001) confirm that statement, showing that about 60% of chronic homeless people present mental problems; and that nearly 80% of those individuals have multiple problems connected, for example, with alcohol or heavy drugs abuse.

The various political difficulties (or even structural incapacities) of social re-inclusion of Vietnam War veterans are also listed as some of the most important causes of chronic homelessness. Statistics show that around 194 thousand Vietnam War fighters have been homeless in the USA, of which 25 to 30% may be considered chronic homeless (see CATON *et al.*, 2007).

The factors that make families with children vulnerable to homelessness are also differentiated. Single-parent families, with low-income, comprised of a mother and one or more children constitute the biggest fraction of this group of homeless people.

Economic issues are usually considered as the most important. Families that present smaller incomes (meaning that they are in a poverty situation or in serious risk of poverty) are the most vulnerable, often unable to find the financial means to keep their house, specially in periods of greater economic instability (see ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

Family breakdown (often caused by the male abandonment of the family during the children's early years or even during pregnancy), as well as the difficulties of insertion in the labor market by pregnant women or mothers of small children also act as strongly conditioning factors for "homeless families and children". In many cases, those women already possess a worrying history of physical and mental trauma, often resulting from physical/sexual abuse from their partners and/or their relatives or from addictive use of alcohol and drugs (see BURT *et al.*, 2001; ROG and BUCKNER, 2007).

Finally, regarding homeless teenagers, traditional issues connected with drug abuse or mental or physical trauma related to violent parents, relatives or partners (e.g., sexual abuse) may be associated with more specific factors.

In the words of TORO *et al.* (2007: 249-250) «*many risk factors associated with youth homelessness have been identified. Examples include family conflict, aging out of foster care, and identifying as gays, lesbians or bisexuals. What is not well understood is how these factors operate. That is, what are the pathways leading to homelessness among youth with these risk factors? Future research needs to explore these pathways and consider how other factors (e.g., access to and quality of services received during childhood or early adolescence, growing up in a family that experienced homelessness)*

[that have recently been questioned as probable causes or suppressors for youth homelessness] *either aggravate or mitigate those risks*».

2.3. Brief note on the investigation on homelessness in the United States of America

In line with the main orientations of the political action related to the resolution of individual and social problems of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA, the first academic approaches to this matter came from the Medical Sciences, until the middle of the twentieth century. Politically, it was a period of general deinstitutionalization and “criminalization” of the phenomenon, with the belief that the existence of homeless people was exclusively justified by factors endogenous to the individuals.

The contribution of investigators from the epistemological and methodological spheres of Medical Sciences remains in our days as one of the most fruitful and important. Contemporaneously, there were important contributions made by doctors from several clinical subjects (particularly Psychiatry, Cardiology and Neurology) but also by psychologists, epidemiologists and sanitarians, amongst many others.

Matters related to public health, to the physical and psychological development of homeless children, to the incidence of mental illnesses amongst the homeless and to the consumption of alcohol or heavy drugs still stand prominently amongst some of the main medical worries of academic nature regarding homelessness in the USA (see ALPERSTEIN *et al.*, 1988; BASSUK *et al.*, 1998; FISCHER *et al.*, 1986, HWANG, 2001; SUSSEY *et al.*, 1997).

However, since the years 1970/80 (and more strongly since 1990), the homelessness phenomenon has gathered interest from other areas of the North American scientific spectrum, mainly from Social and Human Sciences, namely Sociology, Geography and Demography.

Note also that those were the decades when the homelessness phenomenon reached new proportions. It is the period when the number of homeless people in the USA increases significantly and when there is a large diversification of the typologies of homeless people (and families) in North American cities.

The analysis of Geography's special interest in the issues of restructuring, production and commercialization of urban spaces goes back to the decades of 1970/80, epistemologically focused on Urban Geography of Marxist inspiration. The homelessness issue, connected with other subjects (for example, the access to urban labor and housing markets or to social support and protection systems), was progressively included and valued in those studies.

Authors like DAVID HARVEY (1985; 1991) or NEIL SMITH (1996; 2005) – strongly inspired by Marxist Geographies – were some of the first geographers that addressed the subject of the homeless (in more or less explicit fashion).

Slowly, researchers of urban spaces from several areas of social sciences granted increasingly more attention to the homelessness issue, seeing it as an essential element of the analysis of the socio-economic restructuring of urban spaces.

Recent attention given by other epistemological currents associated, for example, to post-modernism and post-structuralism, that have privileged the analysis of urban areas as social and planning fragmented spaces, have also motivated the appearance (specially in the USA, but also in Europe and even in Portugal) of particularly critical studies regarding the vulnerability of the homeless in the new processes of territorialisation and rebuilding of the assets and of the identity of urban spaces (see MITCHELL, 1997).

In spite of the advances from 1970/80 on, it was only in the decade of 1990 that the investigation about the homeless took a definitive leap. That move forward meant not just a larger quantity of material being produced, but also more quality reflected in its bigger operability and closer connection to public policies.

The rise of the phenomenon in previous decades had stimulated the need to start implementing, effectively and efficiently, programs and measures to fight and mitigate the phenomenon's effects. It is precisely in the years 1990 that the efficiency of such measures will start being "tested", resulting in the production of intense critical investigation, growingly based on thorough and deep field studies performed (in more or less coordinated fashion) in several North American cities (see BARROW *et al.*, 1999; BLAU, 1992; CULHANE *et al.*, 1997; SALIT *et al.*, 1998; SHINN *et al.*, 1998; WOOD *et al.*, 1990; WONG, 1997).

The integration of the results of this intense investigation with the mechanisms and action guidelines of political action and of civil society has suffered an important increment in 1998, through the organization of the “First National Symposium on Homelessness Research”, that gathered researchers from several scientific spectrums, policy-makers and civil society agents and representatives (e.g., NGOs), as well as individuals that had experienced being homeless (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007).

The main topics addressed in this meeting were related to the homeless’ access to housing, health and support systems. It created the foundations that allowed to develop new lines of institutional investigation and action, and to promote the field operability of the defined policies. Also, it raised some of the basis that allowed for later approaches and programs that marked the political and institutional action regarding the homeless (we will review some of those programs later on) in the last decade and that are greatly responsible for the (at least provisional and apparent) success of the evolution experienced in the last few years.

Almost a decade later (that is, in 2007), the “US Department of Health and Human Services” (HHS) and the “US Department of Housing and Urban Development” (HUD) organized a second symposium called “Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research” aiming to analyze the advances achieved during the previous decade and to adopt new work guidelines for the following years (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007).

Apart from the subjects approached in 1998, new concerns were introduced in this second symposium, namely the importance of a thematically comprehensive action, in an attempt to understand from a more holistic point of view the true complexity of the current phenomenon of the homeless, through the adoption of measures oriented to the: *i*) Education and inclusion of the homeless in the employment markets; *ii*) Specific support to the homeless war veterans and to the chronic homeless; *iii*) Relationship between homelessness and the criminal, judicial and prison systems; *iv*) Questions related to homeless teenagers and families with children, growingly common and requiring (growingly) specific approaches; *v*) Homelessness and poverty in rural spaces (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007).

New (and old, but renovated) programs and approaches to the resolution of the homelessness issues were also addressed in this meeting, through the evaluation or analysis of their efficiency. Also several models of sheltering and housing the homeless were debated (specially the mechanisms of “Supportive Housing” and “Housing First”, that we will analyze ahead in further detail), as well as several plans to support labor integration and independent income creation for the homeless, in an attempt to progressively promote individual self-sufficiency.

One of the main conclusions of the event is the acceptance of the existence of a notorious evolution in the preceding decade, both on the reflection and theorization about the phenomenon and in terms of its empirical knowledge, and also on the level of the effective application of local and national programs and initiatives directed to the North American homeless (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007).

The analysis of the multiplicity of topics addressed allows us to draw a conclusive “state-of-the-art” (that may be considered relatively up-to-date) of the investigation on homelessness in the USA. Therefore, in trying to make a short account of the evolution verified in research over the last few years (in terms of its quantity, depth and connection to the action of political instances, to civil society and to the homeless themselves) about the homeless in the USA, it seems possible to register the emergence of two central aspects that abridge the main guidelines which presided over that ten-year evolution (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007):

1. There was a notorious emergence and strengthening of new collaboration efforts (many of which followed pre-existing efforts) to address homelessness in the various levels of political decision-making, enhancing the growing importance conferred to the local sphere (to aid suppliers as well as to the recipients of such aid).

The so-called “10 Year Plans” may be pointed as one of the full examples of this local action, characterized by the connection and coordination between work done at different levels of decision but showing a bigger (and progressively growing) important role played by the local sphere.

2. During the last decade, we saw a growing emphasis placed on the processes of gathering and using empirical data seen as ways: *i)* to better understand the

characteristics and dynamics of the homeless; *ii*) to help and promote the implementation of more adequate assistance programs; *iii*) to draw new and more adequate paths for investigation and political action, based on the progressive actualization of the gathered knowledge.

The growing use of the so-called “Homeless Management Information Systems” (HMIS), and the trivializing of the application of cost-benefit analysis to each of the interventions performed constitute examples of recent actions, developed within this line of thought/action that enhances and renovates the importance that must be conferred to field work and to the perception and in-depth knowledge of the specific effects of each of the implemented programs and initiatives.

Now that the main processes of the evolution (and current situation) of the homelessness issue in the USA have been properly contextualized, and once the renovation of the main references of academic investigation through the last few decades has been introduced, it seems that the foundations for the presentation of homelessness-oriented policies in the USA have been set. To that effect, we will begin by analyzing their diachronic evolution (up until the current status) and then we will analyze in further detail some of the main political and institutional action programs currently directed to the homeless in the USA.

2.4. Strategies to help the homeless in the United States of America – diachronic perspective and a few current examples

The homelessness theme has been a persistent aspect of North American history. Throughout the last centuries, several measures have been implemented, revealing different institutional approaches and opinions regarding that phenomenon.

It has been demonstrated that in the last few years big changes were witnessed in the homelessness issue in the USA. Structural causes (whether endogenous or exogenous) have gained progressive relevance in later years, leading to a growing permanence and diversity of homelessness situations. This broadening of dimensions of

this problem has also (such as previously mentioned) given it more visibility, at the scientific, institutional and even socio-economic levels.

Especially in political terms, this larger scale of the homelessness issue in the USA has had many reflexes, leading to the application of new measures and programs that are technically more comprehensive and integrative when compared to the theoretical and empirical work developed in social (civil society associations) and academic spheres. From the second half of 1990 decade, there was a progressive attempt of governmental intervention (by the Federal Government as well as by local political organs), with important direct effects that, believing the structural nature of recent statistics, are felt on the evolution of the number and living conditions of homeless populations and also on the very cities where the interventions take place.

On the other hand, we must note that the enthusiasm that has been generated around the policies directed at the homeless since the years 1990 is not unanimous, with authors that remain skeptical and fiercely critical of the legislation and of the directly homelessness-oriented policies (mainly until the end of the 1990 decade), considering them to be restrictive, exclusive, incriminatory and destroyer of the public space usable by the homeless (see MITCHELL, 1997).

In some cases, those same authors even claim that these measures are mere urban marketing movements, associated to big, visible media events, and supported by renovation plans that do not aim to benefit the homeless population (at least not in a legitimate and uninterested manner).

On the contrary, there seems to exist some consensus in considering that the evolution of the homelessness phenomenon in the USA has been characterized by the existence of long episodes (or periods). What varies slightly from one author to another are the considered time intervals. Note that each of those phases is usually associated to different forms or approaches of public intervention (see BLAU, 1992; BURT *et al.*, 2001; CULHANE and HORNBERG, 1997; HOMBS, 2001; JENCKS, 1995; LEGINSKI, 2007).

In short, and mainly inspired in WALTER LEGINSKI's (2007) classification (that considers, however, some nuances introduced by previously mentioned bibliography) we may consider a total of five phases, whose names, time delimitations, characteristics and associated forms of political action we will now briefly present (Table 1):

1. *“Colonial homelessness” period (from the XVIIth century until 1820/30)*: The period that preceded the existence of asylums and where there were no identifiable relevant located strategies defined specifically to the resolution of the problems of the homeless. The classifications attributed to these individuals were generally recriminatory and exclusive (for example, the categorizations of “wandering poor” or “sturdy beggars”). There were violent and punitive actions towards the homeless, with regular punishments or the organization of “purges” by the political organs or by the communities, to try to repress and disincentive the existence of such individuals. Following the British inspired legislation, the communities were made responsible for “their” poor, which led to considerable discomfort in local communities regarding the homeless (that at the time were predominantly migrants) and their social non-insertion, resulting in the former repressive and social and territorially exclusive practices.
2. *Post Civil War period (from 1820/30 until the beginning of the XXth century)*: The discriminative classifications persist, with the homeless being commonly called “vagabonds”, “bums” or “tramps”. When compared with the previous period, there is a large growth of the number of homeless people, mainly due to the aftermath of the North American Civil War that generated a bigger number of freed slaves, of war veterans, of immigrants or dislocated populations, of orphans, etc. The phenomenon’s criminalization is institutionalized, leading to the homeless being directed to asylums, police stations, prisons and orphanages during this period. In this context, the “Rhode Island Tramps Act” (1880) was approved, a document conceived to establish the rules of the criminalization of the homeless that ended up being emulated by a big part of North American States.
Paradoxically, this is also the period when the first shelters are created (usually by Evangelic Christian groups) and when some of the first registered investigation work about North American homeless is done, mainly derived from the sphere of Medical Sciences (for example, studying and recognizing the existence of connections between the homelessness phenomenon and alcohol consumption; or these individuals’ stronger tendency to contract contagious diseases such as tuberculosis).

Table 1: Phases of historical evolution (from the XVII century to the present) of the homeless phenomenon in the USA

| | Consequential Homelessness Episode | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| | Colonial Homelessness (1680s–1770s) | Pre-Industrial Period (1820–1850) | Post-Civil War Period (1870–1900) | Great Depression (1929–1940) | Contemporary Period (1980–Present) |
| Nature of homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itinerant workers • "Wandering poor" • "Sturdy beggars" | Primarily unemployed working men | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "vagabond" era, with large numbers of men "hopping" trains and wandering. "Tramp" and "bum" were the standard labels, derived from terms applied to provisions foraging by Civil War troops. • Some freed slaves, single and family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working class especially represented, with homelessness reaching into middle classes • Clear emergence of African Americans, women, families • Prevalence rates of 1–5 percent cited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness persisted following Great Depression but associated almost exclusively with alcohol abuse among single men located in marginalized neighborhoods • Single people, with high incidence of behavioral disabilities • Families with children |
| Causal factors suggested | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural society required skilled and unskilled worker mobility • Continuing territorial skirmishes • Beginnings of business cycles • Immigration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumpy business cycles • Mills, mines, and dock work complement agriculture, but with less employment security • Railroads and telegraph introduce pervasive societal changes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two severe economic downturns; employment near 40 percent • Immigration • Large number of Civil War veterans • Railroad penetration allowed for a subculture of "train hoppers" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe economic instability • Immigration • Migration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor economic performance during 1970s–early 1980s • Shift to service economy • Deinstitutionalization • Housing access and affordability • Changes in programs to assist poor/uninsured • Service access and adequacy |
| Service responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vagrancy laws • Community "warning out" procedures • Work programs • Corporal punishment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity-run almshouses and wayfarer lodges • Publicly run lodging houses • Obligation to return work for service • Little differentiation of homelessness responses from assistance to the poor and down on their luck • Jails commonly provide overnight accommodation • Toughened vagrancy laws • Imprisonment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skid rows, flophouses, and cage hotels are the modal response • Rhode Island Tramps Act of 1880 emulated by nearly every state; designed to arrest/convict homeless people • Municipal and charity-run shelters; bare bones lodging and modest rations • Shelters and services by Christian evangelical groups • Except for criminal justice interventions, little differentiation of homelessness responses from assistance to low-income people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quarter of cities surveyed in 1933 offered nothing to homeless persons • Breadlines, soup kitchens, shelters, and shantytowns • First federal assistance for homeless persons, federal Transient Service, focused on unemployed homeless; existed for 3 years, established "transient relief programs" providing housing, food, job training, and education in 47 of the 48 states • New Deal programs were to assist people who were homeless as well as other poor and needy people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial ad hoc responses by cities, charities to address immediate shelter and food needs • Early federal intervention as service demonstrations and analysis of population • 1997 survey documents 40,000 homelessness-serving programs in 21,000 locations • McKinney legislation and amendments establish and fund housing and service programs specific to homeless people |
| Other observations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradition derived from English law that the community/parish was responsible for its poor people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential segregation by class; working class increasingly concentrated near employment • Short-term residential approaches developed suited to rapid turnover of working class • First emergence of editorial and other writing that impugns homeless people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong negative opinions about homeless populations softened later in the period as economic causes are better recognized • Inchoate professionalization of social work set stage for analytic examination of homeless and first formal research studies in early 1900s • Documentation that alcohol abuse among homeless population is recognized as a problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First advocacy group for homeless persons, National Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless, established in 1932 • Federal government promotes zoning by communities. Multi-family residential development more difficult and real estate on which much of the affordable multi-family housing is located becomes attractive for commercial uses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong advocacy group involvement as leadership, policy analysis, oversight • Increased private foundation interest over time • Challenge to end homelessness articulated in early 2000s substantially influenced by knowledge development and research |

^a Based substantially on Kusmer (2002) and Caton (1990)

3. *Great Depression and two World Wars Period (from the beginning of the XXth century until the 1950 decade)*: A period marked on an international basis by moments of great economic and political instability that generated big migratory movements destined to the North American continent. All of those combined factors promoted an increase of the number of homeless people in the USA.

Although the majority of the big cities still had no offer of support to the homeless, this is the period of the introduction of the first federal assistance programs to these individuals, usually as institutional mechanisms that acted in terms of supplying food (“soup kitchens”), shelter (“shelters”) or employment (“transient relief programs”).

In spite of previous advances, up until the creation of the “National Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless” (that may be considered as the first real action group directed more or less specifically to the homelessness issues) the measures directed to these individuals were not very different from the general policies that were developed to improved the living conditions of the populations with higher levels of poverty.

4. *Period of deinstitutionalization of economies and social services (from the 1950 decade until the years 1990)*: Some of the current processes that have been mentioned in previous topics gain shape (and bigger proportions) and together concur to explain the present complex shapes that the homelessness phenomenon has acquired. It is the previously mentioned period of the “resurgence of homelessness” (see HOPPER, 1997) or “advanced homelessness” (see ROSSI, 1996). Diversified and deep urban restructuring processes occur in the main North American cities, accompanying the social recomposition that was taking place in those same urban spaces, with multiple, important and different impacts (direct and indirect) on the homelessness issue.

The implementation of the famous “McKinney Act” happened in 1987, an important legislative diploma that defended a more comprehensive approach to the concept and subject of homelessness and promoted an easier and more efficient establishment and financing of specific programs to the homeless population.

The cities (local contexts), albeit in a relatively shy manner, gained more prominence in the resolution of “their” homelessness. However, in this phase there is little creativity or effectiveness in the development of social programs directed to the majority of the urban spaces, since the most part of the developed policies focused (solely) on the provision of shelter and food to the homeless. The theorization developed throughout the 1990 decade (generally very critical of the preceding period) will recognize the inefficiency of previous policies, even considering their effects to be harmful, perverse and responsible for the proliferation of the homeless phenomenon in many American cities (see BLAU, 1992; BURT *et al.*, 2001; CULHANE and HORNBERG, 1997; HOMBBS, 2001; JENCKS, 1995; ROSSI, 1996).

In this period there are two phases with different characteristics (see ROSSI, 1996).

In the first phase, there is a de-territorialization of the homeless population, based essentially on morally conservative ideologies and brought upon by the excluding processes of social and urban reorganization of the cities.

That phase is followed by a phase of re-territorialization of the homeless.

To the most positive thinkers, this is a phase of alignment to the homelessness issue that will start being seen as a complex problem whose social and institutional answers should include coherent and comprehensive approaches and resolutions. This transition will bring upon a group of positive effects, such as: *i)* The stimulus of the investigation of the homeless; *ii)* The creation of more or less efficient programs specifically directed to the problems of the homeless; *iii)* The opening of spaces to expand and consolidate the work done by civil society (such as NGOs, for example); *iv)* The creation of the basis that allowed the transition to the conceptual and operational transformation of the homelessness-oriented policies perceived since the second half of the 1990 decade (see BURT *et al.*, 2001; CULHANE and HORNBERG, 1997; DENNIS *et al.*, 2007; LEGINSKI, 2007).

However, it is also important to mention that not all authors demonstrate this positivity towards the phase of re-territorialization of the homeless, seeing it essentially as a period of legal annihilation of the public space, through the creation

and reconfiguration of a group of surveillance mechanisms and indirect punishment (for example, by directing the homeless, more or less subtly, to other less valued parts of the cities) of phenomena such as mendacity or sleeping out on the open (see MITCHELL, 1997).

5. *Modern period (since the second half of the 1990 decade to our days)*: There is, in general, a continuation of the previous period, both in terms of the expansion and of the typologies of the phenomenon as in terms of the policies directed to it. Note, however, that there is an inflexion in some of the previous practices, marked essentially by the undoubted recognition of the failure of the policies exclusively focused on offering food and shelter. New approaches are searched, more holistic, integrative and directed to the specificities of each homeless group and community. We see major developments in the knowledge of the homeless, resulting from a stronger intervention and involvement of the political agents, as well as from the action of foundations and public and private associations and from the growing academic theorization about the phenomenon. From the political perspective, new practices were implemented, such as the so-called “Ten Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community”, the “Supportive Housing” programs and the underlying approach of the “Housing First” philosophy, each trying to adjust the best solutions to each specific group and situation.

The importance of the three previous political approaches (through the positive results that their implementation has achieved, as well as their potential transposition to the specificities of the Portuguese case) demands more attention over their main characteristics and an evaluation of their main capacities and constraints, briefly determining their application scopes and the main results (and future perspectives) they have achieved. To that effect, we will resort not only to the bibliographic research that has been conducted but also to the information gathered in interviews of several North American specialists with important knowledge and contributions in this subject.

That analysis will be performed through the approach to the so-called “Ten Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community”. The identification of their

genesis takes us back to the year 2000, when “A Plan, not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years” was published (see NAEH, 2000).

This report recognizes (through the presentation of a diagnosis of the homelessness problem in the USA) that, apart from the social costs of the phenomenon, the homelessness issue implied important externalities in economic terms. In spite of the relevance of such considerations, made to try and capture the attention of the political community to the importance of acting on the phenomenon, note that several authors had mentioned them already (see O’ FLAHERTY, 1998; SALIT *et al.*, 1998).

One of the keys to the “Ten Year Plans” is their attempt to implement the requirements perceived in the intense investigation of previous years. Another success factor is the fact that the political decision-makers want the plans to be developed according to a more innovative approach in social, cultural and political terms, searching to attribute importance to the work that can be done on a local basis, that is, in each community.

So, in short, these plans’ philosophy points out to the importance of giving independence to the local decision organs. According to the “National Alliance to End Homelessness” (NAEH) – an organization that was the major creator and propeller for these “Ten-Year Plans” – the strategies to solve the homelessness issue (of a community) may be best developed within that community, enabling those individuals to a better, easier and less bureaucratic access to housing at more affordable prices (the so-called “affordable housing” programs) and to the various social services from which the homeless are usually excluded (health, education, employment and social protection) (see NAEH, 2000; 2003; 2006; 2007c).

So, following the previous conceptual notes, the preliminary report – “A Plan, not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years” – created some important guidelines that should be incorporated into the strategies for the reduction of homelessness related problems that would be developed within the several communitarian ten year plans. Amongst those guidelines we selected the following (see NAEH, 2000; 2003):

1. *Plan for outcomes*: Believes that the territories destined to the intervention of the local plans, as well as the action strategies, should be conceived by means of a thorough

- data collection about the local homeless, in order to allow for a bigger (and better) diagnosis and knowledge of the phenomenon, securing a better applicability and adequacy of the policies and strategies that will be developed to mitigate it;
2. *Close the front door*. Enhances the importance of adopting more holistic and comprehensive measures and programs to fight poverty in the communities, in order to avoid that the risk groups they identify become homeless; basically it defends preventive action;
 3. *Open the back door*. Enhances the importance of analyzing the housing and social needs of the homeless in each community, defining and applying, as fast and as efficiently as possible, the strategies that may prove adequate to their reinsertion, socially and in terms of housing;
 4. *Build infrastructures*. Focuses on the demonstration of the importance of the widening of the services rendered by social and political institutions and of granting the homeless the possibility to autonomously generate their own income; those measures should complement and be associated with the generalization of the housing offer (at more affordable prices) to the homeless.

Since the year 2000 – which, as mentioned before, is the date of the establishment of general guidelines to the organization of ten-year community programs to eradicate homelessness – this kind of initiatives have been developed in over 360 communities spread throughout the nation but obviously and clearly concentrated in the North American States and cities more affected by the homeless problem (Picture 7).

Of all the implemented plans, 234 have already been concluded while the others are in a developing stage, which seemingly demonstrates there is a strong commitment from social and political agents.

Considering the (obvious) impossibility of analyzing all the plans, we will try to establish some tendencies and organization patterns that reveal the existence of common strategies between those plans.

The first important aspect is the formal structure of the plans' strategy. According to NAEH (see NAEH, 2000; 2003), it seems that most plans (except for some local adaptations) present a structure built around a group of strategic goals that aim at

answering the question “what are we trying to achieve?”. For each of these goals, it is possible to identify a set of action steps whose definition should allow to understand “how will we act to fulfill those goals?”. Each action step is usually associated to one or more timeframes and, in some cases, to the identification of the person/organization that is responsible for the fulfillment of such action step (see NAEH, 2000; 2003; 2006; 2007c)



Picture 7: Geographical distribution of the “Ten Year Plans” that have been concluded (until middle 2009) in North American territory

(Source: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/tools/communityplans>).

According to NAEH (2006; 2009), most of the plans included strategies directed at the chronic homeless (thus paying justice to the plans full name – “Ten Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community”). This segment of the homeless population was even considered as the main recipient of the strategic measures implemented in more than 30% of local programs. Almost half of the plans include initiatives directed to youth homeless; about 50% (and growing in the plans implemented in the last few years) focus on issues related to family homelessness. In NAEH (2009: 17) is stated that *«approximately 49 percent of plans to end homelessness specify*

families as a target subpopulation. The recent emphasis on ending homelessness among families has resulted in progress».

Continuing with the same sources of information, it is possible to understand that the majority of plans rendered considerable importance to the involvement effort of a vast range of stakeholders, including public agents and private entities in the planning process(es). Also almost 30% of the implemented plans profited from the experience of the homeless, promoting their participation in the plans' development.

As for the financing sources, there is a considerable variety of investors that includes public entities as well as private foundations. About half of the plans initially identified important donors that became responsible for the implementation of the whole plan. Albeit some plans showed a good capacity to raise funds from private investors, most plans were made financially viable through the action of the local authorities that secured a very substantial part of the financing in more than half of the plans (see NAEH, 2006).

Another important aspect is the fact that in spite of having a common genesis (namely NAEH's pioneer reports, that created the guidelines and general action steps to the elaboration and put into practice of each plan), there was an attempt to maintain the flexibility of the implementation of each plan, in order to achieve a bigger adequacy of each set of measures to each specific situation and community. Some communities have focused more on issues related to alcohol and drug abuse, others insisted on the intervention on the mentally-ill homeless, and others still preferred to center their action on giving access to housing.

However, the evaluation of the several plans by NAEH (2006) identified (at a strategy level) some common action expectations inherent to most of them (in a more or less direct manner). Thus, we can identify the following aspects as relatively common concerns of the several plans (see NAEH, 2006):

1. *Creation of database systems*: Recognizing the importance given by theorizers to the role of knowledge and information about the homeless (see DENNIS *et al.*, 2007), about 90% of the implemented plans sought in their strategy to create (and put into

practice the mechanisms that would enable its' future constant actualization) a "Homeless Management Information System" (HMIS);

2. *Homelessness prevention*: Almost 80% of the plans recognized the operational importance of the development of preventive measures regarding the worsening of the homeless phenomenon in communities; amongst those measures (that vary considerably from one context to another), there is the support and consultancy to poor and socially excluded individuals in the communities, support in negotiating rent prices or in escaping unemployment and underemployment; in accompanying vulnerable families (especially single-parent families) with adopted children, early pregnancy or children in school ages, etc.;
3. *Reduction of the continuous periods of homelessness*: Directing these initiatives to the mitigation of chronic homelessness, for example, through the creation and generalization of opportunities for permanent housing to these individuals or the implementation of the so-called re-housing programs. These initiatives are present in over 70% of the plans, totaling more than 200 thousand subsidized houses, of which 80 thousand correspond to permanent housing. In line with this action's orientation, the initiatives developed within supportive housing and housing first programs (that we will study next) are strongly privileged;
4. *Connection and insertion of homeless individuals and families in the social services network*: Once the "housing the homeless" stage has been completed, around 80% of the plans included a continuity of that action through the application of measures to promote the connection of the homeless to basic social service; thus, their labor integration (enabling their self-sufficiency) and their inclusion in the various social support and protection services (for example, health and education) must be promoted.

In short, both the authors whose bibliographic production we have consulted and the various experts we have interviewed agree that the application of the Ten Year Plans may be generally considered as very positive. A large part of the plans has already been implemented (within the stipulated deadlines) and resulted in some communities in a major reduction of the number of homeless people. The comparison between the maps of the effectively implemented plans and the States and cities that have obtained higher

success in the last few years in the reduction of the number of homeless people seems to demonstrate these initiatives' relative success.

On the other hand, in other contexts the results were inferior to initial expectations and in some cases there were even high levels of inactivity in the implementation of the programs established in the plans. The fact that these plans (organized for relatively vast time periods) depend of a strong political commitment may constitute one of the explanations to the loss of enthusiasm that occurred in some of the plans during electoral transition periods in some communities. The misapplied implementation of some initiatives and plans (seen, sometimes, more as political marketing measures than as effective strategies to fight homelessness) may be another cause to the least successful cases. Apart from those aspects, there was also some inefficiency of a considerable number of plans in the ability to raise private investment. In some cases, this may also have functioned as a conditioning factor of the effectiveness of the initially planned measures.

In short, regardless of eventual disruptions in the adequate functioning, the underlying approach of the “Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness in Your Community” (whose application, we recall, is generally considered quite positive by the experts) presents several interesting points, such as: *i)* The focus on local decision contexts (communities); *ii)* Their flexibility and ability to adjust (at least in theory) to the specificities of each social and spatial context; *iii)* The importance granted simultaneously to preventive and prophylactic measures destined, respectively, to “close the front door” and “open the back door”; *iv)* The fact that they enable a joint action with several housing programs directed at the homeless, such as “Housing First” or “Supportive Housing”, whose specificities and main aspects and results achieved will be presented next.

The underlying approach of the concept of “Permanent Supportive and Affordable Housing” is essentially the combination of two key-aspects: *i)* Providing the homeless with housing quickly and efficiently, in affordable monetary conditions (that is, the promotion of the so-called “affordable housing”); *ii)* Creating a network of support services directed to the needs of each individual, acting continuously after providing

housing to the homeless (hence the name “permanent supportive housing”) (see HANNIGAN and WAGNER, 2003).

From those two key-aspects we may derive (in spite of the variety that is inherent to this type of programs) four basic principles that are the basis of this social development model directed to the homeless (see HANNIGAN and WAGNER, 2003):

1. *Permanence and financial accessibility*: One of the main goals of the programs is the greater availability of affordable housing to the low-income population, especially to the homeless with special needs (for example, physical or mental health problems). Usually, the rents do not exceed 30% of the new tenants’ income;
2. *Safety and comfort*: In these programs, one of the priorities for the integration of the homeless is the promotion of their comfort and safety in their new houses, both to facilitate their social inclusion and to promote their level of acceptance of the programs. Those feelings of comfort, social and territorial identity, and safety, must be achieved through the quality of the houses and lodging and through the promotion of the integration and creation of identity power for these individuals in “their” new communities;
3. *Accessibility and flexibility of support services, aiming at housing stability*: The programs must be inspired by the most urgent needs of the supported individuals, both in the beginning, when the programs’ structures are defined, and during their implementation process, in line with the evolution of the needs of each community. These programs’ primary goal must be to ensure, in a progressive and phased manner, the individuals’ housing stability, through the promotion of their self-sufficiency and the stimulus of the effective fulfillment of their citizenship and social responsibility, e.g., through the setting of phases for the rents’ payment; through the maintenance of hygiene and sanitation in the houses; or through the compliance of some rules (at housing level and at the level of integration in the communities).

Support services vary according to the programmed house units. However, in general terms, they usually focus on: *i*) Support and consultancy for the fulfillment of the individuals’ legal obligations (for example, rent and tax payment or mediation

with immigration services, when relevant); *ii*) Creating support structures for training and education, including professional counseling and for promotion of the inclusion in formal educational structures, for example, through the organization of courses directed at learning or recycling technical skills; *iii*) Strengthening the connection between the individuals and the health services, specifically oriented to the clinical problems experienced by the individuals.

4. *Empowerment and independence*: Programs should be conceived to promote the individuals' empowerment and self-sufficiency, instilling into them feelings of freedom and of responsibility for their own actions.

Here are some clear examples of efforts that can be done to that effect: *i*) Involving the new tenants in the management of the supportive housing project they belong to; *ii*) Creating job opportunities; *iii*) Promoting the creation of and participation in support and counseling groups within the community itself.

One previously mentioned aspect that must be exalted is the recognition of the diversity of supportive housing models. We find big variations between the programs, whether in terms of their size, the structure of the places of application, the dominant characteristics of the lodged individuals, or the level and type of support granted. Such flexibility and ability to adjust to the specificities of each context and to the needs of the main tenants (expressed in the several shapes and typologies it may adopt) is considered one of the main advantages and beneficial points of these supportive housing programs (see HANNIGAN and WAGNER, 2003; NAEH, 2007d).

This is exactly the idea that presides to the description of this kind of programs proposed by HANNIGAN and WAGNER (2003: 1), when this author claims in a brief and organized statement that *«supportive housing offers affordability and a stable living environment while helping tenants access services and amenities that promote self-sufficiency and enhance their quality of life. Depending upon the tenancy, supportive services programs in housing provide and/or maintain linkages to individual and family counselling, HIV services, mental health services, alcohol and substance use services, crisis intervention, childcare, medical care, vocational counselling, and job placement, among others. Supportive housing projects also work to foster community-building efforts among tenants and are often engaged with the surrounding neighbourhood as well. (...) Affordability*

and the flexibility to adapt services to the needs of the tenants are the greatest strengths of effective supportive housing projects».

Albeit this is not a totally new social approach to the homelessness issue (because in their essence these programs are based on simply providing lodging to the individuals), those adaptive specificities that combine the granting of affordable housing with the organization of support structures adjusted to the specificities/problems of each group, have given the supportive housing programs a reputation of efficiency and adequacy to the multiple and differentiated problems raised by the homelessness issue.

The expansion of its application has rapidly grown in the last decade, often integrated in the previously mentioned Ten Year Plans. There are by now several dozens of thousand units of “assisted lodging” in the USA, usually sponsored and managed by NGOs, that alternate between unitary lodgings (normally occupied by families with children) and housing projects that comprise several units, usually directed at homeless individuals that share the same kind of problems (for example, mental impairments; physical impairments; HIV infection, etc.) (see HANNIGAN and WAGNER, 2003; NAEH, 2007d).

There are mixed opinions about these programs. Some authors find them exclusive – roads to the creation of ghettos and enclaves for “homogenous” and social excluded individuals – claiming their development aims at cleaning the cities, creating better qualified and homeless-free urban landscapes (see MITCHELL, 1997).

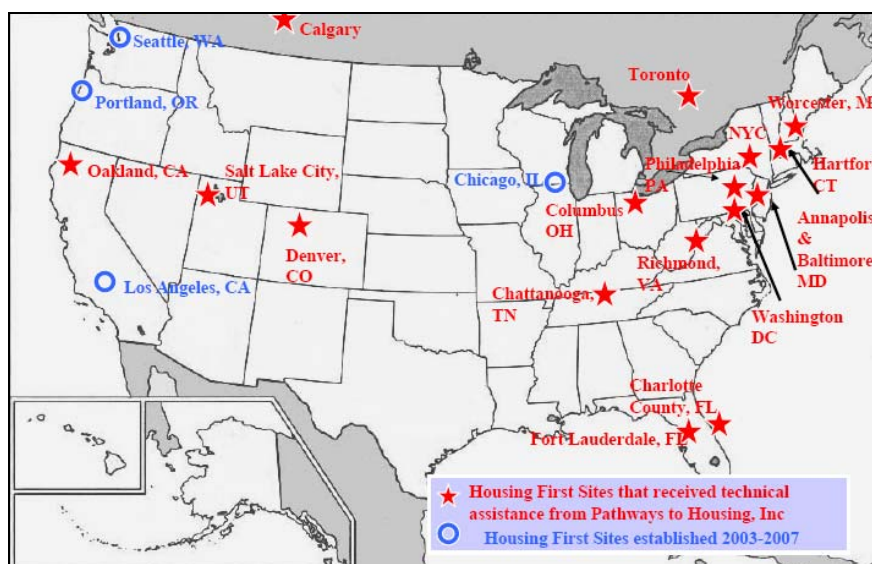
However, other authors prefer to enhance the positive aspects of these approaches, stating that they allow the constitution of progressively self-sufficient approaches (and integrated in their surroundings) with individuals that relate to each other and, therefore, help each other. These authors believe that this approach promotes empowerment and progressive independence of the homeless population that, in stages and profiting from the close monitoring of several social agents, are progressively reinstated in society and get access to employment and health systems, as well as to the creation and management of their own income sources and the chance to eradicate their addiction to substances (see HANNIGAN and WAGNER, 2003; NAEH, 2007d; 2009).

Although it is not this report’s goal to determine which of the preceding visions is more correct, we must stress that the reduction of the number of North American homeless in the last few years. *«This decrease is likely due to both real decreases, meaning [for example] more chronically homeless people getting back into permanent housing, and changes in the methods used to count chronically homeless people. Considering the recent efforts to increase the stock of permanent housing targeted (...) one would expect a decrease in this population. And in a number of places, decreases (...) have had a visible effect on the street»* (see NAEH, 2009: 14-15).

The same document mentions the growing importance of these initiatives on a national level, stating that *«communities across the country are implementing strategies to end family homelessness, including increasing permanent housing options for families and Housing First initiatives»* (see NAEH, 2009: 17).

Once having debated some of the main aspects inherent to actions like supportive housing, it is finally time to pay attention to the “Housing first” programs.

The first (and to our day, the most recognized) program that developed measures of housing first type started in 1992. Called “Pathways to Housing”, it was implemented in New York City and later expanded with relative success to several North American cities and States, totaling now 150 programs implemented in several cities in the USA and even in Canada (Picture 8).



Picture 8: Housing First programs that were supported by “Pathways to Housing” in the USA and in Canada (until 2007) (Source: TSEMBERIS, 2009).

The main recipients of these programs are homeless people with difficulty in being eligible to other lodging problems, namely the mentally-ill homeless and all the individuals with alcohol or heavy drugs abuse related problems.

These programs' main goal is providing the homeless population with direct access to housing. Once the housing is provided, all individuals are monitored on a full-time basis (usually from an administrative central point in the lodging neighborhood) by people (usually social agents) organized in teams, according to a pre-established plan called "Assertive Community Treatment" (ACT) (see GULCUR *et al.*, 2003; NAEH, 2007e; TSEMBERIS, 2009).

In the words of one of the great mentors of the program, housing first is «*a program that provides immediate access to permanent housing and support services with a philosophy of consumer choice. Consumers are not required to participate in psychiatric treatment or attain a period of sobriety in order to obtain housing*» (see TSEMBERIS, 2009: 2).

From this definition we quickly conclude that Housing First is a variety of the supportive housing programs, more flexible and focused on the concept of "consumer choice" (see TSEMBERIS, 2009). The major difference of the housing first programs is precisely the concession of decision power to the homeless ("consumers") regarding several aspects of their new lodgings and the type, sequence and intensity of the support systems they believe they need, with the possibility to choose not to benefit from any support services and merely agreeing to a weekly mandatory visit by a monitoring team. It's an attempt to dignify the role of independent decision-making and the ability to participate, thus promoting the homeless' self responsibility and personal enrichment.

In short, we see that one of the main innovative aspects of this approach is the separation between two action spheres of the teams (see GULCUR *et al.*, 2003; NAEH, 2007e; TSEMBERIS, 2009), that is:

1. *Lodging services*: The apartments selected by the "consumers" may be independent from one another, as long as they are adjusted to their needs and legal and financial capacities. In spite of the granting of subventions to the purchase and maintenance of the apartments (that substantially reduce the rent prices when compared with market values), the new tenants' responsibility is promoted through the obligation

to pay 30% of the negotiated rent and to oblige to the remaining dispositions of the contract for the purchase and use of the house.

Social support teams help searching for and negotiating apartments, with legal consultancy (especially about rent payment) and mediation in the relationship between tenants and landlords.

2. *Treatment services*: Clinical support systems are also provided, but are not mandatory. Clinical supervision (often rendered within the communities) is made independently from the lodging systems and may be offered on different levels, adjusting to the individuals' needs and choices (for example, psychiatric support, drugs and alcohol abuse, etc.). Apart from clinical support, other reinsertion services are rendered, namely labor and education insertion services and accounting support for the management of bills and expenses.

In short, these programs' priority is lodging. The homeless individual is not obligated to have the resolution of his clinical, educational or labor problems monitored. However, if the individual decides to be supported, there are several structures in the communities that allow that monitoring to happen efficiently. The individuals' effective integration (not only in society in general, but more specifically in his/her community) is also a very important aspect.

Regarding the evaluation of these programs' efficiency, the first important note is the progressive awareness and demand (in numerous North American States and cities) for the implementation of this type of measures, which may be seen as the demonstration of the program's general efficiency.

More specifically, the available results (and their quantitative and qualitative analysis) demonstrate the existence of very positive signs resulting from the implementation of these programs.

Various authors (including those we interviewed) state that the maintenance rate of the houses by formerly homeless individuals is about 85% after the first year of being granted lodging on a "Housing First" basis. These results are common to several North American cities and not just to New York City, which cradled this initiative. It is clear that the nearly 30% decrease in the number of homeless people nation-wide between

2005 and 2007 is, among other aspects, due to housing first programs (see GULCUR *et al.*, 2003; NAEH, 2007e; SHINN, 2009; TSEMBERIS, 2009).

The qualitative analysis of the quantitative data presented by SHINN (2009) allows us to draw some important conclusions. In general terms it is possible to say that the consumers in “housing first” were lodged faster than in other programs (thanks to less bureaucracy in the lodging concession process) and in general showed an ability to maintain their houses for several years. Economic results are also obvious, for example, on the reduction of public costs with health, justice and social protection services to these individuals (see GULCUR *et al.*, 2003; NAEH, 2007e; SHINN, 2009; TSEMBERIS, 2009).

Let us recall that these programs focus on the homeless with history of drug abuse and on the chronic homeless (particularly those with clinical mental problems). They are usually considered incapable of keeping a house (with or without clinical support) and are usually rejected or show big difficulties in adapting to other more restrictive programs. These rates show the potential interest and importance that this specific approach should receive within the wider spectrum of the “permanent supportive housing” initiatives.

One of the main characteristics of “Housing First” initiatives is their potential flexibility and adjustment to the choices of the homeless. However, in spite of its ability to adjust, it is possible to find some aspects common to the various programs.

Its distinctive nature (when compared with other initiatives dedicated to fight the homelessness problem in the USA) enables us to present the following characteristics of the program, seen here as conceptual benefits that differentiate it from other programs, enhancing the advantages of its application (see NAEH, 2007e):

1. Strongly privileges (and even makes it its motto) the direct routing of the target population (that can be varied and differentiated, although privileging the support to groups that are less eligible to other programs) to permanent lodging, which results in a decrease of the bureaucracy that is inherent to the process of the homeless leaving the streets;

2. Albeit the programs may include the offer of different support services, the homeless are not forced to participate in them, which is less restricting and conditioning and favors integrating the individuals and valuing their opinions;
3. Even if there are some programs specifically directed to homeless families, the majority of these initiatives are directed to the mentally-ill homeless and to the chronic homeless, particularly those that possess a history of drug abuse and that are usually more reluctant and unwilling to attend shelters and other social services.

The three types of programs presented (very briefly) are counted amongst the main initiatives currently directed to the homeless in the USA. We have tried to demonstrate impartially their reputed positive aspects and the criticism they face, enumerating their main characteristics and some of their more emblematic results (mostly quantitative).

Although the initiatives we have presented do not constitute all of the political approaches to homelessness in the USA, they allow us to draw a quite reliable general picture of the main ideas underlying such political action in the last few years.

The selection of the mentioned programs was based on their current importance in the USA and on their potential to be transposed to the Portuguese situation (always safeguarding the necessary specificities), more specifically to the local context of the city of Lisbon, that corresponds to this report's case study, whose distinctive and similar aspects will be analyzed next.

Chapter III

Knowing the Homelessness Phenomenon in Portugal and in Lisbon

3.1. The Homelessness Phenomenon in Portugal

Whatever the spatial and temporal context, the understanding of the “universe” of homelessness is a hard and complex task given that *“homeless people exist outside of the normal structures of society; they comprise a moving target which by its very nature is difficult to access. Subsections of the homeless population are even more difficult to identify”* (DOHERTY *et al.*, 2001). The numbers and statistics associated to homelessness are often not more than mere estimates that *“tendem a variar amplamente consoante as fontes e o seu significado político”* (JENKS *apud* BARRETO, 1995; BENTO, 2002, 31).

A clear example of the previous citations refers to the inflation portrayed by the data presented by private field institutions, normally very dependent on external financing; governmental organs tend to underestimate the homelessness numbers.

Statistics concerning homelessness are rare in Portugal. The first studies go back to the late 1980's.

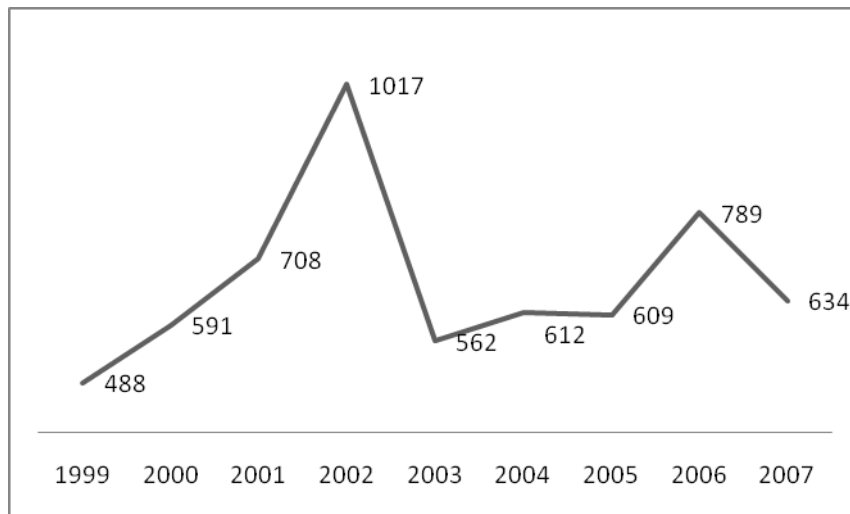
DRAKE *apud* BARETO (1994) advances the number of 4.100 homeless individuals in Portugal. This figure was considered *“baixo relativamente a outros países da Europa”* (BENTO, 2002, p.30)⁴¹. Nevertheless it is relevant to point out that these estimates (contrary to the common procedures in Northern Europe, for e.g.) do not consider the approximately 60.000 Portuguese slum dwellers (*idem: ibidem*).

The most recent estimates assume that the homeless population consists of about 2.500 to 3.500 individuals in mainland Portugal.

Despite all the inherent uncertainties the previous figures seem to suggest that this phenomenon is far from its resolution. Corroborating this idea the Aide Medicale Internationale (AMI) assumes the yearly appearance of an impressive number of new homelessness cases in Portugal since the late 1990's (Picture 9). In 2002 and 2006

⁴¹ There is no real consensus surrounding this number; several estimates assume an absolute frequency of between 2.000 and 3.500 homeless individuals in the city of Lisbon alone (Portugal, 2007:2).

(particularly affected years) the same institution noticed that our country experienced (respectively) 1.017 and 789 new cases of homelessness.



Picture 9 - Evolution of the number of new homelessness cases treated by AMI

(Source: Relatório Anual AMI, 2007).

In 2006 the same institution presented a report on the homeless individuals in Portugal where it concluded that they:

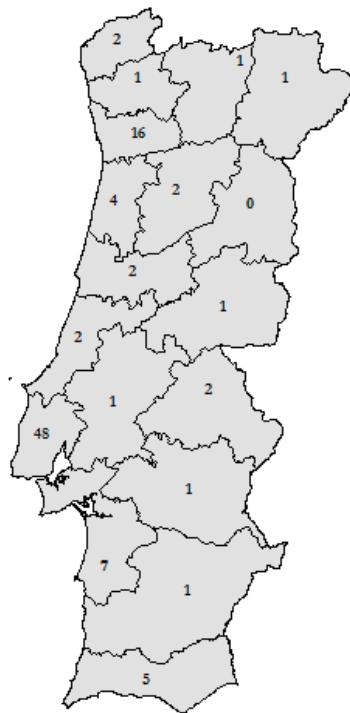
- Tended to sleep on the streets on a daily-basis (32%);
- Mendacity is their primal economic resource (27%);
- The overwhelming majority is unemployed (89%);
- Although they usually have living family members (92%) only a small share of them maintain any kind of relationship with these relatives (37%);
- Approximately 39% of them do not have an appointed family doctor;
- HIV/AIDS affects 7% of this population;
- About 28% have substance abuse problems (either it is drugs or alcohol).

The same study noticed that in the last years homelessness increased heavily among the female Portuguese population.

More recently, Portugal's "Instituto da Segurança Social" (ISS) (which can be translated as Portugal's Social Security Institute) coordinated an important study on

homelessness⁴². Its objective was to deepen the understanding of the Portuguese reality, in order to better design and implement strategies to promote this population's integration into the educational and labour markets.

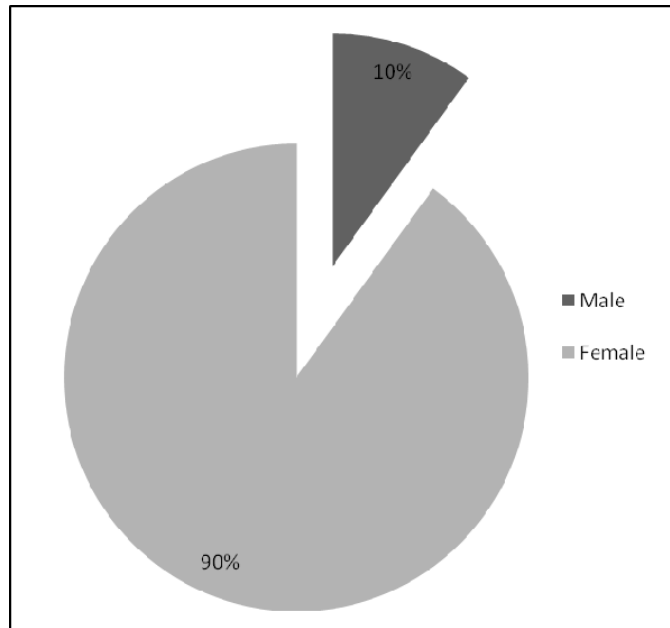
This study showed that Lisbon's weight in the Portuguese context is massive comprising almost half (48%) of the identified homelessness cases in Portugal. Important cities/districts such as Porto (16%), Setúbal (7%), Faro (5%) and Aveiro (4%), also have important relative frequencies (Picture 10). This enabled the promoters of the study to position Portuguese homelessness as an imminently urban phenomenon.



Picture 10 - Percentage of cases of homelessness identified in each Portuguese district
(Source: ISS, 2005).

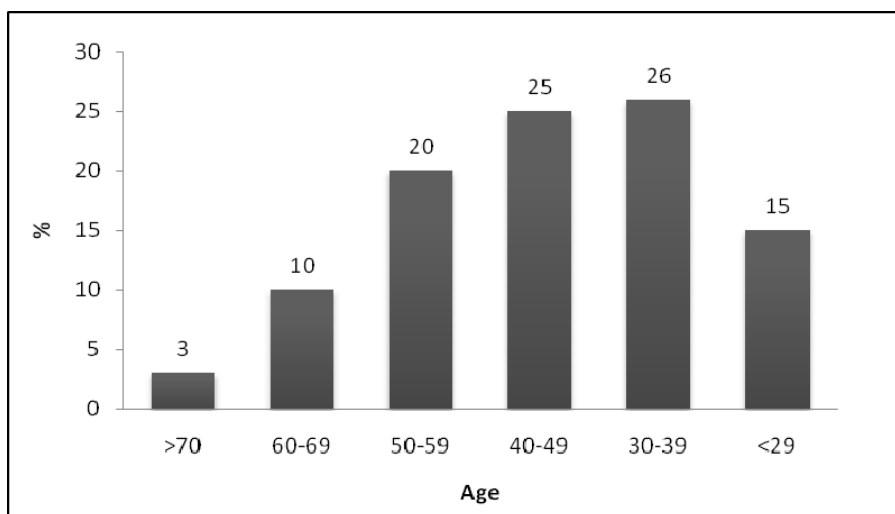
The vast majority of the Portuguese homeless population is composed by male individuals (90%) (Picture 11). Nevertheless, the data gathered through that study also supports the idea that, in the last years, homelessness has been increasingly transcending the gender barrier.

⁴² Instituto da Segurança Social (2005) – Estudo dos Sem-Abrigo, Instituto da Segurança Social, Lisboa.



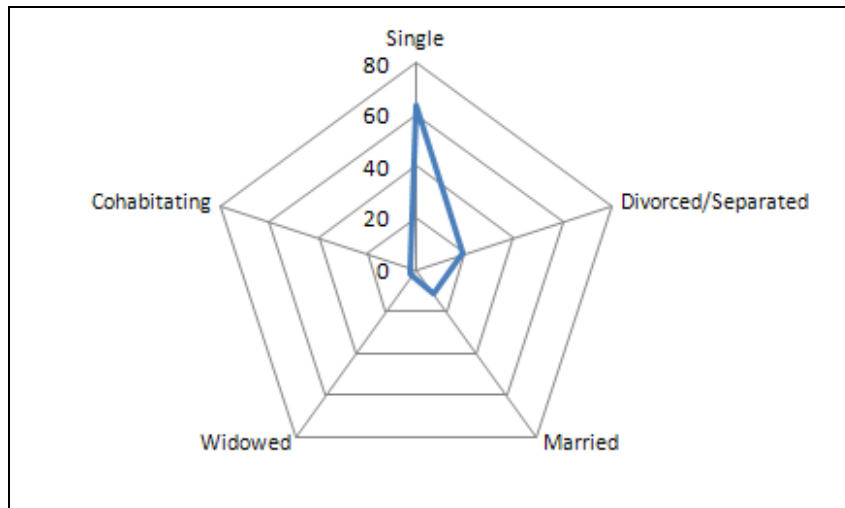
Picture 11 - Homeless by Gender, in Portugal
(Source: ISS, 2005).

More than half of the inquired homeless population lied on the class comprising the ages between 30 and 49 years (Picture 12). This is relatively similar to the US situation, whose homeless population is overwhelmingly situated in this age category.



Picture 12 - Homeless by Age, in Portugal
(Source: ISS, 2005).

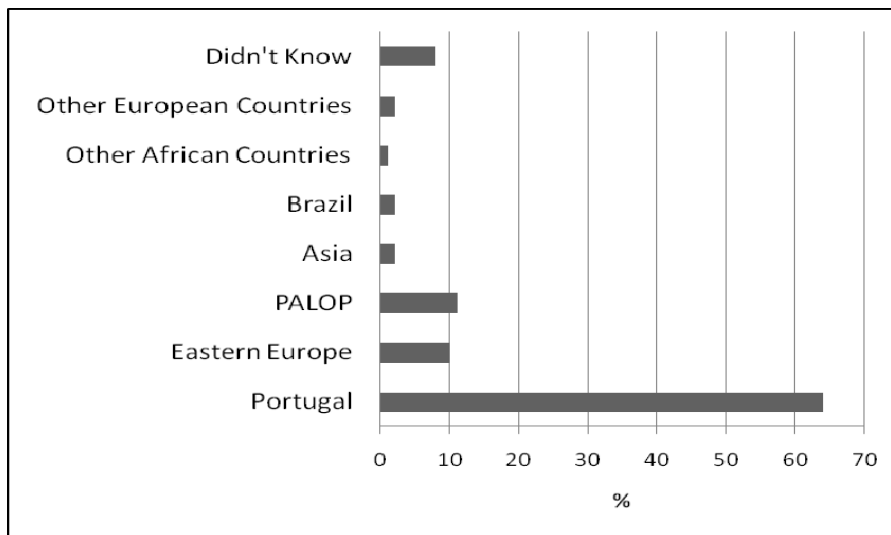
Most of the Portuguese homeless individuals are Single (64%) (Picture 13). The Divorced/Separated are the second most prominent class. This underlines the idea of loss of family bonds commonly associated to this segment of the population. Still, about 12% of the homeless individuals were married at the time of the inquiries.



Picture 13 - Homeless individuals by Marital Status, in Portugal

(Source: ISS, 2005)

In what concerns these individual's nationality (Picture 14) it is possible to identify that approximately 75% of them were Portuguese citizens. Nevertheless, the effects of the last decades' heavy immigration flows directed to Portugal are clearly noticeable, patented in the 20% of homeless individuals coming from the "Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa" (or the African Countries with the Portuguese as their Official Language, which include Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and the islands of Cape Verde and S. Tome and Principe) and Eastern Europe. It seems obvious to conclude that an important share of these individuals are not legally in the country, which causes serious problems in what concerns their insertion into the formal labour or even housing markets.



Picture 14 - Homeless individuals by Nationality, in Portugal.

(Source: ISS, 2005).

The statistical data related to these people's position towards employment revealed that almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were, at the time of the studies, unemployed. Among these, almost half (44%) have already been previously excluded from the labour markets. Even between the homeless individuals effectively employed, more than 25% assumed to have unstable and precarious working trajectories. Approximately 85% of the homeless population in Portugal never benefited from any kind of unemployment subsidy. No more than 2% effectively received this social benefit at the time of the study. Conclusively, one can assume that these persons are normally unemployed and economically inactive. Sometimes they are inserted in informal labour markets, situation which grants them a salary but no social security benefits.

When they are effectively working they are normally underpaid and labouring in precarious conditions. If they are employed into a new job while already being in a homelessness situation, that lack of a dwelling scenario tends to persist because of their normally low salaries and the high values and bureaucracy (most renting contracts require the payment of two months in advance; banks only concede credit if you have a trustful warrantor, and a long-lasting and relatively secure employment contract which these socially excluded individuals normally do not have) inherent to the rentals and the conceding of credit. In Portugal, there is no policy directed to ease these individual's

payments (either of house rents or related services like water or electricity). The bureaucracy inherent to the buying of a house is immense. According to FEANTSA the stereotypes and negative conceptions of the homeless place even higher obstacles to their equal opportunities in house access.

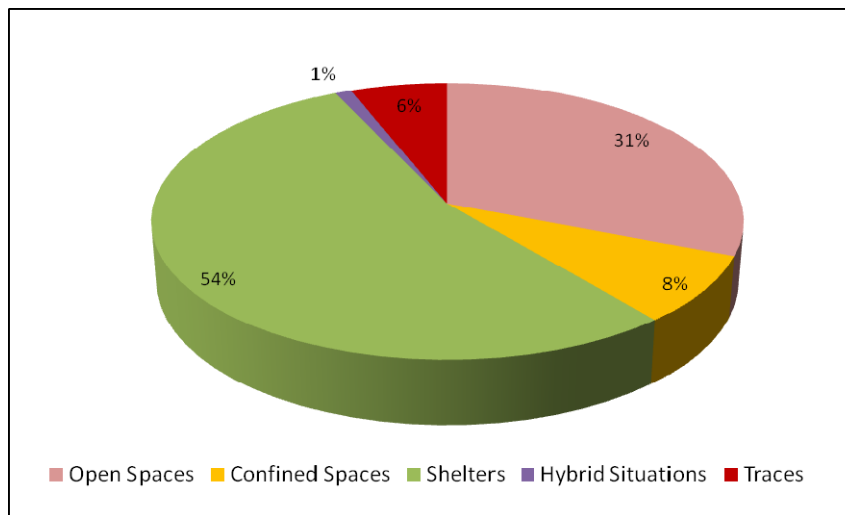
Once this work is directed to present some strategies to support the homeless in the Lisbon city area it is imperative that we expend some time trying to understand the specific reality of this territory. Intending this purpose we will resource to a varied set of documents that, in some way, will enlighten us about Lisbon's homeless, enabling us to better and more adequately design the strategies/measures to adopt concerning the real needs of this marginalized group.

3.2. A Profile of the Homeless in the City of Lisbon

Homelessness is in fact a common reality in today's main urban centers and Lisbon does not escape this pattern.

Recent studies informed that there are currently close to 2.5 million homeless individuals in the European Union. According to a study coordinated by the Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil (LNEC) (which can be translated literally as Portugal's Civil Engineering National Laboratory), Lisbon had an exact number of 1.366 homeless persons. Although this datum concerns to the year 2000 this is still nowadays the most thoroughly developed study concerned with the gathering of detailed information about Lisbon's homeless population.

LNEC's investigation showed that the majority of the Portuguese capital's homeless persons tended to usually sleep in shelters (54%) (Picture 15). However, the truly roofless individuals represent approximately 30% of Lisbon's homeless population. The so-called hybrid situations, including those cases in which the homeless individual sleeps in heavily degraded and/or precarious spaces are just 1% of the city's homelessness universe.



Picture 15 - Homeless Individual’s Overnight Sleeping Places in Lisbon.

(Source: LNEC, 2000).

Similarly to other Portuguese urban sites the overnight options of the homeless individuals without a permanent domicile vary from sleeping in “bunkers”, hostels and/or shelters subsidized by the IPSS⁴³ or Lisbon’s Municipality. Even so, and because of the short number of vacancies available (in relation to the rising number of existing homeless) the occupation of abandoned buildings (either residential or not) and vehicles is also very frequent. Nevertheless, rooflessness is also extremely recurrent and visible. In these cases building’s doorways, public sidewalks, and (spaces under the) bridges are some of the most common overnight “shelters” for Lisbon’s homeless persons.

Table 2 displays Lisbon’s homeless’ overnight sleeping spaces, meaning the places where these individuals were identified and contacted by the teams conducting LNEC’s field studies. It clearly shows that the majority of Lisbon’s homeless can be found sleeping in hostels and other related sites (53,9%). Buildings’ doorways and nearby places (13,5%), vehicles (8,7%) and abandoned residential areas (6,6%) are, as previously noted, the most common overnight sleeping places.

⁴³ Instituição Particular de Solidariedade Social (Private Institution of Social Solidarity).

| | N | % |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Abandoned Residential Areas | 90 | 6.6 |
| Abandoned Non-Residential Areas | 44 | 3.2 |
| Vehicles | 119 | 8.7 |
| Buildings' Doorways and Nearby | 184 | 13.5 |
| Public Recreation Spaces | 19 | 1.4 |
| Sidewalks | 53 | 3.9 |
| Open and Unused Fields and Reeds | 28 | 2.0 |
| Bridges and Related Structures | 25 | 1.8 |
| Hostels and Related "Shelters" | 736 | 53.9 |
| Bus Stops | 14 | 1.0 |
| Other Sites | 54 | 4.0 |
| Total | 1366 | 100 |

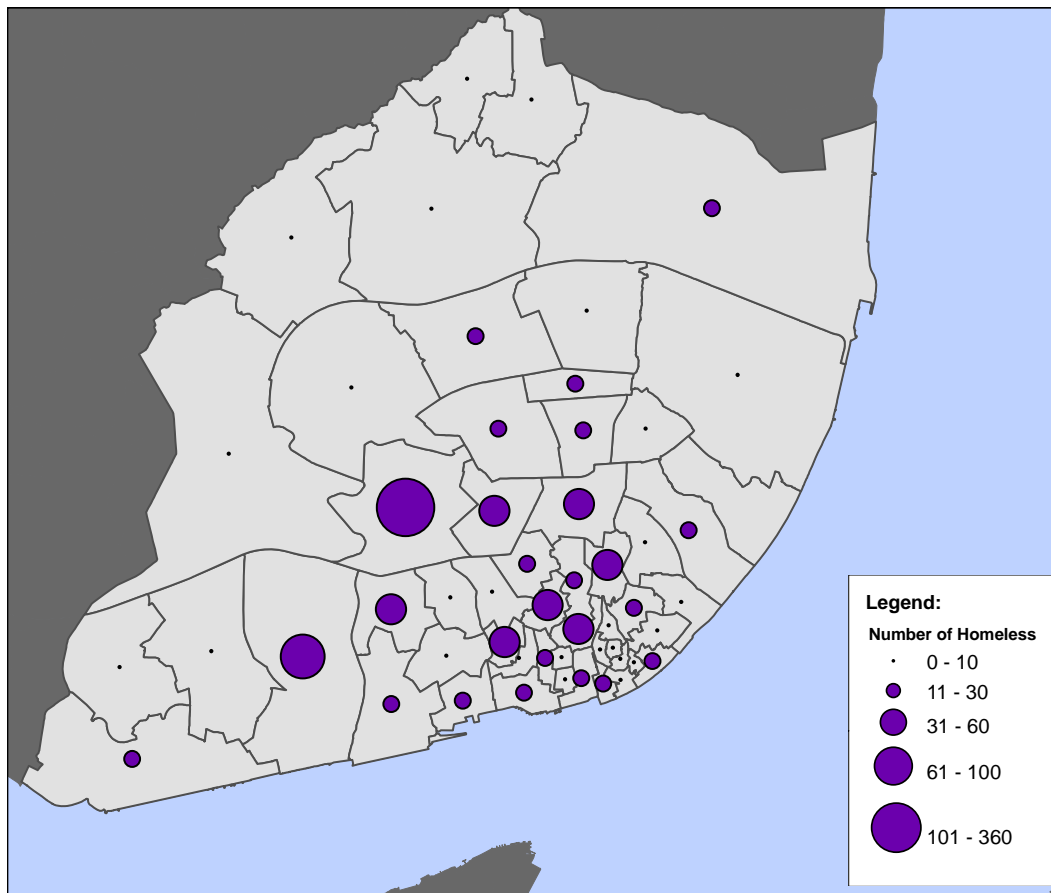
Table 2 - Detailed Homeless Overnight Places in Lisbon.

(Source: LNEC, 2000).

One of the main conclusions of LNEC's study was that approximately 2/3 of Lisbon's homeless tend to spend the night in "roofed" and enclosed spaces such as shelters and abandoned buildings (residential or not). This means that the really visible side of Lisbon's homelessness (meaning those that sleep on the streets, normally the most stereotyped individuals) consists of no more than 1/3 of the city's real problem.

In what concerns the spatial distribution of the homeless throughout Lisbon's city streets, the above mentioned report showed that Beato (26,6%), Campolide (11,6%) and Alcântara (6,7%) were the most affected neighborhoods. Together they covered around 45% of Lisbon's homeless individuals. These were also the areas with the highest availability of shelters and similar support infra-structures. On the opposite side, São Vicente de Fora (0.1%), Marvila (0.1%) and Socorro (0.2%) were the neighborhoods with the least number of homelessness cases identified respectively corresponding to a

total of 1, 2 and 3 individuals. There are also several other neighborhoods with under 10 homeless persons (Picture 16).



Picture 16 - Homeless Distribution throughout Lisbon's Neighborhoods.

(Statistical source: LNEC, 2000; Built from those data).

The spatial distribution of the roofless individuals (meaning the homeless persons that sleep in unsheltered and open spaces) is somewhat different. The neighborhoods of São Jorge de Arroios and Santa Justa (each one of them with 31 individuals); followed by Alto de São João (with 26), São Nicolau (25) and Alcântara (24) are the most prominent ones. An explanation for these figures could be that these areas are among the ones more actively patrolled by the homeless support street teams. São Sebastião da Pedreira and Santa Maria dos Olivais were the neighborhoods displaying a higher number of homeless individuals sleeping in enclosed spaces (not considering the public shelters), with respectively 30 and 15 cases. Finally, it is also important to inform that only in 10

neighborhoods⁴⁴ (less than 20% of the total of 53 existing in Lisbon’s city area) there were no cases of homelessness identified (Photographs 1 and 2).



Photograph 1: Example of Lisbon’s City roofless individuals.

(Fonte: Jornalismo Ponto Net, 2004).



Photograph 2: Example of Lisbon’s City roofless individuals.

(Fonte: diario.iol.pt, 2008).

In 2004, Lisbon’s City Hall (or, in Portuguese the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (CML)) promoted another study directed to analyse “A População de Rua da Cidade de Lisboa”. This investigation intended to find the answers to several questions related to Lisbon’s “street population”, namely: “Who are they?”; “How many are there?”; “What

⁴⁴ Namely: Ameixoeira, Carnide, Castelo, Charneca, Mártires, Santiago, São Cristóvão, São Lourenço, São Francisco Xavier, São Miguel e Santa Catarina.

answers should be given?”. The homeless were considered as the group of people that, having no alternative, make the public spaces their own dwelling places either it is in a circumstantial, emergent or definitive way.

This study was carried out in all of Lisbon’s neighborhoods. A total of 931 individuals (of whom 432 were sleeping on the streets) were identified. The majority of them were males, with ages comprehended between 25 and 34 years old and carriers of Portuguese citizenship.

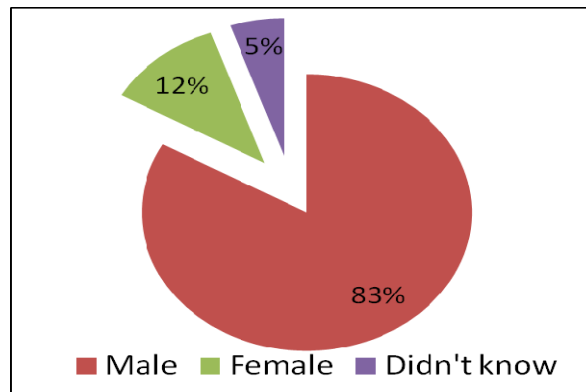
Most of these individuals presented symptoms of many social and/or health problems associated to their condition of homelessness. Several of them displayed heavy substance abuse issues.

A particularly relevant aspect of this study is that it was based in a single night’s counting. Despite the possible interest of this methodology, it undermined that more scrupulous conclusions could be taken from the study. Following this report Lisbon’s City Hall decided to create a workgroup called “Motivação e Encaminhamento” (translatable directly as “Motivation and Direction”) designed to provide a deeper articulation of the work developed by the multiple institutions operating in Lisbon’s city area under the scope of the homelessness issues. This group was coordinated by the homelessness team of Lisbon’s City Hall “Divisão de Intervenção Social e Animação Sociocultural” (DISASC), a working nucleus belonging to the same institution’s “Departamento de Acção Social” (or the Lisbon’s City Hall Social Intervention Department in English).

Among other goals this team was designed to obtain a wider knowledge of Lisbon’s homeless population, not only concerning to its number but also to its characterization and associated social problems. Their 2007’s Annual Report presented numerous data. The city’s homeless’ profile obtained through this document’s execution corroborated the previously mentioned studies’ conclusions.

The field teams that carried out the study identified a total of 766 homeless individuals, the majority of them being males (about 83% against 11,5% of women). The

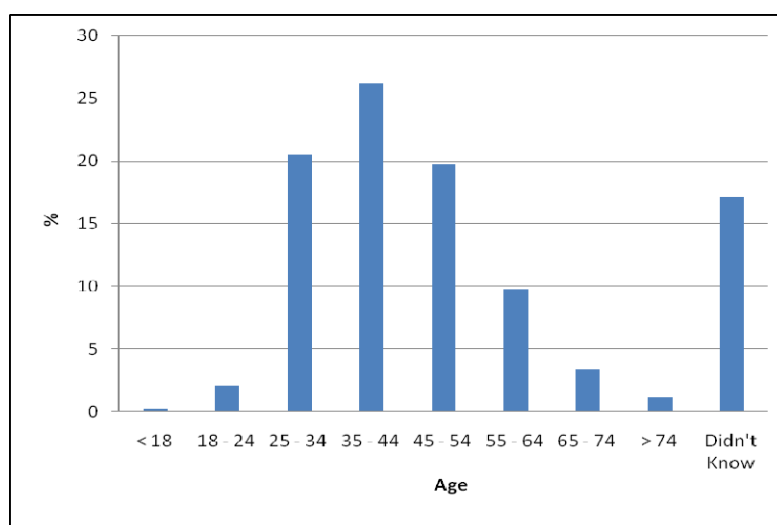
remaining percentage concerns to situations where the person's gender could not be identified (Picture 17).



Picture 17 – Homeless individuals according to their gender, in Lisbon.

(Source: Adapted of de CML, 2007).

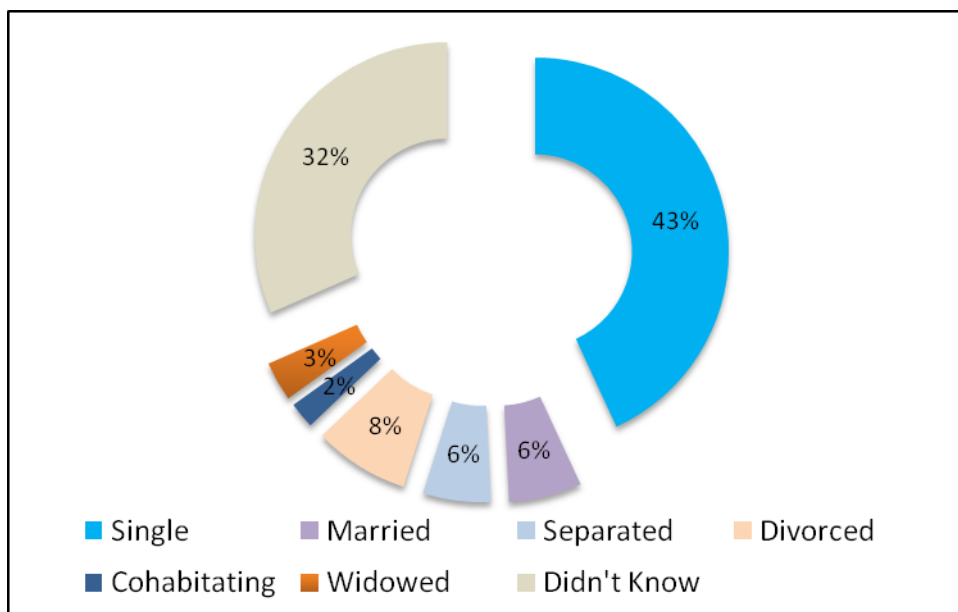
Analyzing these individual's age structure one can assume that the interval between 35 and 44 years of age is the most frequent (26,2%). The gaps between 25-34 and 45-54 years also displayed very significant values, with 20,5% and 19,7% respectively. The average age of the homeless individuals identified was 43 years old. The youngest homeless person inquired was 17 years old; the oldest was 89 (Picture 18).



Picture 18 - Homeless individuals according to their age, in Lisbon.

(Source: Adapted from CML, 2007).

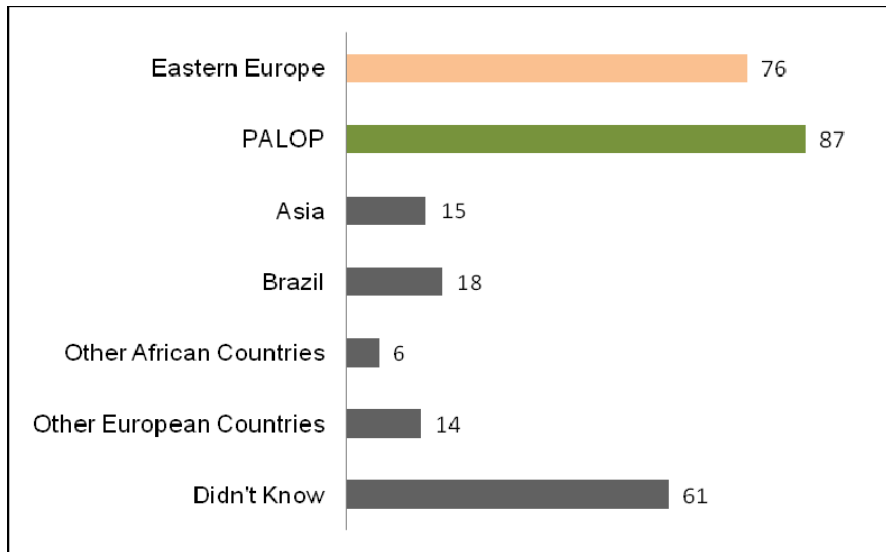
Similarly to what happened in other studies it was also identified that these homeless individuals were mainly single (43,1%). Approximately 8% of them were divorced at the time of the study (Picture 19). Both these situations have disturbing implications, once they tend to correspond to *“indivíduos sem-abrigo sem suporte familiar directo e, assim, também, mais vulneráveis às situações extremas de exclusão social, se atendermos à importância do papel de suporte que as famílias ainda assumem em situações de crise”* (CML, 2007:9).



Picture 19: Homeless individuals according to their Marital Status, in Lisbon.

(Source: Adapted from CML, 2007)

Almost 2/3 of the individuals inquired (63,8%) assumed to be Portuguese citizens. The remaining 223 pertained to many other origins the most frequent of them being the former Portuguese colonies in Africa (PALOP) (approximately 11,4%) and Eastern Europe (Picture 20).



Picture 20 - Foreign Homeless Individuals in Lisbon, according to their origin

(Source: Adapted from CML, 2007).

The problems that placed these individuals in a homelessness vulnerability situation are diverse and caused by multiple factors. As stated by BARRETO and BENTO (2002, p.32) *“para uns a condição sem-abrigo é resultante da condição primária de pobreza. Neste sentido, não existem «sem-abrigos» mas sim pessoas muito pobres que, a dada altura, perdem o seu alojamento por várias razões relacionadas com a sua pobreza”*. Nevertheless there are also some intrinsic factors contributing to each individual’s vulnerability to homelessness. PILIAVIN *et al.* (1993) *apud* BARRETO and BENTO (2002) classified these multiple individual factors in four main categories:

- Psychiatric disturbances;
- Educational and/or professional deficits;
- Desafiliation;
- Cultural identity.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) it is normal to find a co-morbidity scenario in the homelessness situations, this referring to the occurrence of two

contemporary dysfunctions in the same individual, one of them caused by psychoactive substance abuse and the other by a psychiatric problem (OMS, 1995).

In the City Hall’s analysis the problems affecting Lisbon’s homeless were divided into two categories: Social Problems and Health Problems. In what is related to the first group of issues it was verified that the most recurrent ones were unemployment (27,2%) and lack of legal documents (11,7%) (Table 3).

| <i>Social Problems</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|-----------------|
| Unemployment | 27,2 |
| “Deinstitutionalization” (not usual to go to the formal support institutions) | 8,3 |
| Prostitution | 0,6 |
| Lack of Documentation | 11,7 |
| Family Problems | 4,5 |

Table 3 – Homeless individuals according to their social problems, in Lisbon.

(Source: Adapted of CML, 2007).

Unemployment is once again identified as one of the most common problems associated to homelessness. And it is a difficult one to resolve because it is normally related to intrinsic excluding factors such as low educational and/or professional qualifications and advanced age (at least for labour market (re)insertion; remember that the average age of Lisbon’s city homeless individuals in 43 years old).

Lack of documentation is normally related to the immigrant population. A large number of foreign individuals get in Portugal through illegal international networks that

“confiscate” their documents, which makes it even harder for these already vulnerable individuals to insert themselves in the formal labor and housing markets.

The most common health problems identified were mental-illness, and alcohol or psychotropic substance abuse sometimes in a co-morbidity situation. More specifically alcohol abuse was identified as a health problem for 22,6% of the homeless individuals inquired, followed by mental-illness (11,4%) and psychiatric substance abuse (5,4%) (Table 4).

| <i>Health Problems</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|-----------------|
| Mental-illness | 11,4 |
| Physical Disabilities | 0,8 |
| Alcohol abuse | 22,6 |
| Drug Addiction | 5,4 |
| Sexually Transmissible Diseases | 2,0 |
| Tuberculosis | 0,6 |
| Chronic Diseases | 2,2 |
| Other Diseases | 2,8 |

Table 4 – Homeless individuals according to their health problems, in Lisbon.

(Source: Adapted of CML, 2007).

All the previous data allows us to design a general profile of Lisbon’s homeless individuals. BAPTISTA (2004, p.35) synthetically claims that these individuals main characteristics are *“pertencerem ao sexo masculino, na sua maioria, serem, em geral, solteiros e com fracas ou inexistentes relações familiares ou outras redes de suporte, em situação de desemprego e/ou apresentando percursos laborais quase sempre em sectores marcados pela instabilidade, registando baixos*

níveis de escolaridade e, frequentemente, também evidenciando saúde (física e/ou mental) debilitada, por vezes, associada ao consumo excessivo de álcool”.

Once Lisbon’s homeless population is already characterized it is now imperative to present and analyze the existing support strategies strictly directed to this population’s segment and to try to design new strategic visions/responses able to support the total eradication of the problems inherent to this serious social and anthropological problem.

Capítulo IV

Current Strategies to Support the Homeless in the City of Lisbon

4.1. Brief Historical Perspective

In Portugal, the perceptions about the “street population’s” phenomenon have varied throughout the centuries according to the historical periods, the socioeconomical conjunctures and the country’s political leaders’ ideologies. The recurrent and persistent transformations of the Portuguese society (clearly felt either at a demographic, socioeconomic and even technological level) has inscribed deep structural problems into our society that still today evidence the need for the constitution and implementation of public social inclusion strategies specifically directed to several and diversified segments of the Portuguese population.

Back when king D. Afonso IV⁴⁵ (1291-1357) was the undisputed ruler of Portugal, he approved a decree obligating the kingdom’s workers to live in their jobs’ places. If one wanted to change his job or even lead a life of mendacity he needed the royal permission to do so.

Several years later another legal document, the *Lei das Sesmarias*, approved in the Portuguese city of Santarém (still today a regional capital in Portugal) in the 28th of May 1375 by the king D. Fernando I⁴⁶ (the grandson of D. Afonso IV; 1345-1383) confirmed the previous law by stating that the beggars and the lazy dwelling on the streets were to be immediately arrested by the justice departments of each place. The shortage of people to work in the fields and in the defence of the kingdom provoked by the so-called *Peste Negra* (or Black Plague)⁴⁷ is the most viable explanation for such a radical royal legislation. Mendacity was forbidden to everyone except for those not able to work, like the old people, and the sick and disabled.

⁴⁵ King Afonso IV the Brave was the seventh ruler of the kingdom of Portugal; he reigned from 1325-1357 and he was the first to be entitled as the King of Portugal and the Algarve’s, title stating his conquest of that region historically under Muslim influence.

⁴⁶ King Fernando I the Beautiful was the ninth ruler of the kingdom of Portugal and the last from the country’s first dynasty; he reigned from 1367-1383.

⁴⁷ Pandemics that assaulted Europe in the XIVth century; it is estimated to have killed more than 50 million persons, almost one third of Europe’s total population at that time.

In Portugal's Second Royal Dynasty⁴⁸ several rulers (for example the kings D. João I⁴⁹ (1357-1433) and D. Manuel I⁵⁰ (1469-1521) must be named as two of the most interceptive in these subjects) determined that the ones without work, master or Lord should be arrested and publicly whipped.

During the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries all across Europe we saw the establishment of “*grandes estruturas asilares alternativas à prisão: a criação do Hospital Geral (1656) e dos «dépôts de mendicité» (1764)*” (Bento and Barreto, 2002: 39). Such political answers to poverty did not find their match in Portugal being the “*Misericórdias, as igrejas e os Mosteiros (...) os principais instrumentos de assistência e caridade*” (*Idem: ibidem*).

According to some historians XVIIIth century Lisbon was a place of concentration of multiple groups of poor people such as beggars, jobless, and disabled persons that slept on the streets and did nothing but wander around the city all day long. Suzanne Chantal states that after 1755's devastating earthquake⁵¹ these individuals started to be recurrently imprisoned, and subjected to heavy labors; if caught stealing or practising any other heavy crime they were immediately hanged without a trial.

In the XIXth century “*a vadiagem era criminalizada tendo como base a inexistência de domicílio certo e a capacidade para o trabalho*” (Chantal, 2002: 41).

In the 12th of August of 1905 the *Regulamento Policial de Mendigos na Cidade de Lisboa* (regulatory document directed to conduct Lisbon's police forces' actions towards mendacity) was published. The so-called *polícia de inspecção administrativa*⁵² was entitled

⁴⁸ The Second Royal dynasty was called “Dinastia de Avis” and it ruled Portugal between 1385 (following a succession crisis and a civil war ranging from 1383 to 1385) and 1580.

⁴⁹ King João I the One of Good Memory was the tenth ruler of the kingdom of Portugal, and the first from the country's second dynasty; he reigned from 1385-1433.

⁵⁰ King Manuel I the Venturous was the fourteenth ruler of the kingdom of Portugal; he reigned from 1495-1521 and most of Portugal's overseas conquests and discoveries were achieved during his period.

⁵¹ This was a shattering seismic episode that affected mainly the cities of Lisbon, Setúbal and several others in Algarve. The number of estimated casualties is over 10 thousand placing it as one of the most deadly earthquakes in the world's modern history.

⁵² Name of a police group created by a law approved by King Carlos' I Minister João Franco (dated from the August of 1893) according to which a new reform of the justice and police sectors (that would affect these sectors' structures until the 1920's) was to be undertaken. This *polícia de inspecção administrativa* was intended to develop effective means to supervise the moral, the hygiene and the public conveniences (Diário do Governo n. ° 194, de 30 de Agosto).

with the task of coordinating the implementation of that document's measures. This police authority developed a very intensive work marked by multiple arrests and purges organized to banish homelessness from Lisbon's city streets.

In 1912 the legal document "*Lei da Vadiagem*" was published. It was supposedly created to answer to "*as preocupações regeneradoras do governo republicano em relação aos mendigos e vadios. A mendicidade é autorizada, desde que seja apresentada uma licença própria para o efeito. E prevê a criação de dois novos espaços para a correção do vadio: a colónia penal agrícola e a casa correcional de trabalho*" (Bento and Barreto, 2002:42).

According to the same author, at the time of this law's approval Lisbon's city already had some asylums ("asilo" in Portuguese) and hostels (called "albergues" or "albergarias") specifically directed for the indigent persons: the "Albergaria de Lisboa" (created in 1913), the "Albergue Nocturno" (alternatively named as "Albergue D. Luís I"), the "Asilo de Marvila", the "Asilo de Nossa Senhora do Amparo" and the "Asilo de D. Maria Pia" (established in 1867). Besides these supportive institutions it is also to underline the work of other entities such as the "*Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa*". This last one was very important in the approval of the legal Decree n. ° 15.778, dated from the 23rd of July of 1928 that created some responses (e.g. the *Cozinhas Económicas*, the *Sopa dos Pobres* and the *balneários*) to the increasing apprehension about the poor and homeless persons' hygiene.

During the Estado Novo⁵³ mendacity affirmed itself as a social phenomenon in Portugal, characteristic of the country's main urban centers. The increasing rural exodus that took place during this period led to the overpowering convergence of peoples to the main littoral cities (especially Lisbon) looking for work and sometimes trying to make the best use of public charity initiatives, that used to be more common in the urban sites. Lisbon was "invaded" by adventurous individuals and fake vagabonds that mixed among the true poor and homeless persons intending to lead an easy but deceiving way of life in the city. Sometimes frustrated with their plans' failure these individuals adopted deviant

⁵³ Name attributed to the Portuguese authoritarian regime installed in 1933, following the army-led coup d'état of May, 28th, 1926 against the democratic First Republic of Portugal.

behaviors threatening public order and the citizens' safety. This scenario led the State⁵⁴ to establish a set of rules and procedures to be implemented by the city's police forces destined to prevent and repress mendacity in the streets, not only of Lisbon but of all the villages and towns of the country.

One of these legal measures promulgated the creation of the *albergues distritais para mendigos*. The intention of this law was the constitution of a series of hostels for beggars functioning under the "Comandos Distritais da Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP)" (regional departments of the Portuguese Public Safety Police) scope. Therefore, these infra-structures should be created in every district capital (Decreto-Lei n. ° 30.389, de 20 de Abril de 1940).

The persons suspected to be facing a mendacity and/or homelessness situation started to be detained and temporarily "hospitalized" in these district hostels, at least until their situation was assessed and resolved.

A relevant aspect of this law was the differentiation between the ones begging because of a poverty condition and those doing it for laziness and/or addictions. The "really poor people", meaning those without a job and/or economic resources to maintain an honourable and dignified living, were allowed to stay in the hostels for larger periods of time.

The ones able to work were engaged, under police surveillance, in an occupation both in the public sector, normally in the municipality's and church's public works departments, or in private domestic services. We can say that the PSP was then performing supportive tasks in a way that leads us to almost consider them as precursors of the current Lisbon's municipality *Serviços de Proximidade* ("Proximity Services").

The Law n. ° 365 dispatched on the 15th of May of 1976 institutes significant changes in the understanding and comprehension of homelessness. It assumed mendacity as a consequence of each community's level of socioeconomic and cultural development caused by the impossibility to gather economic resources to live (either it is

⁵⁴ The legal document Decree n. ° 19.687, dated from May 4th 1931, officially established the repression of mendacity in the streets and public spaces.

by motives of old age, physical or emotional disabilities or illnesses, and/or unemployment) and by psychological sources (namely each individual's emotional instability and/or deviant behaviors).

Nowadays the Portuguese Republic's legal structure does not forbid street dwelling. Police authorities and support institutions can intervene only when the homeless individuals allow them to do so.

In the 1980's and 1990's we watched the emergence of deep changes in the Portuguese society, economic system and demographic structures; most of these transformations resulted from the country's rural exodus and consequent urban explosion. The urban centers (and especially Lisbon's city) are now massively populated, filled up with immigrants that came looking for a better life. Many of them, unable to find a job were not able to pay a rent and so they "plunged on the streets". Homelessness increased and became a more visible phenomenon than ever in Portugal.

4.2. Existing Answers in the City of Lisbon

Some of Lisbon's contemporary homelessness alleviation equipments (namely two shelters⁵⁵, respectively in the neighborhoods of Beato and Xabregas) were created during the late 1990's especially throughout and just after the EXPO' 98⁵⁶.

Now that we have already presented an historical perspective on homelessness in Portugal it is essential to lay some attention to the identification of the current answers available for such a social segment. More than merely enunciating the list of sleeping and sheltering places existing in Lisbon we will now try to recognize and present the structures that enable these individuals to satisfy their basic needs (such as food and hygiene); to have psycho-social and medical support; or to find a job or at least a day-to-day occupation.

⁵⁵ In a recent restructuring of the available infra-structures and equipments directed to help Portugal's homeless persons held by the national Social Security, the shelters changed its official name from "Centro de Abrigo" (literally meaning "Shelter Center") to "Centro de Alojamento Temporário" (literally meaning "Temporary Housing Center").

⁵⁶ Expo'98 is the short name attributed to the world renowned Lisbon's International Summit of 1998 that took place in the city of Lisbon between May and September of 1998.

The basics of the previous information can be found in a report presented by the Group for the Homeless Person (translated from the original “Grupo de Trabalho para a Pessoa Sem-Abrigo”). This working group was responsible for the manufacturing of the *Plano da Cidade para a Pessoa Sem-Abrigo – Lisboa* (PCPSAL) (“Lisbon’s City Plan for the Homeless Person”), dated from April 2009, which presented the city’s strategic answers to alleviate its homelessness problems.

One of the main conclusions of this working group’s report is the perception of *“a existência de respostas no território (...) como de suporte e vocacionadas, as primeiras com uma finalidade de intervenção que não se esgota na população sem abrigo, e que se estende ao vasto conjunto da população em situação de exclusão social. Considerando-se como respostas vocacionadas as que priorizam e privilegiam a pessoa sem abrigo como objecto de intervenção”* (PCPSAL, 2009: 31).

From the many answers and strategies presented by that report we will center our attention in the so-called “Homelessness Directed Answers” (*“Respostas Vocacionadas”*).

Picture 21 enables us to acknowledge the existence of various types of service directly created and developed for the fulfillment of two of homeless people’s basic needs – shelter and food. Nevertheless, and considering the diagnosis presented in Chapter 3 and the information contained in Table 5, we can start by anticipating that we believe that the number of beds available (less than 500) is imminently insufficient to provide help to all of Lisbon’s homeless individuals (even when we are solely considering the universe contacted by the street teams they are almost 1.200).

Table 5 also presents other interesting results. There are 13 homelessness outreach street teams working in Lisbon. Only 8 of them work during the night, distributing food and clothes to the homeless; the remaining have mainly motivational and educational purposes.

The same “chart” notices that there is only one social canteen and one treatment service working all year long. Both of these services are coordinated by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa.

The shelters only provide dinner, breakfast and a sleeping place. The users must abandon the premises right after the first meal of the day. This creates an important

temporal hiatus concerning these people’s daily sheltering and support needs. The constitution and organization of more Occupational Workshops to be operating during the day is manifestly a “must do”.

| REDE VOCACIONADA | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | Entidades | Equipamentos | Resposta | |
| COMUNIDADE DE INSERÇÃO | AMI - Fundação de Assistência Médica Internacional | Centro Porta Amiga das Orlas | Comunidade de Inserção | |
| | CAIS - Associação de Solidariedade Social | Centro CAIS Lisboa | Comunidade de Inserção | |
| EQUIPA DE RUA | AMI - Fundação de Assistência Médica Internacional | Equipa de Rua | Equipa de Rua | |
| | Centro de Apoio Ao Sem Abrigo | Equipa de Rua CASA | Equipa de Rua - distribuição de alimentos | |
| | Centro Social do Exército de Salvação | Equipa de Rua | Equipa de Rua | |
| | CML/ Departamento Acção Social | Equipa de Rua ERASA | Equipa de Rua | |
| | Comunidade de Sto Egidio | Equipa de Rua | Equipa de Rua - distribuição de alimentos | |
| | Comunidade Vida e Paz | Espaço Aberto ao Diálogo | Equipa de Rua - distribuição de alimentos | |
| | Igreja Evangélica do Sétimo Dia | Equipa de Rua | Equipa de Rua - distribuição de alimentos | |
| | Legião Boa Vontade | Equipa de Rua | Equipa de Rua - distribuição de alimentos | |
| | Médicos do Mundo (Associação) | Noite Saudável - Unidade Móvel | Equipa de Rua Para Pessoas Sem Abrigo | |
| | Movimento ao Serviço da Vida | Equipa de Rua Projecto Sentidos | Equipa de Rua | |
| | Novos Rostos Novos Desafios | Equipa de Rua Cidade Segura | Equipa de Rua | |
| | Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa | Serviço de Emergência Social | Equipa de Rua | |
| | VITAE - Associação de Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento Internacional | Equipa de Rua - ETIR | Equipa de Rua | |
| CENTRO DE ALOJAMENTO TEMPORÁRIO | AMI - Fundação de Assistência Médica Internacional | Centro de Abrigo da Graça | Centro de Alojamento Temporário | |
| | Associação dos Albergues Nocturnos de Lisboa | Albergue Nocturno | Centro de Alojamento Temporário | |
| | Centro Social do Exército de Salvação | Centro de Acolhimento Temporário para Sem Abrigo - Xabregas | Centro de Alojamento Temporário | |
| | Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa | Centro de Apoio Social dos Anjos | Centro de Alojamento Temporário Mãe d'Água | Centro de Alojamento Temporário |
| | | | Centro de Alojamento Temporário (Extensão) | Centro de Alojamento Temporário de Emergência |
| | VITAE - Associação de Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento Internacional | Centro de Acolhimento para os Sem Abrigo de Lisboa | Centro de Alojamento Temporário | |
| REFEITÓRIO CANTINA SOCIAL | Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa | Centro de Apoio Social dos Anjos | Refeitório/Cantina Social | |
| ATELIER | Associação Crescer na Maior | Atelier Ocupacional | Atelier Ocupacional | |
| | Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa | Centro de Apoio Social dos Anjos | Atelier Ocupacional e Sala de Convívio | |
| | | Centro de Apoio Social de São Bento | Atelier Ocupacional | |
| ATENIMENTO | Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa | Serviço de Emergência Social | Atendimento/Acompanhamento Social | |

Picture 21 – “Directed Responses” Available to Lisbon’s Homeless Population.

(Source: PCPSAL, 2009: 33).

The analysis of all the previous information (and the one presented in the following table) would allow us to achieve many conclusions. Synthetically we can assume that probably the most important of them is the fact that the majority of the answers and/or support structures available in Lisbon are directed to the satisfaction of the homeless people’s basic needs, un-strategically not considering their effective and long-lasting social inclusion.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Inclusion or Reintegration Communities | 2 |
| Outreach Street or Field Teams | 13 |
| Shelters (Total Number of Beds – 494) | 8 |
| Social Canteens | 1 |
| Occupational Workshops | 3 |
| Treatment and Care Services | 1 |

Table 5 – Structures for homeless people in Lisbon that were considered as “Directed Responses” according to several categories.

(Source: PCPSAL, 2009: 33).

4.3. Strategies and social inclusion policies

4.3.1. In Europe

According to the “Joint Report on Inclusion”, social inclusion is a process that ensures people in poverty and social exclusion situations will have access to the opportunities and resources necessary to fully participate in the economic, social and

cultural spheres and to benefit from a standard of living and wellbeing considered normal in the society they live in.

The official realization of the urgency of the fight against poverty in Europe has happened over 35 years ago. The Council of Paris, in 1972, brought a need to elaborate a social action program. This was the origin of the “European Anti-Poverty Programs”.

The first European Program was created in 1975, in the aftermath of the oil crisis, which aggravated the socio-economic problems of the majority of the European space, mainly amongst the more underprivileged social classes. That program was essentially oriented towards investigation, that is, to the knowledge about the phenomenon, since different societies in European countries were facing the “non disappearance” of poverty and the rise of new problems. Thus, it was necessary to clarify the concepts of “poverty” and “deprivation”; it was the first admission of not knowing enough about this problem within the European Community. In short, its main goals were “(...) *promover a inovação, estimular o debate público, favorecer a estruturação de redes de agentes e desenvolver ações de informação associando reflexão e prática (...)*”⁵⁷.

From 1979 to 1985 (the year that saw the birth of the second “Anti-Poverty Program” – 1985 to 1989) there was an interruption to gather statistic data about poverty in Member-States, to exchange knowledge, to coordinate actions and to develop scientific investigation processes, also enabling the constitution of transnational teams for the discussion and application of new methods in the fight against poverty⁵⁸.

In 1989 the “III European Anti-Poverty Program (1989-1994)” began. Its main purpose was to evolve from the exploratory stage that had characterized the first two programs. It intended to achieve three great goals:

- To contribute to a deeper knowledge and awareness of poverty and social exclusion issues;

⁵⁷ - Cf. REAP – *Lutar Contra a Pobreza e a Exclusão na Europa – Guia de Ação e Descrição das Políticas Sociais*, Instituto Piaget, Lisboa (1998:75).

⁵⁸ *Idem* (1998:76)

- To promote experimentation of new strategies to fight poverty, especially through innovative methods, adopted policies and model-practices, and to stimulate the debate about the actions and their results;
- To fundament the recommendations for policies directed to the homeless on local/regional, national and supranational levels.

The European Anti-Poverty Programs ended in 1994 and until the year 2000 there was no joint European strategy, leading each Member-State to adopt its own strategy.

Since then, we have concluded that the fight against poverty and social exclusion, as well as the promotion of social inclusion, have been a strategic priority of the European Union (EU). In March 2000, the Lisbon European Council defined a new strategic goal for Europe, expressed in the “Lisbon Triangle” formula: economic growth, more and better employment and more social cohesion. The main political corner of this strategic goal is the “Open Method of Coordination (OMC)”⁵⁹ in the field of social inclusion. The OMC is based on a series of common goals that must be transposed by the Member-States into their internal policy, through National Action Plans on Inclusion (NAPIs). The EU’s main goal is to promote the eradication of poverty and social exclusion from its territory by the year 2010. At Lisbon European Council, the EU Member-States accepted the challenge to fight poverty and social exclusion as one of the central elements of the modernization of a European social policy.

These efforts in the fight against poverty and social exclusion must be supported and broadened in order to improve the position of the most vulnerable, such as precarious workers, long-term unemployed people, single-parent families, deprived children, ethnic minorities and the ill and/or handicapped. Because the less-favored have bigger difficulties in entering and remaining in the labor market, Member-States must support their integration, in order to prevent and fight social exclusion as well as to

⁵⁹ The OMC is based on common goals and targets: preparing the NAPI, through which Member-States present the policies they propose to implement; common indicators; and Joint Reports for the Plans Evaluation, made by the European Commission.

promote education, encourage job creation and ensure the sustainability of the social protection systems.

The “Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion”, presented in 2005 by the European Commission, reveals that the Member-States are intensifying their efforts to fight poverty and to ensure that pension schemes remain able to warrant the pensioners appropriate income. They are also focusing on fundamental issues, such as eliminating child poverty, improving living conditions and promoting the qualification of those that abandon the school system early.

We should also mention that the European Community Commission in 2003 had already acknowledged the homeless phenomenon as a complex issue that doesn't solely respect to the lack of housing. Many homeless people fight numerous problems (mental and physical illness, unemployment, etc) that drag them to a spiral of poverty. Therefore, in the words of the Commission *“é essencial não enfocar apenas as pessoas que vivem na rua, mas considerar o fenómeno dos sem-abrigo numa perspectiva mais abrangente”*.

The Spring 2006 European Council, developing the Lisbon Strategy, announced a group of new common goals for social protection and inclusion, comprising three of the OMC aspects: social inclusion; pensions; health and nursing care. They establish the basis for the “National Strategy Report for Social Protection and Social Inclusion”, of which the National Action Plan for Inclusion (NAPI) is an integral part. It defends a global strategy for social inclusion, identifying the main intervention areas and social policies, as well as measures to be implemented according to a specific schedule.

4.3.2. In Portugal

The Portuguese government has been aware of the homeless phenomenon and of the recommendations of the EU and has legislated accordingly. Therefore, there have been several generations of National Action Plans for Inclusion, each lasting two years (for example, the NAPIs of 2001-2003, 2006-2008 and 2008-2010).

In Portugal, the NAPIs have been an instrument for the strategic and operational coordination of social inclusion policies, consolidating actions on different levels and

using a large group of measures. There are several Ministries involved, cooperating to fight poverty and social exclusion, and they are responsible for the creation of sectarian plans directed to the same national strategy. Some examples are the Strategic Plan for Housing, the Strategic Plan for the Integration of Immigrants, the National Employment Plan, the National Health Plan, the National Plan for Drug Abuse and the National Plan for Mental Health.

The 2001-2003 NAPI major challenges were:

- *Eradicating poverty until 2010;*
- *Reducing a poverty rate of 23% in 1995 to 17% until 2005, equaling the European average;*
- *Reducing absolute poverty by 50% until 2005;*
- *Starting 50 “Urban Social Development Contracts” in the next two years, in order to create inclusive cities, based on the convergence of the necessary means and instruments in urban territorial communities, and managed in an integrative manner through the contribution of public, private, national, regional and local players;*
- *Starting the “Rural Space and Social Development” program, integrating several instruments and initiatives for the local integrated development of rural communities;*
- *Ensuring that all social excluded persons are individually approached by local social action services, in an active approach perspective, aiming to sign, within a year, a social insertion contract appropriate to the specific situation and involving (when applicable) measures in the areas of education and training, employment, housing, health, social protection, income and access to services;*
- *Reducing that deadline to three months in case of children and teenagers at risk, using specific measures directed at the return to school or initial training;*
- *Starting a national emergency phone line⁶⁰, properly articulated with district social emergency centers with continuous uninterrupted functioning, to ensure that any citizen in*

⁶⁰ 144 it is the Social Emergency line of Social Security. It is destined to respond immediately to risk and exclusion situations, such as children at risk, abandoned elderly, women victims of domestic violence and homeless people. The Line

an emergency situation – namely homeless people, victims of domestic violence, children at risk – is directed to primary care and shelter services” (NAPI, 2001-2003:10).

In this plan we find “new social categories of exclusion”, including children at risk, prisoners and ex-prisoners, drug abusers and homeless people. Also, there is a reference to the territories where these problems are concentrated, particularly in urban areas, where “(...) *habitação degradada, a marginalidade ou clandestinidade de alguns dos residentes, a quase ausência ou dificuldade de acesso a infra-estruturas, serviços e equipamentos básicos, o frequente funcionamento das instituições em níveis de qualidade mais baixos, entre outras carências, marcam a vida nestas comunidades onde a pobreza tende a perdurar e a transmitir-se de geração em geração (...)*” (NAPI 2001-2003:6).

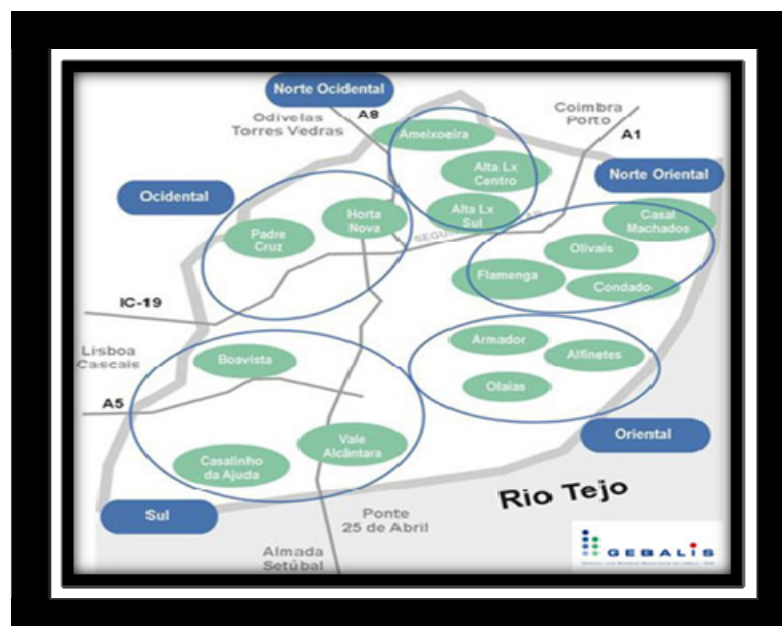
There was an intention to “territorialize” the interventions and differentiate them according to the categories rural/urban. Around this time, several measures and programs that showed this concern were initiated (for example, the creation of the “Educational Territories of Priority Intervention” (ETPI) and the “Special Relocation Plans” (SRP)⁶¹ that predicted the total eradication of slums in Lisbon and Oporto Metropolitan Areas.

In Lisbon, several slums that had emerged throughout the years in the city were demolished, as well as the provisional districts of *Estado Novo* (districts of Relógio, Boavista, Quinta da Calçada, Horta Nova, Furnas, Padre Cruz) that the then Lisbon Town Councilor for Housing (Vasco Franco) once called the mark of a political regime that took democracy some time to eradicate.

To understand how many barracks (with bad living conditions) existed and motivated the relocation of the families, we will say that within the Lisbon SRP (Picture 23), 23.398 houses were built, spread along 2.117 lots.

is answered by psychologists, jurists and social services professionals that call the district teams that will render the necessary support and shelter.

⁶¹ Created through the Decree-Law n. ° 163/93, of May 7th (Decreto-Lei n° 163/93, de 7 de Maio), aiming to grant financial subventions to the Municipalities, in order to build, purchase or rent houses destined to relocate families from slums and similar housing.



Picture 23 – Social housing in the city of Lisbon
(Source: GEBALIS)

In this manner, the development of Lisbon’s municipal housing park grew more intense, now comprising 69 municipal districts with a total population of about 81.900 inhabitants.

These social policies and programs have created important synergies in the different actions foreseen in the Plan, with a local development philosophy and with intervention at a micro level, claiming this is the one way to solve these problems.

The 2006-2008 NAPI analyses the evolution of poverty and the identification of the more vulnerable groups, such as children, women, big families, elderly people, etc. It also depicts a national overview of the socio-economic situation, labor market, education and training and also health.

Following a recent orientation of the EU, a limited number of political priorities was adopted:

- *Fighting child and elderly poverty through measures that will secure their basic citizenship rights;*

- *Correcting the handicaps in education and training/ qualification;*
- *Overcoming discrimination and strengthening the integration of the disabled and of immigrants (...)" (NAPI, 2006-2008:9).*

These were the priorities upon which the measures identified within the inclusion strategy were based, aiming to warrant the citizens' access to goods and services, resources and rights. In order to promote equal opportunities and to ensure the participation in a socially cohesive society, this Program obeys to the following principles:

- *The consecration of citizenship basic rights such as the right to employment and to basic support to insertion and also the exercise of civil rights, culture, education, decent housing and participation in social and cultural life;*
- *The responsibility and mobilization of the whole society and of each individual for the effort to eradicate situations of poverty and exclusion, particularly contracting social protection responses;*
- *The integration and multi-dimension seen as the convergence of economic, social and environmental measures towards the development and promotion of local communities and aiming at the convergence of synergies and the congregation of resources;*
- *The appropriate combination of universality and positive differentiation, i.e., the assurance that all citizens are treated equally in the fulfillment of the social inclusion goals, respecting the diversity of their situations and needs and the relationship with resources and opportunities;*
- *The territorialization of the interventions as an approach and as adequacy to local specificities, there creating dynamics to potentiate the resources and competences;*
- *The recognition of the importance of equal opportunities and gender perspective as a form of ensuring the exercise of rights both in public and in private domains. (NAPI, 2006-2008:45-46).*

Under these guiding principles, the Government tries to involve and mobilize the Portuguese society to the eradication of poverty, the promotion of positive discrimination and a special consideration for territorial specificities, acting on the problems' causes and not just on their exterior signs.

Within social protection measures, we will mention the Social Insertion Income (SII), created in 2003. It consists of a pecuniary payment included in the solidarity subsystem, and of a social insertion program of mandatory subscription for the recipients. It's destined to ensure individuals and their family units have resources that contribute to the satisfaction of their basic needs and that favor their progressive social, labor and communitarian insertion. It amounts to EUR 187,18 € per month and varies with the size of the family unit and/or certain situations such as disabilities, chronic diseases, dependent people, etc. Although it's not exclusively destined to the homeless population, this group of people also benefit from such measure.

In March 2008, the EU launched a guide to the preparation of National Reports for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2011. Such guide states that the first cycle of the OCM is nearly concluded. Therefore, the Social Protection Committee and the European Commission recommend the maintenance of the Common Objectives adopted in the European Council of 2006, continuing in a three year cycle “(...) *alinhado com a Estratégia para o Crescimento e Emprego (...)*”.

The guide recommends that National Reports for Social Protection and Social Inclusion should consist of four chapters: the first chapter will make the social characterization of each Member-State's social situation and will finish with the presentation of the strategy that particular country will adopt in this new cycle. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 must identify the progresses made in the National Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSSPSI) and the challenges enumerated in the Joint Report 2007, the development of the priorities enumerated in the Report 2006-2008 and the main challenges, priority goals, targets and recommendations of each country.

Hence, the political goals set for Social Inclusion in the 2008-2010 period are organized in three areas:

- *“Combater a pobreza das crianças e dos idosos, através de medidas que assegurem os seus direitos básicos de cidadania;*
- *Corrigir as desvantagens na educação e formação/qualificação;*
- *Ultrapassar as discriminações, reforçando a integração de grupos específicos, nomeadamente: pessoas com deficiências e incapacidades, imigrantes e minorias étnicas”* (NSSPSI, 2008:30).

In this document, just as in the previous ones, the elderly and the children are still privileged recipients, with an intention to fight poverty in these specific groups. It is never enough to say that in the path set by the European Social Charter, the fight against poverty is today a basic right of citizens and the failure to eradicate it endangers our life in democracy. According to a report on the Social Situation in the European Union (2007), Portugal (as Lithuania) is one of the countries where more social inequalities exist and persist: our gap between the rich and the poor is still the biggest in the EU. This report claims that in Portugal there is a 6,9% gap, while the European average is 4,9%.

It is also notable that of all the NAPIs, the one currently in effect (2008-2010) is the one that defines, for the first time, concrete measures and actions directed at the homeless population. By the way, that document declares that the *“(...) crescente complexidade da exclusão social tem acentuado a visibilidade do problema da população Sem-Abrigo, desafiando respostas que se ajustem ao perfil de défices evidenciados (...)”* (NSSPSI, 2008:29). In this line of thought, the government believes in putting into practice measures that lead to a strategy directed to *“(...) o seu enquadramento e para uma intervenção reforçada (...)”* (Idem:29).

Therefore, it's the government's wish that 80% of the people identified as homeless will be enrolled in Individual Plans for Social Reinsertion until the end of 2010 and will be individually monitored.

According to the NAPI, there is much ignorance about the number of homeless people in Portugal. It is known that those are mostly male, in active age (30-49 years),

single or divorced, of Portuguese nationality, with basic schooling and mainly concentrated in Oporto and in Lisbon.

So, one of the measures to implement by the end of 2009 is the creation of an information and monitoring system for this phenomenon. The government declared that until the end of 2010 it will make this database available on the Internet and it will ensure that all public and private entities, nationwide, will use the information and monitoring system.

Earlier in this section about policies and strategies to promote social inclusion in the Portuguese case, we mentioned that there are several Ministries involved in the NAPI and that they are responsible for a number of Sectarian Plans. We must specifically address one of those – the National Plan for Mental Health 2007-2016 (NPMH), approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers n.º 49/2008.

On chapter III we identified some health problems of the national homeless population, with a special mention to “mental disease”, with 11,4% of the cases. It is truly a group where there is a high incidence of mental illnesses and that “(...) *requer programas especialmente desenhados para as suas necessidades específicas. Além de apresentarem uma morbilidade geral muito mais alta do que a população em geral, deparam-se, em regra, com inúmeras barreiras no acesso aos cuidados prestados pelos serviços de saúde disponíveis (...)*” (Resolution of the Council of Ministers n.º 49/2008:11). To that effect, the National Plan for Mental Health proposes to develop “(...) *um projecto piloto para tratamento de Pessoas Sem Abrigo(...)*” (NPMH, 2007-2016:53).

This Plan lays down the deinstitutionalization of serious mental patients (NPMH, 2007-2016:20) in order to “give them back” to their community and their family. But if no services and programs are created to that effect, we may have the same consequences that occurred in Italy, in the United Kingdom or even in the United States of America. In these countries, deinstitutionalization gave way to a process of trans-institutionalization, i.e., the people that were taken out of the psychiatric institutions were unable to integrate in the communities and ended up being excluded from society and, for example, becoming homeless.

4.4. Homelessness Oriented Strategies

4.4.1. National Strategy for the Integration of the Homeless – 2009-2015

As stated in the previous section, social inclusion strategies and policies do not acknowledge specific measures for the homeless population, except for those included in the NAPI 2008-2010 (an mentioned above). Actually, we may even question if this is a correct intention.

Some experts believe there should be strategies exclusively directed to the homeless, due to that population's specificities.

To Marybeth Shinn (2007), social policies that promote and reduce social inequalities and provide income and other forms of support to those that occupy the bottom layer of the income distribution pyramid are usually associated to low levels of homeless people in the developed world. She also claims that “(...) *the allocation of subsidies, patterns of social exclusion, and individual levels of economic, social, and human capital interact to influence who becomes homeless. Interventions to reduce homelessness at one level (e.g., social policy) can counteract vulnerabilities at a different level (e.g., individual risk factors) (...)*” (Shinn, 2007:657).

Certain authors refer that the individual characteristics of each person interact with social exclusion policies and patterns and influence who becomes homeless. It is very important to understand the *causes* because only based on that knowledge we will be able to direct the policies and intervention theories.

There is a distinction between universal social policies and those that are specifically directed to the homeless. The first include “(...) *tax policy as well as social welfare and housing programs that attempt to combat poverty and social exclusion (...)*” (Shinn, 2007:658). In Portugal, for example, social transferences to a certain segment of the population are an important instrument for the budget and lives of poor people. However Shinn considers that “(...) *social policies can shape the composition as well as the numbers of homeless people in each country (...)* and homelessness is not simply a surprising short-term anomaly, but an

entrenched modern phenomenon in developed nations, which will require concerted efforts to alleviate (...)". (*Idem*: 662-664).

Therefore, it is important to observe the following contextual aspects:

- In November 2008, the 17th meeting of the Ministers responsible for housing in the EU produced a Recommendation that stated that all policies associated with the homeless phenomenon should be considered within the European Year for the Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion – 2010;
- The goals defined in the NAPIs concerning the risk of exclusion of some of the more vulnerable groups (namely the homeless) have been a major concern of the Portuguese government;
- There is insufficient knowledge about this phenomenon in Portugal;
- It is necessary to involve all the stakeholders in the identification of the problems, the causes and their solution; and
- There is still a need to enable and make a profit of the existing resources.

Given this scenery, the Portuguese Government decided to create a "(...) *Grupo Interinstitucional, cuja missão foi a de desenvolver uma Estratégia Nacional*⁶², (...) *com vista, não só a cumprir as directrizes europeias nesta matéria, mas também a implementar um conjunto de medidas que permita criar condições para que sejam despistadas e acompanhadas as situações de risco prevenindo a perda de habitação, e garantindo que ninguém tenha de permanecer sem alojamento condigno*" (NSIHP:5).

This Group was created in May 2007 and coordinated by the Social Security Institute (SSI). It consists of a group of public and private institutions⁶³.

⁶² National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People – 2009-2015 (NSIHP).

⁶³The following entities are represented in the Group: **Public entities**: ACIDI, IP; ACS; ANMP; CIG; DGS; DGSS; DGRS; DGSP; GNR; IDT; IEFP; IHRU; ISS, IP; LNEC; PSP; ENSP; **Private entities**: CNIS; REAPN; SCML; FNERDM; U. MISERICÓRDIAS; CESIS, FEANTSA's Observatory.

The National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People (NSIHP) establishes a set of general guidelines and more specific commitments for public and private entities and bases on respect for individual and citizenship rights.

It proposes that their implementation should occur on a local level, through Local Action Councils (Social Network⁶⁴), “(...) *com base em planos específicos e adequados às necessidades locais identificadas (...)*” (NSIHP:6).

Considering that this Strategy is directed to a well defined target group, it was necessary to harmonize a concept that after being approved by the Strategy (14/03/2009) is in effect in Portugal within the Strategy’s implementation:

“*Considera-se pessoa sem-abrigo aquela que, independentemente da sua nacionalidade, idade, sexo, condição sócio-económica e condição de saúde física e mental, se encontre:*

- *Sem tecto – vivendo no espaço público, alojada em abrigo de emergência ou com paradeiro em local precário;*
- *Sem casa – encontrando-se em alojamento temporário destinado para o efeito.”*

This concept is inspired in the (ETHOS⁶⁵) typology proposed by FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless) and also used in other European countries. The Strategy considers that this “(...) *conceito deve ser utilizado a nível nacional por todas as entidades públicas e privadas para efeitos de contabilização e caracterização das pessoas sem-abrigo e como base para a apresentação de medidas inseridas nos planos de desenvolvimento social das redes sociais concelhias*” (NSIHP:16).

⁶⁴ The Social Network was created by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers n. ° 197/97, of November 18th. It is a program that promotes local social development and aims to build local support networks that integrate the whole community in order to solve effectively and efficiently the social problems in each local community. It wishes to create effective partnerships between several entities, namely municipalities and non-profit public and private entities in order to create new forms of effort coordination to ensure more effective social responses.

⁶⁵ *European Typology of Homelessness*. FEANTSA believes that the definition of this typology is a form of promoting the understanding and evaluation of the homeless situation in Europe and promoting common language. This definition is built around the *concept of house*. “A FEANTSA considera que existem três elementos que constituem uma casa, e na falta dos quais se esboça a situação sem-abrigo. Ter uma casa pode ser entendido como: ter uma habitação adequada sobre a qual a pessoa e família podem exercer uma posse exclusiva (elemento físico); poder manter a privacidade, conseguir relacionar-se (elemento social) e ter um estatuto legal para ocupação (elemento legal). Isto conduz a quatro principais categorias conceptuais sobre pessoas sem-abrigo: sem tecto, sem casa, em habitação insegura e habitação inadequada” (SPINNEWIJN, 2005: 22-23).

The National Strategy works at three large specific levels: i) prevention (applying to all risk groups) ii) emergency/intervention (action directed to the homeless population), iii) intervention/integration (monitoring and integration of the homeless population). It seeks to build conditions to ensure no one will ever be (or will ever be once more) in a homelessness situation or will ever stay on the street for more than 24 hours. It also wants to ensure no one will have to stay indefinitely in temporary lodgings and to warrant to all citizens access to all social rights, as well as full citizenship exercise.

It is organized around two pillars and has the following strategic goals:

- Pillar 1: Knowledge about the phenomenon, information, awareness and education
 - 1.1 Promoting the use of a single concept of “homeless person” on a national basis;
 - 1.2 Ensuring the phenomenon’s monitoring in order to adequate the responses to the actual needs posed by the problem, by means of an Information and Monitoring System (IMS);
 - 1.3 Ensuring that the Diagnosis and the Social Development Plans of social networks include indicators of the homeless phenomenon;
 - 1.4 Ensuring the permanent updating of the knowledge and of the fight against discrimination;
 - 1.5 Ensuring access to and availability of permanently updated information about this subject and about the existing resources.
- Pillar 2: Information qualification
 - 2.1 Promoting the intervention’s technical quality;
 - 2.2 Ensuring the intervention’s effectiveness and efficiency;
 - 2.3 Ensuring the quality of the responses, of the rendered services and of the operational logistics of fixed or mobile equipments used in supporting the homeless;

- 2.4 Ensuring the existence of responses that guarantee no one will be deinstitutionalized without the previous execution of all necessary measures to grant them an appropriate place to live and all the necessary support, whenever required;
- 2.5 Ensuring no one will stay on the street for more than 24 hours;
- 2.6 Ensuring technical support for as long as necessary after leaving temporary lodging;
- 2.7 Ensuring the existence of conditions that guarantee the promotion of autonomy through the mobilization and contracting of all available resources, according to the diagnosis and the identified necessities: a) Housing – creating lodging conditions by providing publicly and privately owned houses for direct or mediated renting; b) Employment – providing adequate professional training and employment solutions; c) Social protection – to warrant access to all appropriate protection measures; d) Health – ensuring access to health care.

As we have stated in previous chapters, the street population phenomenon has not been much studied in Portugal. Therefore, Pillar 1 prescribes a group of measures that point towards knowing the phenomenon on different levels, in order to compare data, exchange information locally and nation-wide and, above all, “knowing, in order to act better”, that is, to plan intervention and to justify political decision-making.

Other equally important measures are connected to information and motivation and for the “*educação da comunidade em geral para o fenómeno sem-abrigo e outras que contribuem para a mudança das representações sociais discriminatórias associadas a estes problemas (...)*” (NSIHP:17).

Pillar 2 defends a group of measures directed to the promotion of the intervention’s technical quality (through training of the agents that intervene with this population) and of the intervention’s efficiency in the quality/diversity of the responses

given to users. After the diagnosis, the “case manager” emerges *“o qual ficará responsável por acompanhar todo o processo daí em diante”* (NSIHP:23).

Still in Pillar 2, we will refer strategic goal 2.4, which establishes the “import” of New York’s Housing First model through of the production of a pilot-project for 50 homeless people with mental illness. This initiative’s big mission will be to support the mentally ill homeless in the process of searching, selecting, getting and maintaining stable and community integrated housing. The participants in this project contribute with 30% of their monthly income to pay the rent. The monitoring of the residents is done by a team (with one doctor assigned for every ten participants) and is performed in the residential and communitarian context, with no less than six house visits per month, per participant. Support to the residents is guaranteed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The other available services in this pilot-project are the support to employment and education, the creation of a mutual assistance and empowerment center, various sports and leisure activities and “crisis support”.

Note also that this Pilot-Project’s external consultant will be Prof. Sam Tsemberis, of “Pathways to Housing”. Prof. Marybeth Shinn, from Vanderbilt University will be responsible for evaluation and monitoring.

On a residential level other solutions are projected, namely collective residencies for population groups with specific and temporary housing necessities.

4.4.2. City Plan for the Homeless Person – Lisbon

In 2007 a Work Group was created within the Lisbon Social Network, represented by 13 institutions⁶⁶ that work with the homeless and whose mission was to conceive an intervention model for the city of Lisbon that contemplates response typologies, articulation systems and integrated intervention strategies directed to the

⁶⁶ AMI – Fundação de Assistência Médica Internacional; Associação Ares do Pinhal; Associação Novos Rostos...Novos Desafios; CAIS – Associação de Solidariedade Social; CIC – Associação para a Cooperação, Intercâmbio e Cultura; Movimento ao Serviço da Vida/Grupo de Reflexão; Médicos do Mundo (Associação); Alto Comissariado para a Saúde Mental; Câmara Municipal de Lisboa; Comando Metropolitano da Polícia de Segurança Pública de Lisboa; Instituto de Segurança Social IP/Centro Distrital de Lisboa; Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa; e o Grupo Técnico da Rede Social de Lisboa.

homeless person, as well as to implement measures and programs associated with the plan's operation. In other words, to contribute in an articulate manner to help the homeless person raise conditions/competences for his/her insertion/independence on a social level (CPHP, 2009).

Data gathered by the monitoring done by Street Teams in 2007 were used to characterize the street population in Lisbon. To ensure that all the agents working directly or indirectly with this population participated in the Plan, a forum was organized and many valuable contributions for the elaboration of the Plan were selected.

Lisbon's City Plan for the Homeless Person (CPHP) was approved on May 4th, 2009 and seeks to center and integrate interventions on the homeless. It stands on three intervention pillars: Pillar 1 – Enabling the Network of Support Services and Equipments towards the homeless individual; Pillar 2 – Implementing a Model of Integrated Intervention in the city of Lisbon; and Pillar 3 – Improving and Qualifying Intervention.

Pillar 1 wants to achieve an Integrated Management of Recourses/Intervention Responses in the city of Lisbon. In short a “(...) *conjunto de acções que visa a articulação intersectorial, a tipificação e orientação das respostas para o bem estar da população e a elaboração de um Plano de respostas específicas (...)*” (CPHP:41). It must be noted that this Group faced great difficulties in defining structures/responses for the city, because it realized there was no real knowledge of the homeless population in Lisbon and of its need for responses. Thus, it is necessary to know the phenomenon deeply and to know/reorganize the existing responses.

Its main Actions are:

- 1 – The evaluation of the existing responses and the proposal for the development of new models;
- 2 – The construction of an emergency response, monitoring and insertion Plan;
- 3 – The optimization of the “Street Teams” work in signaling and monitoring the homeless;

- 4 – The profitability of food distribution institutions;
- 5 – The evaluation of conditions for the reopening of public baths;
- 6 – The adaptation of geo-referenced systems to the homeless – including the mapping of Lisbon’s equipments;
- 7 – The identification of the zones with bigger concentration of homeless people in order to chose the location for Local Support Centers;
- 8 – The implementation of an Emergency Center with a hosting structure;
- 9- The creation of responses regarding transition housing with appropriate technical monitoring (in a Housing First logic).

Pillar 2 seeks to implement “(...) *um modelo de intervenção integrada, de carácter pró-activo e preventivo, para a pessoa sem-abrigo na cidade de Lisboa através de um outro conjunto de acções, que visa a definição de etapas e circuitos da rede integrada e a garantia duma intervenção coordenada e atempada, centrada na pessoa sem abrigo, de maneira a convergir e suportar as necessidades da população.*

É neste eixo que estão previstas acções no sentido de corresponder a algumas das sugestões referidas com maior insistência no Fórum (e cuja pertinência nos parece ter sido entretanto, confirmada nas reflexões e partilhas de opiniões entre os técnicos)” (CPHP:41).

Amongst other actions, this Pillar establishes the following:

- 1 – Definition of an integrated Intervention Model for the city;
- 2 – Creation of a manual of intervention strategies procedures in view of the risk factors and situations;
- 3 – Definition of the model/functional role of the process/case manager;
- 4 – Creation of a guide defining the principles and the criteria to becoming a process manager;
- 5 – Creation of a digital platform on the subject, with a shared register of entities according to the intervention level, with the variable “online vacancy management”;

6 – Operation of the model, seeking the reintegration and social and professional qualification of the homeless person;

7 – Creation of a website that provides online information about the existing resources and responses for the homeless in Lisbon.

Pillar 3 – Improving and Qualifying the Intervention predicts “(...) *a Formação/qualificação dos agentes, dirigentes e organizações, como um dos pilares fundamentais para qualquer mudança profunda ao nível da intervenção. Essa mudança é consensualmente referida, como sendo necessariamente estrutural e não simplesmente em termos de reorganização superficial de procedimentos. A introdução de elementos e mecanismos de articulação; a clarificação de boas práticas, o envolvimento dos parceiros – quer ao nível técnico, quer ao nível dos dirigentes – e o envolvimento das instituições num modelo integrado de funcionamento são algumas das preocupações centrais do Plano (...)*” (CPHP:42).

Some of the planned Actions are:

1 – Constitution of a training/action program for intervention agents (e.g., about the management/supervision and qualification model of the Third Sector);

2 – Qualification of the technicians for training in integrated answering;

3 – Evaluation of referential good practices;

4 – Training of the leaders in the subject of qualification processes;

5 – Raising the health professionals’ awareness.

To conclude we will mention that this City Plan adheres to the National Strategy, since they were created simultaneously and since one of the members of this Group (High Commissioner for Health) attended both work groups, enabling the mutual knowledge of the developed work. The very concept of “homeless person” is the result of conciliation between both work groups.

Conclusions

The information displayed in the current report strikes us with an immensely important first idea: in the city of Lisbon the total number of beds available to be used by the homeless is not enough to fulfil the entire city's needs. Several studies about homelessness in Lisbon were presented each one of them presenting its own estimates on the number of people dwelling in the streets of Lisbon. In each case, the number was impressively far beyond the city's responses' capacities. Another relevant aspect that has to be underlined is that the estimated numbers are probably quite optimistic. A deeper and more thorough knowledge, monitoring and assessment of the phenomenon would eventually show a larger number of homeless people that managed to keep itself "untouched" by the inquiry street teams.

The previous arguments are enough to justify the need to create new and diversified housing options for the Lisbon's homeless population. They highlight the necessity to increase and diversify the available answers. Existing shelters are little more than "overnight roofs" providing no occupation or treatment during the day. There are no supportive housing initiatives; homeless people are scarcely (re)integrated into the city's housing markets. The Occupational Workshops' numbers and functions must be enforced; their role can be a fundamental one in the promotion of the homeless individuals' daily occupation, medical treatment and even educational qualification.

It is also urgent to improve the various street teams' working conditions. Despite some organizational initiatives implemented by Lisbon's City Council, food distribution is still quite problematic. Logistics and distribution must be supervised and more accurately managed; food distribution teams must be entitled with other functions such as clothing distribution and personal hygiene's promotion initiatives.

Another critical aspect is the promotion of these individuals' social and professional integration and this is one of the greatest deficits of Lisbon's former strategies. These individuals' "basic needs" should be seen in a larger spectrum

broadened in order to include the implementation of either educational, health or housing measures.

“Housing First” (whose results in the reduction of the incidence of homelessness and its associated socioeconomical costs in the US and particularly in New York’s city streets have been impressive) is soon to be implemented in Lisbon. Its application is not consensual. Some people seem to think that it is not adaptable to the Portuguese reality. Some do not believe that it is possible for a homeless people to manage and maintain a home without being “socially re-educated”. We believe to have showed that the doubts and fears happen in this program’s genetic places. Let us hope that the same incredulity that was felt in the US when program started will lead here in Lisbon to the same surprising results that are now happening in cities such as New York.

Whatever are the results of such an initiative we at E-GEO can assure that we will continue to be closely and thoroughly approaching these issues, proposing strategies and impartially, objectively and pro-actively assessing the results of this (and other) programs, interventions and strategies to help homeless people in Lisbon city area and (why not?) in the entire country.

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