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**1988-89 Exploratory Research  
on Enumerating Homeless Individuals  
in Baltimore and Washington**

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1988-89 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON  
ENUMERATING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN  
BALTIMORE and WASHINGTON

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This paper reports the results of research undertaken by Census Bureau staff. The views expressed are attributable to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bureau of the Census.

## ABSTRACT

This study reports the findings of ethnographic research among a variety of homeless people in Baltimore and Washington during 1989 and 1990. The research focused on individual handicaps, daily problems, environmental constraints and patterns of coping behaviors. We concluded that future censuses and surveys will require a clear definition and screening of those who are to be included in the study, some idea of the natural subgroups of the homeless universe, a description of the behavior patterns exhibited by those groups, and an attempt to tailor enumeration and interview methods to their local situations.

A longitudinal multimethod survey is recommended for getting maximum coverage of a homeless population over a year. This requires the collection of personal data to unduplicate records. A snapshot census can produce acceptable results provided that a full range of homeless groups is either sampled or enumerated. Special techniques need to be developed to enumerate the most elusive homeless groups, such as homeless youth, undocumented aliens or drifters. We recommend using the most knowledgeable local people to help design the study, and focusing the efforts on day-time services and nighttime shelters, but also including larger outside sites. Each regional census office should also have an expert on hard-to-enumerate groups.

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IN BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of the dynamics of homeless existence, behaviors, and the barriers these create for enumeration efforts, in order to design better enumeration procedures for future censuses and surveys. The implicit goal of most such censuses or surveys is to obtain better estimates of the numbers of homeless during some specified time period. This is different from the 1990 Census goal of including them in the overall population figures. The impetus for the research came from an evaluation of the S-Night component of the 1988 Census Dress Rehearsal held in St. Louis, MO. The evaluation, conducted by George McCall, from the University of Missouri, concluded that although the shelter counts went reasonably well, the street enumeration had major problems and recommended that "the Bureau should give serious consideration to alternative methods and procedures."

**RESEARCH CONDUCTED:** Exploratory research was conducted in the homeless shelters and streets of Washington, DC and Baltimore, primarily during 1988 and 1989, using standard ethnographic observation and interview techniques. Roughly about one hundred individuals were interviewed, out of which number about a dozen, representing various strata of homeless, became key informants providing the bulk of the information presented here. The research culminated in a successful pilot test of alternate service-based method of enumeration that demonstrated its feasibility. The test was evaluated by a team led by an anthropologist from the University of Maryland. The evaluation of the Dress Rehearsal, our ethnographic research, the pilot test, and its evaluation reached surprisingly consistent conclusions about the nature of the problems confronting any enumeration of the homeless.

**FINDINGS:** The homeless come from all strata in the society, but preponderantly from the lower income "at risk" stratum. They exhibit a gamut of physical, economic, social and mental problems requiring different patterns of coping behaviors that impact on the Census's attempts to enumerate them. Depending on the combination of personal qualities, problems, and resources available, different strategies of adaptation to homelessness lead people into a wide variety of places to seek shelter, food, and other resources to meet their needs giving rise to a number of subpopulations. To the extent there is a patterned consistency in their behaviors, access to such subpopulations is to an extent predictable on the basis of knowledge of their behavior patterns.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Because the varieties of homeless individuals and their different patterns of adaptation to homelessness are still insufficiently understood additional research needs to be done on some of the less known and more elusive subgroups.

After the homeless universe has been mapped subsequent research or enumeration should then proceed with a clear definition and criteria for who is to be included or excluded in it. The criteria must be empirically grounded so that people will not be omitted from the counts by arbitrary considerations, such as prostitution, drug dealing or temporary work, unrelated to their homelessness. Since a very large percentage of the homeless, at any particular time, are in temporary housing or in institutions, those populations should be asked some form of the UHE question to establish their homelessness. Failure to do so will seriously undercount the homeless population.

If a single-shot enumeration of the homeless will be attempted in the future, our recommendation is to use shelters and services as the primary enumeration sites. To improve our chances of getting maximum coverage the shelters, services and other sites should not be defined too narrowly so as not to exclude sites by arbitrary criteria, such as a ceiling on what a motel charges a homeless person for a night. In any case, cooperation by local organizations or individuals serving or acting as advocates for the homeless is needed to learn about, gain access to and facilitate coverage at these sites.

However, since many homeless do not use the services consistently, this procedure should be supplemented by an enumeration of large congregation sites, especially for those subpopulations shunning shelters and services. Regardless of the number of sites used it is clear that any one-shot attempt will miss many of the homeless. A better method might be monitoring sites to catch individuals as they drop in over some specified period of time. If unduplication of large number of individuals can be shown to be feasible, a longitudinal method of enumeration (e.g. over a year) would produce the greatest yield, and be most representative of the entire range of homeless people, since different types of people are homeless at different times of the year.

Regardless of the method employed, local exploratory work needs to be done with the different subpopulations of the homeless to determine their use of shelters, services and congregating sites. Some of this information is already available if the appropriate local experts, such as service providers, outreach workers, and the homeless themselves, are consulted. Their detailed

knowledge of local sites frequented by the homeless should form the basis of any enumeration effort, supplemented and updated by the census or survey teams preparing for the count. Administrative records may still have to be consulted to pick up individuals not picked up by other methods. Because of the large variety of situations under which the homeless can be found, we strongly recommend the development of a toolkit of methods that can be applied to different subpopulations in different circumstances.

## 1988-89 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON ENUMERATING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Census and Census Research on Enumerating the Homeless

The Decennial Census is intended to be a snapshot in time of the entire population of the United States. However it faces a major problem in that many homeless individuals without a stable residence will be missed by the standard address-based procedures. The locations they use for sleeping, eating, work, recreation or meeting other needs are extremely varied, subject to sudden changes not governed by predictable schedules. To include them, special procedures are required to adapt enumeration to their irregular living conditions and behavior patterns. Ethnographic research, which provides accurate descriptions of the conditions of homeless existence, can provide the necessary groundwork to mount better enumeration efforts. This report describes the results of such exploratory research undertaken by the Center for Survey Methods Research to provide the kind of behavioral data required to design plans for the enumeration of homeless people in future censuses, or for conducting surveys to learn more about their needs and problems.

Homeless individuals were included in the census as part of their regular procedures already in the 19th century; for example, about 22,000 "outdoor paupers" were counted in the 1880 Census.<sup>1</sup> In addition, by 1910 the Bureau made special efforts to enumerate mobile, hidden or irregularly housed populations.<sup>2</sup> The Census Bureau had also included a "Casual Count" as a limited part of the 1980 enumeration, but it was not until the 1990 Decennial Census that, in addition to its regular household census and procedures to count persons in group quarters, the Bureau conducted a special one-night nation-wide operation called "Shelter and Street Night," or "S-Night." S-Night was a 14 hour attempt to enumerate the people who spend the night in shelters or at visible street sites, in commercial locations, or come out of abandoned buildings in the early morning hours.<sup>3</sup> The original purpose of S-Night was to count "selected components" of the homeless population nationwide in the Decennial census.<sup>4</sup> The components were defined by preidentified locations where homeless



persons might be encountered, instead of defining homelessness and screening out those who did not meet the criteria.<sup>5</sup>

In preparation for S-Night, the Census Bureau developed an advance list of shelters using national and local government and private sources.<sup>6</sup> This list was supplemented by the knowledge of local officials who were asked to provide additional locations of emergency shelters, missions, low-cost hotels or motels, and other sites where homeless persons or families live, as well as street blocks, places of commerce and abandoned buildings where homeless persons were assumed to spend the night. The list of preidentified sites was used for enumerator assignments; enumeration was scheduled for 6 p.m. to midnight for shelters on March 20th; and 2:00 to 4:00 a.m. for street sites and 4:00 to 6:30 a.m. on March 21 for the abandoned buildings phase. In addition, about 90 percent of the District Offices added street locations and shelters to their lists of sites.<sup>7</sup> The street site boundaries were defined by adjoining streets or other features such as parks, railroad tracks or similar boundaries. The counts were to be conducted within the boundaries of the designated site. Enumerators were instructed to count all visible persons not in uniform, or engaged in obvious money-making activities, except for begging or panhandling.

The Census Bureau began an ethnographic research program on homeless enumeration, starting with the evaluation of the 1988 Dress Rehearsal in St. Louis. The stated purposes of the evaluation were: 1) To understand the night settlement/migration patterns of the homeless; 2) To observe the behavior of homeless people during S-Night (street and shelter phases); 3) To ascertain homeless people's awareness of and attitudes toward the census on and after S-Night; and 4) To measure the completeness of census coverage of the homeless (street only). Their observations led the researchers to believe<sup>8</sup> that the shelter counts went well, but also demonstrated that the street enumeration had major problems causing the authors to state: "we conclude that the Bureau should give serious consideration to alternative methods and procedures."<sup>9</sup> Our research subsequently, at least in part, focused on a search for such alternative methods and procedures.

Before 1988, only a few ethnographic studies existed which could give us some idea of what kind of population and behaviors the

enumerators could expect, even if they could not provide us with estimates of the numbers of the homeless. These studies provide much useful information on the variety of homeless living situations and coping strategies, but because their purpose was not to conduct enumerations they are insufficient to guide census efforts. In addition to the general information they provided, more detailed local data and additional tests of specific enumeration methods were needed. None of the prior sociological or survey-based research efforts provided enough useful information about the range of homeless behaviors to mount a realistic census effort. Even the ones that attempted to count them did not include enough data on the variety of homeless or the range of their behaviors to enable us to take all homeless groups and salient factors, such as degree of mobility, timing of activities or range and types of locations used, into consideration.<sup>10</sup> These were major enumeration issues that needed to be addressed in more detail with specific ethnographic observations.

Building on the St. Louis research findings of 1988, research continued in 1989 with a program of exploratory ethnographic research in Washington and Baltimore, followed by a pilot test of alternate ways to enumerate homeless people in Baltimore in June 1989. The St. Louis research had indicated that the street phase of the S-Night enumeration could be improved and that a daytime count of the homeless at soup kitchens and other daytime service facilities might provide a better alternative for future censuses.<sup>11</sup> The pilot test compared a test run of the S-Night enumerations with an S-Day enumeration at daytime service facilities serving the homeless. The 1989 Baltimore test also included an independent evaluation of the nighttime street and shelter and daytime service facility components of enumeration conducted by a University of Maryland team of researchers.<sup>12</sup> The ethnographic findings, the results of the pilot test along with its evaluation, and the observations of the test by Census headquarters staff in Baltimore in 1989, provide us with a surprisingly consistent picture of the problems in enumerating the homeless.<sup>13</sup> Our recommendations, made on the basis of the understanding of the actual behaviors of the homeless gained from this research, were intended for improving future enumeration efforts. However, the timing of the research effort precluded its findings from being used to change the 1990 S-Night plans.

To gain an understanding of the dynamics of homeless existence and an awareness of the range and kinds of barriers to enumeration, we conducted firsthand exploratory ethnographic research among the homeless in Washington, D.C. and in Baltimore. By observing how, when, and where the homeless met their needs, we identified which food, shelter, medical and other services they utilized and roughly with what frequency. We designed the daytime service-based enumeration method partly on the basis of these findings. We used what we learned during the exploratory phase in planning for the pilot test which provided many useful insights on enumeration problems.<sup>14</sup> Finally, based on the ethnographic research and the results of the pilot test, we developed a broader set of preliminary recommendations for future research and for more efficient approaches to the enumeration of the homeless.

#### B. Ethnographic Research Methods

Most of our exploratory research was based on an ethnographic methodology consisting of participant observation and interviews of homeless individuals in the natural context of their everyday lives over a sufficiently long period of time to detect regularities in their behavior.<sup>15</sup> Our orientation toward the data is similar to the "grounded theory approach."<sup>16</sup> The data are grounded in, rather than isolated from, their natural settings; the local context is included as part of the phenomenon studied and the meaning of any action observed is derived from its interconnections with other contextual variables rather than abstracted or imposed from outside. Our ethnographic descriptions of homeless life circumstances are based on the understanding of the rules for their behavior and how the rules were applied in natural contexts, rather than on interpretations of incidents as defined by outsiders. We used the criterion of "saturation" as a yardstick of our understanding.<sup>17</sup> When additional observations no longer provided new information to expand our understanding of the conceptual categories being developed, but merely added examples of previously recorded behaviors, those categories were considered saturated.

Our research had several foci, among which the most important were: 1) determination of the varieties of homeless individuals representing the naturally constituted subpopulations among them;

2) locations which these subpopulations frequented on a fairly regular basis (with special attention paid to the resources used by the homeless and the constraints they experienced in meeting their daily needs); 3) any of the procurement, maintenance, defense or diversionary behaviors engaged in by the homeless; 4) scheduling of their activities; 5) the perceptions and evaluations by the homeless of their environment and other people, as well as 6) the norms and rules, e.g. street etiquette, that guide or inform their day-to-day behavior. Additionally, the Census requirements for both S-Night and S-Day procedures were used as criteria for determining what behaviors we should emphasize as relevant for our research.<sup>18</sup>

Because our research was exploratory and not designed to test a hypothesis, we did not draw a random sample of respondents to represent the gamut of homeless populations, or any one stratum among them. We were, however, concerned about getting an understanding of the variety of homeless situations we observed and consciously tried to locate knowledgeable informants from each stratum. In the end we located enough key informants to feel fairly confident that we had gained a good working understanding of the most frequently occurring behavior patterns of homeless men, both the old and young, who comprised the majority of the homeless in the two research areas. When we spoke to individuals, who were familiar with the homeless milieu elsewhere in the country, we found that most of our observations about homeless adaptations held true for other urban areas of similar size; the main differences were in the specific adaptive strategies which were activated on the basis of local distribution of resources.

In order to understand what physical and social realities the homeless had to face, we conducted both visual surveys from a car and exploratory reconnaissance by foot throughout the study areas. We located shelters, service centers, transportation routes, hangouts, hideouts, resting places and many other sites used by the homeless. These surveys also provided background data for understanding the social milieu to which the homeless had to adapt. The author's previous general understanding of urban milieu facilitated a rapid acquisition of an overview of homeless environments as behavior-informing factors.

In addition to observing the physical and social milieus of the homeless, we also needed to learn how they perceived their environments and what kinds of decisions they made that might bear on their movements related to enumeration efforts. This information could be obtained only through personal interviews, which we conducted with a variety of homeless individuals and institutional staff. We consulted shelter, daytime service and other agency directors, managers of various service sites, outreach workers, and any other service staff, who had frequent and continuing contact with the homeless. Although their information helped make sense of how homeless people fit into these milieus, it was not as detailed or accurate as that of the homeless themselves. It provided a useful supplement to other data and occasionally provided topics and questions we might not have thought to address otherwise. Except for the handful of ethnographic studies mentioned earlier, works by "experts" were of little practical value in locating or approaching the homeless. We did make considerable use of the extensive knowledge possessed by some outreach workers, but the best sources of information were the homeless individuals themselves.

We found little difficulty in interviewing most homeless persons, but there were exceptions. In our experience only two categories of individuals presented problems upon approach: 1) the mentally disturbed, whose grasp of reality was sufficiently warped to make normal conversation difficult, if not impossible, and 2) those young Black males who, either due to political radicalism or simple racism, were alienated and hostile toward anyone they thought represented "the MAN." When these individuals came in groups they reinforced each other's anti-white, anti-establishment attitudes and behaviors. The only way of talking to any one of these individuals was by separating him from his associates and interviewing him aside.

The most accurate and most complete information came from about a dozen "key informants," who were homeless themselves.<sup>19</sup> These were individuals chosen on the basis of their being part of, and knowledgeable about, one or more of the subcategories of the homeless, e.g., older alcoholic men, younger drug users, the working homeless and so on, and also on the basis of recommendations from others as to their knowledge and articulateness. In spite of their reputations as "experts" on homelessness, we took great care to check the information they

provided with others to avoid what might have been a strictly idiosyncratic perspective or to detect any attempt at fabrication of information. What we endeavored to obtain was a consensus of opinion about how homelessness appeared to individuals belonging to particular subpopulations who, to us, seemed to be exposed to similar problems and were using similar solutions.

#### C. Use of Administrative Records

Existing records were consulted, whenever available, for checking the accuracy of our ethnographic findings. The kinds of records available varied greatly from location to location in information covered, and its completeness and accuracy. We became aware of the following types of records in the course of our work; the ones marked by an asterisk were actually consulted for background data and verifying other findings. Records of these kinds can also provide information on the numbers, distribution and composition of the homeless; their schedules and changes over time in service use.<sup>20</sup>

- Lists of shelters & services\*
- Shelter rosters, rules, schedules\*
- Soup kitchen sign-in sheets; tallies of clients
- Service in-take, record of use forms\*
- Hospital, arrest, jail, prison, rehab service records
- Work records
- Records of blood sales at plasma banks
- Medical records on experimental subjects

#### D. Limitations of the Research Design

The main limitation of our research was imposed by the shortness of the time in which the research had to be conducted, which did not allow sufficient familiarity to develop for comprehensive ethnographic coverage. The ethnographic work began in September 1988, continued intermittently through 1989, and concluded with the observations of S-Night in March 1990. There was no opportunity to amass quantitative data; the coverage was sometimes uneven, and not fully representative of the range of geographical and social variation of which we became aware early in the research. Only limited areas of two urban centers of the District of Columbia and Baltimore were covered and only selected segments of their larger homeless population could be studied in

depth. The categories of homeless women, teens, families, criminals, mentally ill, undocumented, migrants, Hispanics, Indians and other ethnic categories are not well represented among our respondents. Thus we cannot fully assess either the role of locally unique factors on enumeration or account for differences in behavior due to subpopulation membership, as we did not sample all subgroups equally. For example, the local availability of shelters and other services to some extent influences the degree to which the homeless concentrate within certain parts of a city; being part of the underage homeless set led to shelter avoidance, whereas the older and less physically fit individuals relied more heavily on the available services.<sup>21</sup> Because research had to be conducted sporadically, when other work allowed, we could not get enough information to adequately assess the influence of seasonal factors on the numbers and kinds of people homeless at different times.

Insofar as one objective of the research was to explore the capability of the daytime service enumeration to pick up the street homeless, we realized too late that the choice of the area for the pilot test was not the best for that purpose. The service sites within the test area catered primarily to the shelter populations clustered around the immediate downtown area of Baltimore and thus did not pick up as many non-sheltered homeless as sites further out would have. Finally the research began too late to influence the 1990 Census operations in any major way. However, as soon as we learned relevant new information, our findings were conveyed to a working group, which made those adjustments still possible to the procedures, such as increasing the number of enumerating teams assigned to large shelters.<sup>22</sup>

## II. THE HOMELESS POPULATION IN BALTIMORE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

### A. Definition and Criteria for Inclusion

Because of the lack of generally agreed-upon definition of homelessness among researchers, the Census Bureau did not attempt to create a formal definition of homelessness for census purposes. However, we needed a working definition to set boundaries to the homeless universe and target our exploratory research.<sup>23</sup> After we had become sufficiently familiar with the

varieties and living conditions of the homeless, we developed a working definition which fit well with our observations and also with the observations of those service providers and staff, especially outreach workers, who had the longest contact and the greatest familiarity with this population.

As the word "homelessness" implies, the condition is defined in terms of what is lacking. The resources homeless individuals seek are the same as those needed by the domiciled population; the main difference is that for most housed individuals they are a given to which they need not pay any special attention. It is the difference in the access by the domiciled and the homeless to certain resources provided by the home as shelter that is at the core of the definition of homelessness. The functions of a home, and a predictable income, provide the average American the basic necessities of life, as well as many other benefits. However, recent figures on the increase of poverty in the United States suggest that more and more people, who may still have a roof over their heads, now lack many other necessities. For example, Barancik reports that four out of five of Baltimore's poor households spent at least 30%, and many up to 70%, of their income on rent. Obviously, this leaves little for other necessities, which accounts for the large numbers of poor, but not necessarily homeless, individuals and families observed at the soup kitchens and other service sites. These people constitute the "at risk" population from which new homeless are being constantly recruited.

Because the functions homes serve are multiple, variously emphasized by different groups, and the needs of people vary by household composition, no simple checklist suffices to define a home. In this context, being homeless means being without those amenities that homes provide to their occupants. We hold that if a substantial portion of the functions mentioned below, that are actually considered essential by the household members, are lacking those persons can be considered homeless:

- Protection from elements
- Safety & security from dangerous people or animals
- Locus for raising and protecting offspring
- Place to take care of personal hygiene
- Privacy and tranquility; place to sleep, rest and relax
- Food preparation & consumption



Storage of belongings

Focus of communications by mail, telephone, visits

The following definition, although fairly general, allowed us to focus on a population whose living circumstances would cause most observers to consider them as being without a reliable home which they had the means and a right to use without fear of eviction:

We defined as homeless people residing or using: a) the streets, abandoned buildings, commerce places or other sites not intended for habitation; b) emergency shelters or other facilities intended primarily for the homeless. People in this category have no usual residence to which they are considered to belong, by themselves or by others, and to which they would have a right to return of their own choice. They comprise the population considered as the "literal homeless" by many researchers.<sup>24</sup>

We also considered as homeless people who are temporarily sheltered during the enumeration period with friends or relatives, or in SROs or hotels, where they have neither the right nor the resources to remain and have no other residence to which they can return. These individuals are different from the above population only insofar they have managed to obtain permission or funds for temporary shelter. Those individuals, whose temporary shelter did not extend through April 1st, 1990 would have been missed during both S-Night and the regular census enumeration.

Also included are those individuals temporarily in penal, mental, medical or similar institutions, without which they would be in one of the above mentioned situations. These would also have been missed unless their stays extended through the Transient Night on March 31st, the housing unit enumeration on April 1st, or the Group Quarters enumeration from April 2nd to the 15th, 1990. Even if enumerated at this time they would not have been recognized as homeless.

#### B. Varieties of Homeless Persons and Homeless Situations

The early published plans of the Census Bureau for S-Night were "to count components of the homeless" on the basis of pre-identified locations, such as shelters or street sites, where

they were found. At the time our research began, one of the stated objectives of the enumeration was to "provide data users the building blocks to construct a count of the 'homeless' appropriate to their purposes."<sup>25</sup>

The purpose of our ethnographic research was also to identify "components," but with a different goal of isolating natural groups with shared or similar behavior patterns, the knowledge of which could be used to plan enumeration strategies. The importance of identification and classification for homeless research should not be underestimated. They draw our attention to populations which meet our criteria for inclusion, but may otherwise remain unnoticed and untargeted in the census.

However, aside from some obvious demographic categories such as race, sex and age, there are multiple and often overlapping ways to identify the homeless. For our purposes a focus on the needs and problems of the homeless made most sense and we developed a taxonomy of situations to which they had to adapt and their responses to them.<sup>26</sup> These situations are not necessarily permanent; people may pass in and out of them over time; consequently their adaptations are subject to change. Since the homeless at different times could be classified by various criteria, not all mutually exclusive, we will indicate some of the most commonly used categories:

1. By demographic criteria:

Men clearly outnumber women among the homeless in both Baltimore and DC, although by how much is difficult to assess. A rough average based on various estimates from around the country gives an 4 to 1 ratio of men to women.<sup>27</sup> Homeless women are less visible in that fewer of them hang out on the streets, with the exception of the so-called "bag ladies," and those soliciting on street corners. According to most of our homeless informants and service providers, women tend to have an easier time finding some kind of shelter: either church-operated or public emergency shelters, or temporary overnight housing with a male, often in exchange for sexual favors. Women with children also appear to be able to obtain shelter more easily than single individuals.<sup>28</sup>

Most of the people we observed on the streets are approximately between 20 and 50 years of age.<sup>29</sup> Very few older individuals

survive the rigors of homeless life on the streets; they either perish or are taken under the aegis of public institutions or some other type of charitable organization, or individual benefactors. Older individuals are also more likely to be taken in by their relatives than younger persons. Teenage boys do their best not to draw attention to themselves as homeless, since they are then vulnerable to be picked up by the police and turned over to juvenile authorities.

Most homeless persons we met are single; many others are widowed, separated or divorced from their spouses. Married couples are a rarity on the streets, although one occasionally sees couples who have formed temporary liaisons for reasons of safety, economy, companionship, or sex. Children are seen most often accompanying single mothers at shelters specifically designated for them. The rare male with children either finds a place to stay with them or has the children taken from him by social agencies concerned with the welfare of the children, not the father or the family as a unit, in mind. Intact father, mother plus children families are found mainly at family shelters; however, we did not follow any families over time and consequently have little information on the circumstances or duration of their homelessness. If the group quarters where they were staying at the time were included among the prelisted sites, and if the enumeration itself was properly conducted, most of the homeless children, or families with children, should be picked up by the Census. However, this may be changing as investigators are reporting more and more families actually living in the streets.

Most of the homeless persons we encountered have their origins in the community where they are found or they are from its immediate surroundings. The homeless like to hang out in their own neighborhoods where they know the terrain and the people, may have family, feel they may have a better chance of getting work, shelter, food or other handouts. The preference for the familiar environment prevents even larger concentrations from forming around shelters and soup kitchens in central locations and results in a fairly scattered homeless population. This outlying homeless population does not attract as much attention as the one queuing up for the shelters or the soup kitchens because it is less concentrated. Interstate nomads, not originally from the Baltimore-Washington area, also pass through, but are relatively a much smaller category.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, the percentage of illegal

aliens or refugees encountered among the homeless in the area was small. Countrywide their numbers may be expected to vary by geographical location; California, for example, has much larger numbers because of proximity to Mexico.

Many, perhaps most of the homeless, retain some links with their families and even those who have been estranged from their immediate relatives may nevertheless keep in touch with other relatives.<sup>31</sup> With the younger homeless the natal family naturally formed the principal social link; however several factors could intervene to make this relationship less than supportive. Surprisingly large numbers of young men told us of either running away or being forced to leave home. Some of the individuals we met had found their home sphere too confining and had left of their own free will. They had been confident they could make it on their own, and when things didn't turn out right many were too proud to return and ask for help. Others were kicked out by their parents because of disrespectful behavior, drug or alcohol use, criminal activities, or otherwise wild life style. Some indicated a desire to return, if their relationships with their families could be normalized. Those who had left their wives and children seemed least likely to return and in fact many were on the run and in hiding to avoid paying alimony or child support. On the other hand a few supported their offspring and, in one case, an elderly mother. One surprising finding was that some homeless persons did have dependents relying on them and forewent their own comforts to provide food and shelter for needy family members.

The racial and ethnic composition of homeless populations appears to reflect that of the local lower income population from which the majority of them are recruited. In Baltimore and Washington the homeless population we observed is preponderantly Black. In Baltimore we observed very few Hispanics, although Washington has a sizable homeless population of Hispanics, mostly refugees, from various Central and South American countries. During the period of field work we observed only one Asian man in Washington; another was picked up by the pilot test in Baltimore. We were told the reason was that Asians take care of their family members better than those of other groups, however, we had no opportunity to investigate whether there was any truth to such claims.

2. By contributing and precipitating causes of homelessness:

The causes of homelessness are relevant to enumeration in a number of ways. Whether a person has drifted into homelessness due to gradual impoverishment of an already low income existence or was suddenly jettisoned from comfortable middle-class circumstances has implications as to where a person would go and what he/she would do. Likewise, homelessness due to loss of employment by an incapacitating condition, in contrast to a layoff of an able-bodied person, calls forth different responses. The same could be said for those laid off with employable skills versus the unskilled, the young versus old, the victims of sudden trauma vs. attrition, etc. The relevant past factors influencing a person's behaviors and affecting his chances of being enumerated are discussed in more detail below.

One of the more noticeable things about many homeless is their poor health.<sup>32</sup> Even after a short period of observation one can note an amazing variety of infirmities. In this almost medieval assemblage one may see the crippled, blind, tubercular, epileptic and the insane; as well as people suffering from skin diseases, malnutrition or respiratory illnesses. A few appear to be in the advanced stages of AIDS. Many are clearly unable to work because of physical problems: for example, a former security guard who had lost one eye; a man who had injured his back and could no longer perform his work with a moving company, and another man suffering from emphysema, who had been repeatedly refused jobs because of his generally emaciated condition. Extremely feeble or aged individuals are occasionally seen, but apparently, as noted, most either are picked up by the police, institutionalized, or else they succumb to the hardships of homeless life.

Others can not get or keep jobs because they are mentally ill, confused or otherwise emotionally disturbed. Although only a few years prior to our field work the deinstitutionalized mentally ill were a prominent part of the homeless scene, only a few obviously disturbed individuals were seen in either Baltimore or Washington. Those referred to as "space cadets" by other homeless persons are sufficiently disoriented not to be able to interact normally or communicate sensibly with others. Some are Vietnam era veterans traumatized by their war experiences; others have had their mental functioning impaired by drug use. Several

suicides were reported among the homeless during our research period. One delusional man in spite of his grandiose fantasies, regularly found his way to the soup kitchens for food and into abandoned houses for nights' shelter. We assume that if anyone were so confused he could not take care of his basic needs, he would be removed by the police for institutionalization. Nevertheless, the behavior of such individuals out in the streets is highly unpredictable and will cause many to be missed.

Substance abuse is widespread, but it is hard to assess to what extent it prevents the users from earning a living or coping otherwise. Chronic alcoholism is pervasive and readily observable; the prevalence of drug use is more difficult to estimate due to its illegality and often concealed nature. Alcoholics, like the mentally disoriented, can be highly unpredictable in their movements; for example, binge drinkers may seek secluded spots where they will not be interfered with, or taken advantage of, while under the influence; others may crash virtually anywhere when their tolerance limit has been reached. Unless we include their sources of supply, i.e. liquor stores, or repeatedly used drinking sites, as enumeration spots, there is little hope of finding them at any particular location.

Some of the homeless are criminals, who are homeless because they do not make enough from illegal activities to support a home; or because they find that being among the homeless is a good way to hide from the law; others are homeless after being released from prison, either because they have no home to return to or can't find employment to afford one.<sup>33</sup> Some of the homeless to whom we spoke freely admitted they had outstanding arrest warrants on them from other states, some were AWOL from the armed forces, and a rather surprising number were evading alimony or child support payments. A few were sought by former criminal associates and hid among the homeless fearing for their lives if their identities were revealed. Quite a few claimed they were unable to return to former homes because of being sought by either the law or by enemies.

We also encountered undocumented or illegal aliens worried about immigration authorities catching up with them. Although we observed only a few foreign-born homeless persons, we were told of many more, especially Latin American refugees, but also illegal aliens from Europe (we met Polish, Belgian and Irish

nationals, who were here illegally) being forced to sleep in the parks, woods, automobiles, etc. because they were unable to compete in the labor market due to language difficulties or because of lack of proper documentation. Both language problems and illegal status are formidable obstacles to enumeration.

One of the more common causes of homelessness reported by the homeless themselves was some form of domestic crisis. In the low-income population many individuals who live in crowded quarters appear to be highly dependent on sharing resources with family members or close friends.<sup>34</sup> When their support is withdrawn, usually because of some domestic argument, the individual may be refused reciprocity leaving him to fend on his own. Those suddenly widowed, or who lose the sole breadwinner in the family may share a similar fate. Many of the young runaway or throwaway children, abused women, cast-out husbands or lovers, or other ejected relatives find that their own skills, knowledge, or contacts are inadequate to support them in the way their family was able to do and are often forced into homelessness as a result.

Because inexpensive housing is increasingly becoming a rarity, a number of individuals and families are made homeless due to the loss of their dwelling, whether due to fire, condemned building, foreclosure, failure to pay the rent, or urban renewal. Landlords are often looking for ways to raise rents by evicting poor or problem tenants and re-renting to those able to pay higher rents. In both Baltimore and DC, it is common to see the belongings of evicted tenants dumped outside their dwellings.

The greatest number of homeless we met were simply poor people who ran out of money to provide for themselves or their families. They either lost their source of income, in most cases their jobs, or their income failed to keep up with the rising cost of living. If, in addition, unusual expenses, such as caused by a fire or illness, were incurred their margin of safety was immediately compromised. Even without a major catastrophe, many individuals already had been living on the margin of homelessness. The loss of a paycheck, without help from friends or relatives, was often sufficient to put them on the street. Those staying in shelters reported that more than half of their compatriots received some form of welfare or retirement checks which were not sufficient to afford permanent housing. Although

the category of "freeloader" is sometimes used by the media or politicians to refer to the homeless, we only found two individuals, who resorted to shelters when it appeared they did not have the money to afford places of their own. However, in Baltimore we were told that during the coldest winter days many poor people show up at the shelters because they cannot afford to heat their homes. Soup kitchens, on the other hand, regularly attract the domiciled poor, from their immediate neighborhoods, who try to save on food costs by eating there. If we wish to separate the homeless from the domiciled during enumeration, we obviously need to screen out those with a usual home elsewhere.

The exact cause of lack of funds is not as relevant to enumeration, as to what the individual does about it, and this in turn is dependent on a host of factors related to his disposition, social support or chances of regaining solvency. As many of the homeless suffer from multiple problems, it is often difficult to identify just one or two conditions as contributing causes. Nevertheless, awareness of some of the major causes related to employability (health, substance abuse, skills); need to hide out (enemies, criminal behavior, debts, illegal immigration status); or simple lack of funds (unemployment, lack of family support or social services) can go a long way in predicting what type of adaptation an individual might make to homelessness and consequently at which types of places we should look for him.

### 3. By adaptation:

The homeless also can be classified according to their chief mode of adaptation to homelessness. Generally this refers to their mode of "making it" on the streets. Thus there are panhandlers, prostitutes, full- and part-time workers, muggers, drug dealers, scavengers, spongers and many others. These adaptations are discussed in more detail below under activity sites. Since any person's activity patterns are time- and location-bound, what he does obviously affects his availability for enumeration.

### 4. By duration of homelessness:

There appear to be important differences between those homeless who have been on the streets for a short time and the so-called hard-core or chronically homeless. The street seems to have a



deleterious effect on most individuals and gradually erodes the ability of individuals exposed to its rigors to lead a more normal life. Many of the substance-abusing homeless blamed the bleakness of street life for their habits, especially alcoholism. This was usually glossed as drinking to forget, drown one's sorrow, to pass time, or simply in order to keep warm. Chronically homeless are usually easier to recognize than those who have not yet been traumatized by having the streets as their only home. The stereotyped image most people have of the homeless applies best to the long-term street dweller. The newly, or temporarily homeless are less likely to be seen in the usual homeless hang-outs, or in the company of other homeless. In fact, they may not yet know how to negotiate the streets or the homeless services and may not yet have learned to trust others, who are in the position to teach them the ropes. For example, an ex-GI, taken into tow by a continental drifter, expressed surprise about how much there was to know about being homeless: "It's like going to school again, or learning a new job." Ironically, adapting well to street life may actually hinder one's chances of leaving it.

5. By social status or personal characteristics:

Individual characteristics of a person play an important part in how he/she responds to homelessness. Intelligence, articulateness, adaptability, motivation, self-confidence, toughness, or the lack of these qualities, determine in part how a person conducts him/herself on the streets. By looking at a combination of personal characteristics and relating them to the resources and the constraints of the environment we can, to an extent, predict where a person may or may not be found and what he/she will be doing there. For example, an older man, relatively physically weak and loath to carry weapons, simply avoided places where he might be caught alone by young thugs. Most often he would be found sleeping in shelters, traveling only in the daytime along main thoroughfares, and frequenting a few well populated soup kitchens. The more vulnerable women often traveled in pairs, avoided being in secluded places, and devised various safeguards against being attacked, raped or robbed. Feeble or handicapped individuals restricted their travels to a minimum and exploited a narrower range of services in a given area. In contrast a younger athletic man despised shelters, slept outdoors, carried a lead pipe for protection and ate at whatever facility

was closest to him at mealtime. In addition to personal characteristics, street experience and relevant knowledge also determine many responses. Where to seek resources, what obstacles one might encounter and who could be a friend or a foe, were some of the more significant considerations affecting movements and schedules of the homeless persons interviewed.

Cultural backgrounds appear to play an important part in one's adjustment to homeless existence; however, this dimension has received only passing mention from researchers, and much more work needs to be done in order to gain a better appreciation of its influence. For example, Native Americans are said to have an easier time adjusting to homelessness, supposedly because of their cultural traditions of outdoor living. Our only example of this comes from acquaintance with a homeless Indian, who had come to Baltimore on a promise of a job which fell through leaving him stranded without money. He traveled with a sleeping bag and minimal camping gear and seemed to suffer no particular hardships from his involuntary outdoor experience. His sleeping places had varied from outdoor sites to abandoned buildings, interspersed with stays at homeless shelters. He eventually got a job, moved away from Baltimore and we lost track of him.

Hispanic homeless were described as being rather familistic and supportive of their relatives and consequently more likely to be found in doubled-up situations rather than in shelters or on the streets.<sup>35</sup> The Hispanics we found among the literal homeless appear to be mostly traveling alone to visit relatives, look for work or performing low paid or intermittent work, and either not making enough to afford rent or trying to save money by not spending it on rent.<sup>36</sup> Only one Asian man was observed among the homeless in Washington, DC-- he appeared to be a recent immigrant unable to speak English. The street wisdom, for whatever it is worth, was that Asians, and also Jews, look after their own. Both Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites were claimed to receive less family support and thus to be more likely to end up in a chronic homeless situation. Observations certainly indicated a preponderance of Blacks and lower class Whites among the homeless in the Baltimore-DC area.

Although the majority of homeless appear to come from lower-class backgrounds, there is still a great deal of variety in their former professional, educational, economic and social statuses.

Among our respondents were a former NASA engineer, college professors in history and psychology, and numerous college graduates, who had fallen on hard times before they had ever had a chance to establish a more stable life. Surprisingly we also found that some students currently in college were among the homeless, at least sporadically. Dormitory and near-campus rents were beyond their means and thus they relied on the solutions of the homeless to cut costs.<sup>37</sup> Those who had previously successful careers appear to have become homeless through some catastrophe, personality problem or substance abuse. They seemed to be best equipped to learn about and find and use services for the homeless and also understanding of the purposes of the census and thus least likely to be missed. Those of lower-class urban origin (mostly young Black men) were among the most streetwise, but not otherwise particularly able to negotiate the services. They also appeared to be the most uninformed and suspicious of any government activities, including the Census. To the extent attitudes, knowledge and skills relevant to answering the Census are class related, class becomes an important variable to consider.

Social status of the homeless has two chief dimensions: first they are the lowest category of the poor in the eyes of the general public; second they have their own rankings among themselves. Among themselves the homeless recognize lower and higher classes of persons. The criteria vary according to a reference group making the evaluation. Standards may include those held by the community at large, such as education, skills, intelligence, sexual orientation, etc; in addition they reflect qualities useful primarily for homeless existence such as hustling skills, toughness and generosity to other homeless. At first many homeless suffer severe shock from their realization that they have sunk so low in the hierarchy and esteem of the established order; subsequently the rankings of the homeless themselves assume greater importance. Competition for respect among one's peers often leads to rather far-fetched claims and posturing -- often tied to imagined opportunities, resources or contacts which will bring about an imminent change in the person's homeless status. Bragging about having places to sleep, opportunities for high-paying work, or plenty of cash on hand were some of the most common forms of ego enhancement we heard. The stigma associated with homelessness causes some individuals to deny their homeless status or to provide false information

intended to show the individual's situation in a better light than warranted by their circumstances.<sup>38</sup>

Our contention is that it is crucial for successful enumeration to be able to distinguish among the varieties of the homeless whose backgrounds, characteristics, vulnerabilities or skills either force or enable them to utilize different aspects of the socioeconomic niche into which they have been thrust. By documenting the range of locations and times where different subpopulations of the homeless obtain the resources they need we will be in a much better position to decide how to enumerate them. Without this knowledge there would be no way to adapt enumeration procedures to the variety of living situations of the different subpopulations of the homeless.

### III. PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SETTINGS

Our frame of explanation assumes that goal-directed behavior begins with the knowledge of the needed resources and the perception of the opportunities to obtain them, and of possible obstacles to this effort. In the lives of the homeless the environment takes on special significance because they have so little control over it and consequently its coercive force is greater on them than on a housed person. In spite of these constraints, the homeless nevertheless retain a certain degree of choice, e.g. when other alternatives are available, as in cases where the homeless can choose between two or more soup kitchens as places to obtain their meals. In Baltimore, for example, we found that the meal program of one church was favored above all others and many homeless persons walked up to six miles across the city, passing several closer meal programs along the way.

According to our informants the number and kinds of resources available for the homeless are geographically variable and constantly changing. Larger cities, such as Baltimore, appear to have the best concentration of resources, but even there budgetary restrictions often cut into much-needed services. The distribution of resources is often patchy, i.e. uneven in regard to the population which needs the services. The density of services may not be sufficient for the numbers of needy individuals, forcing those whose needs are not met to go elsewhere. Also the frequency of services (e.g. meals served) or

their schedules are not always appropriate for some segments of the homeless population.

Social environmental factors, consisting of numerous control agents or gatekeepers such as police, security guards, maintenance personnel as well as one's fellow homeless who may not want anyone else intruding on their turf, further complicate the picture. Knowledge of the presence of such people usually precludes the simultaneous use of the same locations no matter what resources are available. The use of public sleeping areas is often terminated by posting guards or guard dogs, fencing in areas, adding razor wire, locking access gates, or simply harassing the homeless until they leave. Neighborhood complaints often result in police attention and either voluntary or forcible removal to another area.

One social resource, consisting of a network of relatives, friends or associates, is often relied on by the homeless to help out in times of need by providing money, food or shelter. Many studies indicate that the homeless visible at shelters or sleeping in parks or on steam grates are only a tip of the iceberg, with the larger proportion being hidden in these temporary living arrangements.<sup>39</sup> This is one of the least known dimensions of homeless existence, which requires additional research if we wish to tap what well may be the largest segment of uncounted homeless.<sup>40</sup> Next, we will look at some of the basic resources used by the homeless in the Baltimore/Washington area in more detail.

#### A. Food Sources

Although food programs are three times more plentiful than shelters in Washington and Baltimore, each city still has areas with sizeable homeless populations who have to go several miles to reach a food serving facility. During our research period local churches increasingly were beginning to fill this void in services; nevertheless not all homeless are able to use the services available. And, as with shelters, soup kitchen schedules do not always coincide with free times of the homeless. Other reasons for not using soup kitchens had to do with the poor quality of food at some of them, not enough time to eat properly before being asked to make room for the next wave of people, discourteous staff, harassment by other clients, and the

possibility of raids by police. In spite of boycotts by a few, all of our respondents agreed that soup kitchens constitute the most frequently used service by the homeless; their estimates of the percentage of the homeless using them ranged from 75 to 100 percent.<sup>41</sup> In addition a recent USDA nutrition study found that 84% of the male homeless they sampled had used soup kitchens over a one week period in March 1987, and of those whose sole contact with services was the soup kitchen, 93% were males.<sup>42</sup> Although the census may not be able to reach everyone through them, soup kitchens undoubtedly provide prime sites for enumeration.

Snacks or cold sandwiches can also be obtained from many daytime drop-in centers, and for those with access to cooking facilities donated groceries can be obtained from food pantries. Food may also be obtained at the close of business from many area restaurants, especially fast-food outlets; barring that, from the dumpsters after the day's leftovers have been discarded. However, individuals, who get most of their food from private benefactors, would not be enumerated at service sites.

#### B. Sleeping Sites:

The kind of shelter, its purpose for being, explicit policies, informal organization, physical layout and intake procedures are relevant to formulation of efficient enumeration procedures. Shelter from the elements is a major concern among the homeless, especially in the more northerly states. Consequently shelters both attract the homeless and organize their lives to a significant degree. However, the very existence of private and charity-run shelters is uncertain due to funding problems; municipally run shelters are at the mercy of political whims. Where no shelters exist or existing shelters are not sufficient, municipalities often farm out their homeless to outside shelters or provide them with vouchers enabling them to be put up in local hotels or motels. Both Baltimore and DC bus homeless people into shelters in the neighboring suburbs and both also use vouchers to place some of the homeless in commercial accommodations. To make maximum use of the availability of shelters for enumeration, we need minimally exclusive criteria of what constitutes a homeless shelter and up-to-date information on which ones are currently operating in the area to be enumerated.

Where shelters are not available, or within reasonable distance, enumerators need to look elsewhere for the homeless, but even the shelters themselves pose a number of obstacles to enumeration due to their often exclusive policies, as well as their physical layout and social organization.<sup>43</sup> Many shelters have selective admission policies by age, sex, or special needs. In the DC, city-run shelters were not allowed to turn down anyone requesting shelter, but church-operated or mission shelters could refuse inebriated, profane or otherwise misbehaving clientele. Almost all shelters have some means of excluding the most obstreperous clients and we have seen or heard of people being put out from all of the shelters we observed. Those allowing troublemakers to stay, in turn, may discourage some of the more timid clients.

Restricted check-in times may not fit the work or travel schedules of the homeless, although most shelters will allow for some exceptions; for example, some allow people working on night shifts to sleep during the day. Most shelters also have some provisions for overflow; e.g. in both Baltimore and DC, individuals coming in after all the regular beds were taken were allowed to sleep in chairs in an area set off for that purpose.

The homeless who shunned the shelters generally complained that many of them are poorly run, the staff abusive, regulations rigid and administration authoritarian. In addition to the formal organization of the shelter spelled out in terms of administration, staff and clientele, each shelter was also reported to have an informal organization which evolves out of individual personalities and interactions, rather than from official positions. Cliques and gangs form inside the shelters, buttressed by whatever power their members can squeeze out of their relationships with staff or from positions of trust. Staff positions are manipulated and often members of the staff, many of whom have been recruited from among the homeless, wield their power to extort favors and money from those not in a position to resist. We often heard reports of extortion and the need to bribe staff to get services that should have been freely available. The informal organization affects enumeration several ways: intake staff may admit friends without registering them and they may remain unknown to rest of the staff, some staff who also do not appear on rosters may be recruited on the basis of clique membership, and others may be allowed to go in or out at irregular hours solely on the basis of their relationship to the person in charge.

Frequent visits by police or bounty hunters discourage attendance by people with outstanding arrest warrants or something to hide. Many mission-type shelters enforce compulsory attendance at their religious services, an approach derogatorily referred to by some homeless as "ear-banging" or "soup, shelter and salvation."

Those not able to stand the authoritarianism this represents tend to stay away. The filthiness of some shelters, the fear of physical attacks by other inmates and the high probability of having one's personal belongings stolen, were frequently cited factors by those homeless who preferred to take their chances on the streets. At many shelters security is lax and clients fear the other homeless more than the staff; most homeless populations include a fair number of unbalanced people. During the test period a man at one of the Baltimore shelters ran amok brandishing a fire axe and threatening staff and the other homeless.<sup>44</sup>

We did not collect data in Baltimore on what portion of the homeless we interviewed stay in shelters and what portion opts to remain outside of them. In Baltimore our informants claimed that somewhat more than half of the homeless on any particular night would resort to shelters for a place to sleep. However, they had no specific knowledge of the hardcore homeless who shunned shelters. Around the country the nature, numbers, kinds, schedules and quality of shelters varies greatly, likewise the visibility of the homeless vary according to the coldness of the weather, quality of the shelters, and the availability of other places to spend nights. The following breakdown illustrates, but does not exhaust, some relevant dimensions of their variability.<sup>45</sup>

By far the largest number of shelters in Baltimore and Washington falls into the category of city or church-operated men's overnight shelters. They may or may not have additional services attached; most will at least provide information on other services even if not able to provide them on location. All have definite limits on the number of clientele they are equipped to handle although most will try to accommodate overflow crowds which are common in areas with high numbers of homeless and especially on colder nights. Some charge a nominal amount; others will have a sliding scale of payment according to the client's ability to pay. As noted, church or mission sponsored



shelters generally require their clients to attend religious services in exchange for shelter.

Many of the shelters are restricted to, or specialize in, a particular type of problem population. Of these the shelters for abused women should be considered as primarily half-way housing for the temporarily or episodically homeless; some will have housing referrals to a place of their own; others will be taken in by regular homeless shelters.

Somewhat longer termed are those housing convalescents, ex-convicts, battered or pregnant women, single mothers or runaway youth. Most have limitations on the number of nights the client can remain; usually only until the problem is resolved. Homes for the mentally troubled, physically handicapped or the elderly are more likely to have indefinite terms of stay, often for the lifetime of the client. At what point we consider such inmates institutionalized rather than homeless is a matter of definition. Rehabilitation centers for substance abusers also may have indeterminate periods of stays, but with an understanding that there is a limit which can be set by the service staff, when they have decided that enough improvement has taken place. Some youth homes also allow extended stays if the youth has no place to which to return and has not been placed with a foster family. Occasionally shelters serving vulnerable populations such as battered women, teenagers or the mentally troubled may attempt to restrict access to the clients or their records. A director of one shelter in Baltimore explained that her charges required careful nurture and protection from stressful situations, such as census enumeration, which might upset them if they did not understand its purpose.

One might think that enumerating the homeless in shelters is relatively an uncomplicated matter, but that is not always the case for the larger facilities. In Baltimore, for example, we discovered at least a half dozen ways in which sheltered homeless could be missed in a medium sized men's shelter. Persons likely to be missed include those kicked out, or picked up by police or bounty hunters from the premises; those staying more than one night in de-tox units or in sick bed; overflow clients not assigned to bunks, but sleeping in chairs; live-in staff recruited from the homeless, but not on rosters; those coming in

late because of a job or other valid reason; and those who worked all night and were allowed to sleep during the day.

In addition to the emergency shelters, on any particular night, many of the homeless can be found housed in a number of institutions. Here the problem of finding them is not the issue; after all they are a captive audience in a place that most likely will be enumerated anyway, but identifying them among the rest of the clients would require specific screening procedures. Defining homelessness for those incarcerated for longer periods also becomes problematic and requires a specification of a reference period. Only the persons counted during the group quarters enumeration who reported no usual home elsewhere (UHE) could reasonably be included among the homeless. These locations included homes for unwed mothers, drug/alcohol centers and group homes, agricultural workers dorms, and group homes for the mentally ill.<sup>46</sup> Homeless in other group quarters were not asked to specify a UHE; instead they were enumerated as living at the facility at which they were found on Census day. Among the voluntary and involuntary institutional settings mentioned most often by both DC and Baltimore homeless are police stations, jails, prisons, detention centers, halfway houses, mental institutions, hospitals and detox centers.

Among the most difficult to find homeless are those who have acquired temporary lodging for the period of the enumeration. These include the homes of relatives, friends and, surprisingly often, chance acquaintances or benefactors. One homeless man reported being picked up from the streets of DC by a young couple, who let him stay at their home for nearly a week. These benefactors do not consider their visitors permanent residents nor report them to anyone as such. A definitional problem obscures their plight as homeless individuals. The literature generally refers to them as "doubled up," implying they may have a longterm, albeit a crowded residence. In fact, they may most circulate among several households, i.e. other people's homes, and other types of temporary shelters. Usually there is no assurance that they can remain in any one place for very long; especially since much rental housing has either statutory or landlord imposed restrictions on the number of tenants per dwelling. The primary renter may have a real fear of jeopardizing and perhaps losing his own housing. Small charitable organizations, such as churches and civic associations, also take

in homeless individuals and provide them with informal overnight shelter in basements, meeting rooms or other available spaces; such quarters are seldom reported to the Census as dwellings or group quarters to be enumerated.<sup>47</sup> Many of them are ad hoc shelters provided to the homeless on the basis of immediate and pressing need, but not on a regular basis. In DC, for example, we found homeless temporarily quartered in a church basement and in a vacant house owned by a synagogue. Finally the homeless themselves will often take temporary rooms at cheap hotels, motels, SROs, or rooming and flop houses, many of which have illegal extensions or partitions, which do not comply with fire or sanitary codes, or have not been approved for habitation. These appear to be especially common in neighborhoods with large immigrant or illegal alien populations. Only a few of these additions are identified as dwellings and scheduled for enumeration.<sup>48</sup>

To the extent persons' homelessness is disguised by the fact that they may have an address, place to keep their belongings, get meals and occasionally stay overnight, without having any formal commitment or right to a place, these associations may actually hinder our chances of enumerating them. Most homeless are acutely aware of the need and importance of having a mailing address, and access to a telephone, especially if they are still actively looking for work. They will attempt to keep up good relations with their past benefactors and try to cultivate new ones. Some actually donate their time in volunteer activities to individuals, businesses and social agencies in hopes that they will be remembered and some good will eventually accrue to them.

Equally hard to find and count are those who purposely hide themselves at night in indoor or outdoor sleeping locations in order to gain privacy and avoid arrest, harassment, muggers and so on. Their hiding places are myriad and in widely scattered locations and it obviously would be futile to even try to locate all of them for enumeration purposes. However, in some areas, especially in the larger cities, congregating sites exist which may be worth monitoring over a period of time to catch the homeless staying at or passing through them.<sup>49</sup> In Washington and Baltimore the train and subway stations are examples of such congregating areas; also public libraries and large indoor and outdoor markets attract large numbers of homeless, when not prevented by the police. Tourist frequented areas are seen by the homeless as a good areas to panhandle. The libraries provide

quiet places to rest or use the toilet facilities; according to one library guard an estimated 200 homeless individuals use his building on an average day. The markets are also an attraction because of the availability of inexpensive food; in addition, some food stall proprietors give food to the homeless.

In the warmer weather many of the homeless sleep outside, partly by preference to avoid the heat, crowding and other problems associated with shelters. Almost any well-hidden location that allows security from attack or robbery and the possibility of undisturbed rest can be used. I have had my homeless guides point out locations in cemeteries, empty weed-lots, lumberyards, under bridges, in dumpsters, and on loading docks, as sleeping spots. Several homeless persons told us proudly of being able to hide in what appears to be a public area and yet escape the scrutiny of passers-by. One man slept on the grounds of the National Zoo in DC for several years and, although he mingled among the crowds during the day, very few people seemed to be aware of his circumstances or the reason for his presence at the zoo. On summer nights up to a dozen men sleep between the shrubbery and a low concrete wall adjacent to one of the Smithsonian Museums in downtown DC. One evening I watched about a hundred people pass by them during a half-hour period and not a single person noticed their presence. The only outside sleeping sites that we would recommend for enumeration are the squatter colonies or shantytowns in those cities where they exist, and any fairly stable encampments where the homeless are concentrated in large enough numbers to make the effort worthwhile.

As a form of resource protection some homeless lay claim to sleeping spots; steam grates, for example, are "owned," i.e. the individual lays territorial claim to their use, lets others know this, and protects the spot from encroachments. The legendary "Wolfman," lived on the same Washington, DC steam grate for 18 years until he finally died on it in 1989. The use of packing crates and cardboard boxes has gained popularity during the last few years since they allow both a degree of privacy and security at the same time since the "shelter" itself is in a public place. In many areas frequented by homeless the streets are very dangerous places. Predators looking for targets for mugging or sexual attack often find the homeless easy prey. The possibility of unpredictable attacks by youth gangs, addicts desperate for drugs, or mentally deranged people, is a constant threat in some

areas. The best defense for most of the homeless, especially the older and weaker, is simply to stay away from such locations. Alternately one can try to develop street smarts, remain constantly on guard and avoid dangerous people. Those who feel vulnerable might rely on conspicuousness, being among or near people, guards or police. Spending time, and sleeping, in plain view of passersby offers some protection from the most obvious kinds of harassment. Others rely more on strength in numbers: the buddy system, or by joining gangs. Those more confident of themselves cultivate a tough guy image, carry weapons and try to acquire a reputation of taking no guff from anyone. Much of what goes into street survival has to do with protecting oneself from other street people, various authorities and even the general public. Because of this many homeless tend to be suspicious and exercise caution about strangers, including census takers.

Official campgrounds and informal camping sites form a special category of outdoor locations in that usually a tent, vehicle or trailer are required as sleeping quarters; occasionally both temporary, makeshift and more permanent and rather elaborate lean-tos and shacks can be seen on vacant lots. However, since local authorities generally frown on these "eyesores" they do not last very long in a public place. Neither Washington, nor Baltimore has allowed the formation of homeless shantytowns such as are found in western cities, such as Phoenix, or in New York. An attempt to start one by the Red Line train tracks in Silver Spring (near Washington, DC city limits) grew to three tin-, tarpaulin- and board-covered makeshift shacks and lasted for about three months before being razed by the authorities.

In many areas, according to our informants, the police are the real bane of homeless people, although occasionally an officer will befriend individuals, and even help them out in various ways. Many, however are said to harass them mercilessly, driving them from place to place, often at the instigation of city officials who want the streets "cleaned up," for the tourist season, for example. Some defense tactics resorted to against this kind of threat include hiding one's homelessness, use of nicknames and aliases, avoiding police at all costs, and avoiding people and places which might result in complaints. All are aware of periodic police crackdowns or sweeps to clear the homeless from those areas of the city where they may be considered as eyesores symbolizing urban blight and detracting

from the image used to promote tourism or to attract new businesses to a city. Any attempt to enumerate homeless persons in public areas needs to be aware of recent or planned police activities that might disrupt the effort.

Indoor sleeping sites are popular, mostly during cold or inclement weather, but also because they provide protection from attackers. Often guards, janitors or other caretakers allow the homeless access to sleeping spots inside public buildings, vestibules, hallways or stairwells. Others seek out unguarded buildings under construction, condemned, or abandoned vacant houses and apartments. Because they could be charged with criminal trespassing, if caught, extreme caution is exercised entering and leaving such locations. In spite of this a vacant hotel building in downtown Baltimore was said to have housed up to 30 people nightly during the summer of 1989. "They just snuck in and took rooms," my informant confided. I was told, over and over again, that all throughout the Baltimore/Washington area hundreds of people are sleeping in a variety of abandoned large buildings, single homes and vacant apartments, "wherever you can break in." Some of the houses and apartments have furniture brought in, the homeless in effect become squatters. Several have drug sales conducted out of them; in fact I was told that most crack houses are not owned or rented, but used without their absentee owner's (often the city itself) knowledge or permission. One of my informants, a former cocaine addict and dealer, pointed out six crack houses within a one-square mile area of Anacostia, one across a street from a school. Each one, he claimed, sheltered 15-20 people: dealers, users, cocaine whores, and frequently their children.<sup>50</sup>

Parking garages, steam tunnels and warehouses are also popular. One warehouse complex in Baltimore was reported, probably exaggeratedly, to house "hundreds of people;" it was also supposed to have a system of rotating guards and passwords for those wanting to enter. I was warned not to go there alone, or I would get my "throat cut." Some overnight parking lot guards allow the homeless to sleep in cars if they do not get them dirty or attract attention to themselves. Many workers, especially migratory construction or agricultural workers, who have their own cars, trucks, trailers or campers, sleep in them wherever they can park them inexpensively or inconspicuously.<sup>51</sup> Some construction workers are allowed to sleep in their vehicles, in

construction trailers, or in unfinished buildings at construction sites. Abandoned or junked autos are also popular with the heavily alcoholic, "derelict" population. One such automobile I observed in Washington, within sight of Rhode Island Avenue, sheltered three elderly men; they had removed the back seat from the car and when sleeping or sitting and drinking on the floor, they were invisible to passers by. Another favorite spot for such sleep-in cars is in the backyards of private homes; they are most often used with at least the tacit approval of the owner. Needless to say they are not reported to anybody as tenants and, as census takers were told specifically not to look for people sleeping in cars, they were most likely missed by the enumerators.

Another category of frequently used sites consist of waiting rooms, platforms or tunnels at transportation terminals such as subway, train or bus stations, docks and airports. Because of the high turnover of people at such locations it is relatively easy to go unnoticed by most people; the employees at such locations, however, do become aware of them and often help them out in various ways, such as providing them with food or warning them about the approach of police.<sup>52</sup> Subway entrances in Washington were favored sleeping places for many and, in spite of efforts by Metro officials to get rid of them, many remain, at least as panhandlers. Riding trains is another adaptation to lack of sleeping quarters.<sup>53</sup> In the wintertime the heated cars are an attraction and the padded seats more comfortable for sleeping than many other places.

Late- and all-night shops, restaurants, theaters, bars and laundromats are also reported as sleeping and warmup sites. Amusing, perhaps apocryphal, stories are told of homeless who fall asleep in bars and unnoticed by the proprietors get locked in for the remainder of the night. Occasionally trusted individuals are allowed to spend a night at such facilities.<sup>54</sup> Movie theaters also seem to be favorite locations as it's easier to sleep and remain unnoticed in the dark. It is doubtful that many of these sites could be used for efficient enumeration due to their large numbers, scattered distribution, and irregular or unpredictable use by the homeless.

### C. Daytime Activity Sites

## 1. Mobility paths:

Since many homeless persons spend considerable time looking for, or traveling to obtain resources, mobility becomes an important variable to consider in planning enumeration. However, the extent and patterns of their travels vary widely. We have met migrant workers, who traversed regular routes from one vegetable or fruit harvest site to another. Workers on construction jobs followed a far less predictable schedule as their employment sites shifted, but most at least tried to return and stay in the same geographical areas familiar to them from prior visits. Those itinerant workers, who simply looked for any kind of work, seemed to drift in even less predictable ways, usually attracted by news of available work.

Even among the local homeless, travel patterns vary widely. As pointed out familiarity with, coupled with length of time spent in a particular area, facilitates the exploitation of whatever resources might be available for the homeless. The daily movements, rounds, routines and schedules of the homeless are as much tied to the distribution of services targeted for them, as are larger scale movements from one locality to another. We need to note the channeling routes in the environment along which the homeless have to pass in order to get somewhere else. Transportation routes, stations, bridges, railroad tracks, or shortcuts through parks or empty lots are examples of such areas; however, the problem of screening large numbers of individuals might militate against their use. The bridges across Jones Falls Expressway in Baltimore are good examples of channeling routes.

Most homeless have walking territories with fairly stable routes with regular stops for food, bathrooms, rest, etc., which however are governed by and subject to changes in service schedules.<sup>55</sup> Although a few individuals try to follow such routes with clockworklike regularity day after day, others have several routines which they alter either at whim or more systematically in rotation. Some fan out into the suburbs or rural areas in search of new resources or fewer hassles. Purely random drifting is rare and possibly associated with mental illness. We were frequently told by shelter workers that the homeless traveling from one end of the country to the other appeared to them to be the most disturbed, as if they were obsessed to keep on moving. Otherwise nomadism among the homeless is primarily tied to



seasonal work in agriculture, construction, or some other seasonal industry.

Knowledge of local travel patterns is useful primarily for scheduling enumeration and selecting key resource sites; knowledge of larger scale migration patterns can provide at least an expectation of when to expect the migrants to come through, and often of their customary stopping sites.

Walking is the most prevalent form of transportation, but thumbing rides, using buses, private cars or even taxis are resorted to when money, vouchers or free tokens are available. The flexibility to take maximum advantage of available resources is dependent on the ability to get to places. For this reason individuals try to obtain free tokens, discount tickets or rides from friends; many also rely on hitchhiking. For longer trips buses and trains are most commonly used. One enterprising man came all the way from California to Washington, DC with a moving truck; he had promised to help the movers unload the truck's contents at their destination in return for the ride.

Whatever their pattern, it is safe to say that a sizable number of the homeless are in motion at any particular time and thus cause difficulties for a single-shot enumeration. Some individuals can be "captured" by monitoring service sites over time because they follow habitual patterns of movement, i.e. they follow the same routes and regularly visit the same facilities. Even those who follow no regular pattern will use at least some of the services over a period of weeks. A recent USDA study estimated for March 1987 that nearly twice as many homeless use services over a seven day period than in a single day.<sup>56</sup>

## 2. Resource sites:

Because homeless life is so characterized by the lack of resources to meet even basic needs, the pursuit of those resources takes a great deal of the homeless person's time and takes him to a wide variety of locations, which we need to be aware of in order to plan enumeration.

Daytime service sites for the homeless attract the greatest numbers and are thus prime locations for enumeration; however many are also frequented by other poor people making some

screening procedure necessary for enumeration. Clothing is dispensed by most shelters, multipurpose centers and almost all churches in poor neighborhoods. Those with health-related needs may be found at the various clinics, dental and psychiatric facilities where they can receive free dental or medical examinations and care, medicine, or counseling. In Washington the Whitman Walker Clinic also provides treatment to homeless with AIDS. Those with a substance abuse problem have access to numerous clinics providing counseling and rehabilitation services to drug users and alcoholics. Women who need birth-control information, pre- or postnatal counseling or child care advice can also find centers specializing in these services, often specially targeted at low-income or homeless individuals. Because getting medical treatment is not a regular occurrence in the lives of most of the homeless any snapshot enumeration at these sites would find only a fraction of the people using these services over the year. Since many of these establishments keep excellent records, enumeration using administrative records and a matching procedure to eliminate duplication may be the best approach. Because homeless people often have trouble with the law, free legal aid centers should also be consulted. Like the clinics, they also keep good records which would be useful for enumeration purposes if confidentiality considerations could be worked out.

Those with other specific or urgent needs visit the various resource and service sites providing those needed goods or services. Some regularly visited sites are not specifically aimed at the homeless, but nevertheless are useful to them. They may include laundromats, places with showers, bathrooms, storage lockers, thrift shops, and park benches or other places to rest. Obviously, most of these would not be viable enumeration sites for the same reasons that the scattered nighttime spots are not; they are too numerous and irregularly attended. In addition, since most of their patrons are domiciled individuals the screening tasks could prove to be overwhelming.

Another activity which takes up a considerable amount of time has to do with visiting offices to learn about, apply for, keep up with changes in, and collect benefits or entitlements of various kinds. For those who receive some kind of relief assistance, AFDC, pensions, disability payments or workmen's compensation the places where they apply for and receive their checks are good

places to contact them. Because most offices generally force applicants to visit often and wait long periods they are among some of the better places to find and interview the homeless. The dates for getting the checks are usually predictable, and checkdays at the dispensing offices usually attract large numbers of the homeless. On the other hand, the long waits and rude treatment by the staff discourages many homeless from even applying for benefits. Administrative record checks may be the easiest way to keep track of some applicants, but legal considerations may restrict their use. However, a large number of people we spoke to either did not know how, or had given up trying to obtain benefits and thus would not appear on those records.

A longterm or forward-looking strategy involves time spent in job training or counseling, reading employment notices and looking for work. Baltimore has one shelter which specializes in the training and placement of homeless men who were believed to stand a good chance of benefitting from the service. Many homeless, perhaps more than half according to most respondents, engage in at least part-time employment; a few have steady, albeit lowpaying jobs. Those homeless with permanent jobs are generally working for a minimum wage or less and either cannot find housing that they can afford, or have other expenses that do not leave enough for even moderate rent. For various reasons such as lack of skills, lack of jobs, too many competing for the same jobs etc., most have to rely on low-paying, temporary jobs of uncertain duration. Employment agencies, especially those offering day labor, are good places to find the homeless. The agency "catchout" sites, or pick-up points are likewise predictable congregating locations. Buses from agencies such as Tracy Labor, Tops, Pro-Labor, and also individual contractors, stop at shelters, soup kitchens, and other designated spots to pick up workers early in the morning. Most of these agencies take down names and keep at least rudimentary records which could provide a supplementary source of information for the census. Alternatively enumerators could try to interview people at the pickup sites during the early morning hours.

In addition to day-labor, organized by a number of agencies both in Baltimore and Washington, many seek out temporary work on their own or are sought by area businesses, organizations or homeowners who have tasks requiring immediate short-term

attention. Typical tasks include passing handbills, help with moving, loading goods, and other household maintenance jobs, such as removing trash, grass-cutting, raking leaves, painting or cleaning, to name just a few examples of the many possibilities. To the extent their jobs scatter the homeless away from enumeration sites, employment is likely to contribute to the undercount.

Many migrant workers doing seasonal agricultural, construction, mining, lumbering, or oil field related work are also homeless.<sup>57</sup> Only the first two kinds are to be found in the Baltimore/Washington area. The area is said to be a conduit for migrant agricultural workers traveling between Florida and New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and beyond. Construction work attracts large numbers of homeless workers; often entire families from the Midwest and even Texas, to the area. Most sleep in their cars, pickups, trailers or tents at campsites, or any place where they are allowed to park.<sup>58</sup>

Some homeless individuals prefer more individual entrepreneurial activities as they consider the day labor market overly exploitative. Instead they collect bottles, aluminum cans and other scrap. In just the last few years the demand for recycling has created an increasingly profitable market for bottles, aluminum cans and other recyclable scrap. Many able-bodied and enterprising individuals are taking advantage of this and are able to make good money from a day's collection. The middlemen or recyclers buying the materials are generally well known among the homeless. However, because the collectors do not adhere to any regular schedules, the processing sites may not be very useful for census purposes.

Others barter or buy and sell almost anything that is in demand, including stolen goods. Peddling and bartering are daily observable activities among the homeless. Other free items frequently converted into cash include food stamps, meal vouchers and bus tokens or passes. Food stamps, especially, have become the equivalent of currency on the streets, and not only among the homeless. Some make rounds at the various free food and clothing distribution points and then sell their loot for petty cash or barter it for something else they need. Those who resort to theft or are in touch with thieves may fence stolen goods. We were amazed at the range of merchandise offered at one DC bar

frequented by thieves and fences acting as middlemen for other street thieves and shoplifters.

Many also sell their blood, hair or take part in medical experiments, some of which can pay several thousands of dollars, because of the health risks involved. These are considered both profitable and predictable ways to raise quick cash. Plasma banks, especially, cater to the homeless and engage large numbers of them in most of our larger cities. Plasma banks and clinics of course are required to keep good records which may be tapped for census purposes. However, screening out the non-homeless may be difficult without face-to-face interviews, unless some screening procedure is built into the registration.

One of the most common hustles reported to us involves establishing dependency relationships with a variety of people who may find it difficult to refuse aid because of the personal relationship cultivated. Relatives are, of course, the first targets, then friends and after that other acquaintances, patrons and kind-hearted people, who might be considered a soft touch. Sponging from an associate is also said to be quite common, although ideally these relationships are supposed to be reciprocal. The most common dependency relationship is between a woman, who has a job and a place of her own and a homeless man who stays with her. Aside from sex, the status derived from having a man around, and perhaps occasionally protection, it is unclear what the woman gets out of the relationship, although the benefits to the homeless man are obvious. The fact that it is rare for a homeless woman to be supported by a man was said to be largely due to the better chances women have of getting work and thus being in a better economic position.

Another stratum of homeless are formed by those engaged in prostitution. The most evident segment of this category consists of those females, who, because of drug habits or the lack of skills, education or ability, are unable to make or save enough to lift themselves out of homelessness. Although their solicitations are frequently in a public location, they are low key and consequently have low visibility. Their numbers are difficult to gauge accurately because most manage to find a roof over their heads on most nights. Typically a woman will first turn a few tricks for money and then entice a customer to take her in where she can catch up on her sleep for the balance of the

night. Since most of the homeless selling sexual favors are not part of the better organized pimp or brothel-run prostitution, they are hard to pin down for enumeration. We were told that most of the homeless women have engaged in prostitution some of the time, but have no independent verification of such claims. Because of the possibility of a large undercount of this subpopulation, an extra effort should be made to learn about sites where they may be enumerated.

Male prostitutes were not studied during this period. We were informed of, and briefly observed, a clique of homeless male homosexuals in Washington, who seemed to hang together, but have no specific information on them. Male teenage hustlers in Baltimore were reported most often to sleep outside of shelters, in the streets, cars, abandoned houses, etc., or go with clients to their homes or to hotels. We were unable to form reasonable estimates of their numbers and predicted they would be difficult to enumerate with standard procedures. We were also told that they were highly mobile both within and between cities.

Although panhandling is stereotypically associated with the homeless, our experience was that only a very small percentage of the population actually engages in this behavior. Those who do not mind the stigma attached to the activity panhandle at locations with heavy street traffic or concentrations of people. Thus in Baltimore and Washington the spots visited by tourists, the indoor markets, train stations and entrances to the subway are favored locations for begging. Entire panhandling areas, specific street corners, or even individual patrons, such as the nice lady down the street, are often claimed as personal resources. A panhandler in Baltimore told me that he had a couple of favorite spots for certain days and certain times of those days. If someone else appeared at those sites he said it might lead to a fight. Otherwise he had a panhandling territory which he covered by walking alone or occasionally with a partner, each taking different sides of the street. Some have also discovered that begging outside of banks, especially on paydays, or from people who have made withdrawals, pays off. This activity does have its risks in that panhandlers are subject to arrest, or at least harassment, by the police. Panhandlers are fairly consistent in their habits and this knowledge can be used to locate them; however, because of competition they do not tend

to congregate and the resultant scattered distribution would not make their enumeration a high priority procedure.

Of course, cadging can take many forms and the willingness to take advantage of someone's generosity or gullibility is far more common than the straightforward begging on the streets. Many homeless are adept at conning people by concocting hard luck stories and scenarios according to which a little cash will see them through the day, get them a hot meal, a bus ride to a job interview, etc. One man in Baltimore told me that he always tries to come up with a story that would appeal to the specific "mark" he's trying to con at a particular time. These activities can be exercised just about anywhere and thus are not bound to a predictable location where enumeration could take place.

Finally there is a large number of criminal activity sites. However, except for crack houses, thieves' markets and a few outdoor drug markets, very few sites have any sort of longevity or predictability as places where one may find the homeless.

A number of homeless persons engage in criminal activities simply because crime is one of the few ways they can support themselves. The underage homeless are often forced to resort to theft or prostitution to obtain food and shelter; they shun official shelters and soup kitchens for the fear of being picked up by the police. Selling drugs is a part-time activity for some of the homeless, with most of the transactions being in small amounts and between users. Because most of these peddlers are either current users themselves or already have had their minds so ravaged by drugs that they are unable to function effectively, they remain in the lowest echelons of drug dealing and rarely make much money. Still others have grown up in a criminal environment and are simply continuing in illegal, deviant, or quasilegal practices such as drug dealing, petty theft or prostitution. Obviously none of these individuals wants attention drawn to himself and consequently they remain among the hardest-to-enumerate segments of the homeless population.

More serious criminal behavior, such as hold-ups, burglary, mugging, purse-snatching, shop-lifting or picking pockets, are engaged in primarily by the younger males. Many of these young people are hardened criminals, who are alternately homeless or domiciled as their "incomes" fluctuate. They drift in and out of

rented houses and apartments, their friends, ' relatives' and lovers' homes, crack houses, abandoned dwellings, prison and the streets, but are not often seen in the shelters.<sup>59</sup> Crimes tend to be opportunistic and largely hidden activities. Unless crack houses are included as locations to be enumerated, criminal sites probably should be written off as not cost efficient and perhaps overly risky to the enumerators.<sup>60</sup>

Of the various locations used by the homeless, the resource sites obviously comprise the most logical and predictable places to use for enumeration. Although some sites may be better left out, such as drug peddling locations, most daytime sites, taken as a whole, allow ready access to practically all segments of the homeless population.

### 3. Recreation sites:

In spite of the rigors of homeless life a few find time to engage in non-procurement, diversionary activities, which may take them to different places at certain times, some of which might have to be considered in a thorough-going enumeration attempt.

Perhaps the most frequent and certainly the most visible form of socializing among the homeless is simply hanging out, idling on streetcorners, in front of liquor stores, or in parks. Many of the men who are either old, handicapped or have no other place to go hang around the shelters all day waiting for the next meal and finally to be let in again in the evening. Similar waiting pattern can be observed around many of the soup kitchens and multi-purpose service centers. A large number of leisure activities, such as playing cards, reading books, newspapers, listening to radio, watching TV or movies are part of many shelter programs. However, since these activities are confined to the shelters themselves and do not take the individuals elsewhere, they are of no direct importance to enumeration, except in the sense that enumeration times may have to be scheduled around some types of activities. For example, most of the church-run shelters insist on regular attendance at religious services which they're loath to disturb. Those more religiously minded may also pray, do Bible reading, go to confessions etc. on their own time. Where they go may be relevant to the Census, if they are not ordinarily expected to be at these locations during enumeration times.



Those who move around more make stops at nearby parks, bars, liquor stores or pool halls where they can meet their buddies, socialize, drink, use drugs, argue and sometimes fight.<sup>61</sup> If the individuals have a little extra cash on hand they may spend it shooting pool or craps, playing pinball, or visiting prostitutes. Sexual activity also takes place between clients of the men's and women's shelters where they are in close proximity. Those with neighborhood contacts visit relatives or friends who may allow their homes to be used for receiving mail and storage of personal belongings. Depending on their financial situation and their present attitude toward the homeless person they may occasionally provide him with a meal or even some spare cash. Because of the large number and sporadic use of such locations the probability of finding homeless is low for any one location. However, to include homeless using no other sites, some sampling of these sites could be attempted to increase representativeness.

#### V. SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS, NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary problem with any enumeration of the homeless is that most do not have specific locations to which they may be expected to return on a regular and predictable basis. There is no fixed one-to-one relationship with a location and the person such as you find with a domiciled person. Many homeless people are mobile, widely scattered, not easily identifiable as homeless and just as likely not to admit their homeless status.

On the basis of our field research we isolated several topics as crucial for the Census Bureau to consider before the plans for the next enumeration became too firmly fixed. The first, and in a sense the most obvious recommendation, is the one for clearly identifying the target population and establishing boundaries or criteria for the inclusion of individuals in it. Without specifying the criteria as to who would be targeted as homeless there would not be much point to the enumeration because we would not know whom we were looking for, counting and describing. The definition provided here (supra p.8) can be used as a starting point although it can be refined further on the basis of input from people who know the homeless best, such as outreach workers. The a priori exclusion by the Census Bureau of certain categories of people engaged in money-making activities (vide supra p. 2),

such as pimps, prostitutes or drug dealers, should be reviewed to avoid arbitrary omissions not related to the actual absence of a stable residence.<sup>62</sup>

One of the principal findings of our research was that the people who fit our definition of homelessness represent an extremely wide range of population categories to begin with and adapt to homelessness with an equally wide range of coping strategies that place them in a diversity of locations at various times. In order to make sure that we have made an attempt to include everyone, we need to identify the major homeless subpopulations, and describe their living situations, locations frequented, and services used by each of them. The purpose of this endeavor is not strictly academic. To the extent the homeless are divided into natural subpopulations, they will share in different activity patterns that will have direct bearing on our ability to enumerate them. Exploratory research on identification, description and classification of subpopulations of the homeless should continue as long as we become aware of sufficiently large groups with distinct behavior patterns that affect their chances of being enumerated.

Additional research would be required to identify the most elusive subpopulations and to discover where and when they may be enumerated. So far we have identified youth (especially black males and teenage hustlers); homeless women in general, but especially street prostitutes; people wanted by law or engaged in criminal activities; temporarily doubled-up; mentally ill drifters as well as those deinstitutionalized; alcoholics; undocumented aliens; crack den habitues and homeless migratory workers as being in this overall category of hard-to-enumerate. Also, other homeless, who are highly mobile, in rural areas, or on Indian reservations, are likely to require special approaches. Even if it were impossible to count the full range of homeless people, we could still make certain that no category would be completely neglected, although some categories might remain less well represented than others. Each group makes use of a different set of locations and times, where they can be most easily reached, and only ethnographic research can tell us what they are and whether current enumeration practices are adequate for each particular group or category or whether alternative techniques should be developed. This work has yet to be done.

After basic information on the subgroups has been acquired through exploratory research, alternate approaches could be developed for the populations at different locations as needed. The enumeration of those who are relatively easy to locate at a single point in time, such as persons in shelters, could continue with the current approach, as long as efforts are made to eliminate the weaknesses revealed in our assessments.<sup>63</sup> Also, instead of pursuing those in the most elusive categories afield, we could wait for them to surface at various service locations over a period of time. Large numbers of homeless persons can also be recognized by the census as not having a usual home by screening them at the institutions, where they may be temporarily sheltered, but not necessarily recognized as homeless. Often the alternate approaches require only slight variations of standard practices, for example, changing the location, the time of day, selecting interviewers of one sex, age, race, ethnic group or language over another, or using an interview approach or providing a message specially tailored to take into consideration the sensitivities of a group's unique orientation. We are not recommending that every group or category should receive a custom-made approach; only those whom we would encounter in sufficient numbers to make the effort cost-effective.

On the basis of our ethnographic research in the Baltimore-Washington area our chief recommendations for future censuses and surveys are 1) to use the daytime service sites and nighttime shelters as the main enumeration sites, perhaps to be covered periodically, and 2) to supplement these counts with longitudinal checks of shelter roster data and other available administrative records.<sup>64</sup> We also recommend expanding the definition of "shelter"<sup>65</sup> to include the numerous other types of housing, not currently included by the Census guidelines, provided for the homeless for a night's lodging. Likewise district offices should strive to obtain as thorough a list of daytime service sites as possible. However, only the largest and the most stable of the so-called street congregation sites should be enumerated due to the documented fluctuations of the numbers of homeless individuals at such sites. The most promising of the non-service sites should be included on the basis of information provided by exploratory research. For some of the most elusive categories of homeless, such as runaway youth or homeless drug addicts, the best enumeration sites may turn out to be primarily non-service locations.

We strongly recommend doing advance local reconnaissance on and monitoring of all selected homeless categories and locations used by them, to preplan enumeration strategies. Such efforts should be part of a monitoring plan by the local census staff that should start well in advance of the enumeration date. In most areas that are not too extensive it is feasible, with little time and effort, to discover the local patterns of homeless activities, map their movements and services used, and determine the best times to approach them. In many cities, for example, local outreach workers already have this information; census staff should make every effort to work closely with them. Whatever the types of sites chosen we recommend that their viability be tested shortly before enumeration; conditions at sites can change very rapidly as Hopper demonstrated in his 1990 experiment in New York.<sup>66</sup> In planning any enumeration the most crucial factor to consider is the juxtaposition of a homeless population with specific locations at particular times, because, as the 1990 S-Night experience demonstrated, even the sites with large homeless populations at one time of the day can be sterile at a different time. The Census Bureau must be alert to monitor any developing situational constraining factors that might impede enumeration, and also do a better job in educating the media, police, service providers, or anyone else in position to either help or hinder enumeration.

It is especially important to develop sound approaches to gain the cooperation of the service providers, outreach workers, gatekeepers, or any other middlemen, who are in a position to help or hinder enumeration. We can enlist their help to locate sites and as advisors to develop plans for site set-up and flow control and also gain additional information about their clientele which might be helpful during interviews. If adequate screening is used, there is no reason we couldn't use carefully selected homeless persons as enumeration planners, guides, and interviewers.<sup>67</sup> We also recommend that the district offices prepare guidelines on how to set up enumeration sites for most efficient enumeration. They should take the layout of the sites and client flow into consideration and, in shelters, also consider the informal social organization of staff and clients. Since there are very few sites which contain only homeless people, shelters included, it is necessary to screen the homeless from the domiciled, both to identify who is homeless, when that is the

goal of the enumeration, and to reduce the possibility of double-counting of domiciled individuals.<sup>68</sup>

It is also important not to miss any homeless individuals at the assigned sites due to interviewer error. Interviewers need to be taught how to make contact, approach and interview respondents; how to probe and persist with refusals, and also to place more emphasis on getting complete information. Interviewers should receive simpler, more relevant and intensive training on how to get a response; avoid non-response or refusals; deal with those unable to respond; get honest responses and avoid deceptive, misleading ones, and to get more complete responses. We recommend doing trial runs if possible, and if not, doing role playing as a minimum. To the extent possible, culturally sensitive or native enumerators should be hired for different subpopulations; also enumerators with skills in languages, such as Spanish, in areas with large foreign language populations. We should try to match interviewer roles with cultural expectations as much as possible; although most respondents will probably already have some familiarity with bureaucracy and official forms. However, because many respondents balk at long interviews, we recommend not using long interview forms, and perhaps further simplifying the shorter questionnaire to give interviewers more time to obtain the most essential basic information.

If rosters or other administrative records are used as the basis of improving coverage our approach should include questioning the record keepers about their record-keeping practices, and probing for any possible omissions in the intake procedures. If the records of the institutionalized homeless are to be checked, additional inquiries will be needed to determine which clients have a usual residence elsewhere.

We also recommend careful consideration of longitudinal survey design and problems involved in tracking the homeless over time to obtain a profile of the full variety of people homeless during a year. The objectives of specially designed surveys, of course, differ from those of the census. As pointed out above, a year is probably the best unit of time for coverage as it would include the full range of seasons during which different categories of persons are homeless. The rationale of the approach is that since we can't cover the entire homeless population at any one time

and, since no point-in-time sample can be representative of the whole, we need to monitor the population as it changes over the year. We can check rostered services monthly to keep up with newcomers and unduplicate between records of homeless services. Identification of duplicate records is recommended by means of unique identifying information. In addition to names, we identified date of birth, place of birth, last home address, occupation or the type of work usually done, and parents' names as easy to get and useful for unduplicating. Many shelters also collect Social Security Numbers as a matter of course; this in itself is usually sufficient to uniquely identify an individual. It has been demonstrated that, if the information can be acquired, two to three items usually suffice to establish a solid match.<sup>69</sup>

Although the acquisition of more substantive descriptive data should be the first priority, more methodological research also needs to be done. We need to determine optimal durations for different types of enumeration efforts and sites, balancing costs with expected yield. We need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of administrative records as supplements to face-to-face enumeration. The counting of the temporarily and precariously housed homeless will certainly require new and creative approaches. In the end we are certain that no single method will prove adequate. A longitudinal mixed method approach is probably the best overall solution; the specific techniques to be used with particular types of homeless and under specific local conditions will have to be discovered through additional research. It is only with a more detailed knowledge of the variety of homeless circumstances that we can develop a toolkit of the best methods. To the extent possible more basic preenumeration research should be done in all parts of the country where large numbers of homeless people are found.

## APPENDIX

SOME ETHNOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS OF HOMELESS EXISTENCE  
OR A TAXONOMY OF HOMELESS SITUATIONSPrepared by Matt T. Salo  
1988

## CLASSIFICATION

By sex: male  
femaleBy age: child  
youth  
adult  
oldsterBy family status: single male or female  
couple  
woman with children  
man with children  
couple with children  
man or woman + other relatives

By race, ethnicity, religion

By duration: one-time, continuing:  
new, first time homeless  
temporary, short term  
long term, chronic  
episodic: occasional, irregular  
regular or cyclical: eg seasonal, end of month

By contributing factors:

Incapacitating health problem:  
illness, injury, physical handicap  
mental illness, war-related coping problem  
mental retardation  
advanced age, senility  
alcoholism, drug dependence

Social problem:

wanted by law enforcement, AWOL

fleeing from threats, eg by criminal associates  
 avoiding alimony, child support payments, debts  
 recently released from incarceration  
 deinstitutionalized from mental institution  
 left due to family conflict, divorce, rejection, abuse  
 alienated, isolated, dropped out  
 evicted, burnt-out, or housing condemned as unfit  
 recent refugee

Increase in expenses:

increase in number of dependents  
 rent inflation  
 cost of living increases  
 unusual medical expenses  
 expensive drug habit  
 debts

Insufficient income, drop in income level, loss of safety net:

unable to get work due to lack of education, skills  
 underemployment, low wages  
 irregular, odd jobs; itinerant work, eg construction,  
 agricultural migrant work  
 job loss: fired, laid off, reduced hours  
 catastrophe wiping out savings: eg property loss  
 safety net holes, loss or reduction in benefits

By shelters utilized:

Emergency shelters for homeless:

city operated  
 privately run  
 religious org, charity operated, eg missions

Special purpose shelters for:

abused spouses  
 drug rehab and alcohol detox  
 convalescence  
 pregnancy, unwed mothers  
 mentally troubled  
 runaway youth  
 elderly

Voluntary or involuntary institutionalization:

in police custody or court  
 in jail, prison, detention ctr, halfway house  
 at hospital, detox center  
 in mental institution



## Temporary shelter:

- doubling up with friends, relatives
- hotels, motels, SRO's, rooming or flop houses
- temporary housing by charities or individuals
- vouchered locations

## Outdoor sleeping locations:

- streets, sidewalks, alleys,
- doorways, stairwells, roofs
- steam grates, dumpsters, bus shelters, phone booths
- parks, plazas, traffic islands, empty lots, cemeteries
- bridges, viaducts, storm sewers, steam tunnels
- lumber yards, construction sites, loading docks
- campgrounds

## Indoor sleeping locations:

- vestibules, hallways, lobbies, stairwells, basements
- buildings under construction, condemned or abandoned;
- parking garages, warehouses, garages, tunnels
- cars, trucks, trailers, campers
- riding trains or buses all night
- train & bus depots, subways
- all night shops, restaurants, theaters, bars,
- laundromats
- public access govt & other bldgs
- makeshift lean-tos, shanties or shacks, tents

## By hangouts, congregating and activity sites:

- Shelter, mission or service site vicinity
- Food sites: souplines, fast food outlets, dumpsters
- Liquor stores, pubs; pool halls
- Socializing sites; often also drinking & drug use sites
- Panhandling spots
- Agency or employer catchout sites, spot work sites
- Criminal activity sites, eg for drug purchase
- Check receiving and cashing sites
- Hospitals, libraries, museums, markets, malls, govt. bldgs.

## By contacts, networks:

- Lone wolf, no associates
- Relatives
- Friends, running buddies, walking partners
- Neighborhood, street corner habitues
- Landlords, hotel or motel proprietors
- Employers

Local vendors  
 Benefactors, eg fast food concessionaires  
 Service personnel:  
 Shelter staff  
 Food, clothing etc. providers  
 Medical, mental health personnel,  
 social workers, counselors  
 ministers, priests, church staff  
 Law enforcement  
 Drug users  
 Bottle gang, drinking buddies  
 Criminal associates, hoodlums

By resource or service sites utilized:

Shelter, Food, Clothing  
 Showers, Laundry, Cooking  
 Transportation  
 Health, medical or dental care  
 Prenatal, maternity, child care  
 Check cashing  
 Mail drop, storage for belongings  
 Job training, counseling  
 Employment service, contact or pick up site  
 Legal assistance  
 Drug or alcohol counseling  
 Detox services  
 Emergency assistance (\$)

By time-passing activities frequently engaged in:

Traveling by walking, bus, train  
 Socializing, loitering, idling on streetcorners, parks  
 Playing cards, pool, pinball  
 Drinking & using drugs  
 Sexual activities  
 Attending religious services  
 Reading, listening to radio, watching TV, movies

By activities producing income, resources or other benefits:

Looking for, or traveling to work  
 Obtaining access to services, benefits eg entitlements  
 Using services, eg visiting dental clinic  
 Hustling:  
 Panhandling

Conning  
 Stealing, boosting  
 Robbing, mugging  
 Collecting bottles, cans, scrap, old clothing  
 Bartering  
 Converting food stamps, vouchers, passes into cash  
 Converting extra food or clothing into cash  
 Peddling, fencing,  
 Selling drugs  
 Selling blood, hair  
 Prostitution, male and female  
 Sponging from associate (usually opposite sex)  
 Putting a touch on relatives  
 Working:  
   Passing handbills, loading goods, removing trash  
   Grass-cutting, raking leaves, and other household jobs, such as help  
   with moving, painting, cleaning  
 Other odd or spot jobs, day labor  
 Low paying part-time or full-time job

By extent of mobility:  
   Limited, local  
   Regional  
   Nationwide

By mobility pattern:  
   Follows routes & routines rigidly, habitually  
   Repeats movements, circulates and visits same sites over  
   time, but not consistently or regularly  
   Random mobility, drifting  
   Systematic nomadism: e.g. migrant work routes

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#### NOTES

1. Taeuber and Siegel 1991: 93.

2. "The census supervisor will dispatch many enumerators on the street to get the vags, loafers, and at nights the dark places, livery barns, lumber yards, railroad box cars, will be visited." The Daily Oklahoman April 27, 1910: 5:4.

A Georgia paper noted that "With a large traveling population Atlanta is peculiarly liable to underenumeration," and exhorted all concerned to take special care to count people engaged in traveling pursuits. The Constitution (Atlanta, GA) April 29, 1910: 4:3.

3. Bureau of the Census. Guide for Training Enumerators (D-671 (Phase 2) and Enumerator Workbook D-671.1 (Phase 2).

4. Census Bureau. 1990 Census Plans for Enumeration of the Homeless. DPLD to FLD Memorandum 89-69; and Cynthia M. Taeuber. Summary of 1990 Census Plans for Enumeration of Selected Components of the Homeless Population.

5. Taeuber and Siegel 1991: 97

6. For example, HUD, FEMA and others
7. Special Place Operations Manual D-565(A) April 1989; Schwede 1990 (SPOS Survey)
8. The shelter enumeration phase was not actually evaluated by the St. Louis research team.
9. "Conclusions." McCall 1989:40-42.
10. e.g. Rossi 1986, James 1988 and Burt 1988
11. McCall 1989
12. Sokolovsky and Belcher 1990
13. Assessments of the 1990 S-Night operation both by independent evaluators and Census staff observers further verified and supported our findings.
14. For the results of the Pilot Test see the companion report to this one by Campanelli, Salo, Schwede and Martin (1990).
15. The research team consisted of the author, as the principal researcher, Pam Campanelli, Brian Jackson and, after April 1989, Laurie Schwede. Most of the field work in the streets was conducted by the author, but Jackson's extensive participant observation and interviews within two Baltimore men's shelters also contributed to our general understanding of homeless behavior patterns. Except for the shelter data specifically attributed to Jackson, all data used in this study were obtained by the author.
16. Glaser and Strauss 1967
17. q.v., op. cit. p. 111
18. q.v. Salo and Campanelli 1991.
19. To maintain the confidentiality promised to the informants we will not describe them in ways that could lead to their identification.
20. The Center for Survey Methods Research of the Census Bureau is conducting further analysis of shelter rosters from Washington, D.C. and Baltimore in a separate project the results of which will be published later.
21. See Rosenthal, R. 1991:109 ff for the deleterious effect this self-selection has on our sampling and ability to generalize about the homeless

without distorting the picture.

22. For a more detailed listing of modifications to S-Night procedures made on the basis of the Baltimore study consult the 1990 Decennial Census Memorandum No. 69 (Miskura 1989).

23. Census procedures operationalized, as the S-Night "target population," those individuals found at locations known to be frequented by homeless persons. In addition, as practically all Baltimore Pilot Test and S-Night observers noted, interviewers also used their own judgments as to who was or was not homeless, thus introducing arbitrary variation to the procedures. Taeuber (1991:107) also noted that: " It is hard to convince enumerators to interview everyone they see when they think they are on a mission to count the homeless.

24. It is important not to reify the concept "homeless" into a characteristic of the individual. Homelessness is a relationship vis-a-vis housing resources, not an integral condition of the person, although certain pathologies may result from homelessness.

25. Taeuber 1989. The objectives of S-Night were subsequently revised to reflect more accurately what was actually accomplished; viz. adding people, who otherwise might have been missed, to the overall count.

26. See Appendix I

27. e.g. Burt 1989: pp 45-47.

28. cf. also Rosenthal, R. 1993:209

29. For the purpose of comparison, according to a Maryland Department of Human Resources report (1986), 75% of the homeless in Maryland were between 18 and 60 years of age; 16% were younger and only 9% older.

30. cf. Dockett 1989:45

31. cf. Dockett 1989, Cohen 1992, and Wolch 1992

32. cf. Cohen 1988

33. See Fischer 1986; also Snow et al. 1989.

34. cf. Stack 1974

35. Cf. also Glasser 1990

36. cf. Montoya 1991
37. See also McNichol 1988
38. cf. Snow 1988
39. The Resource Group 1989. Our informants told us that many individuals getting some form of entitlement check will spend it on housing for as long as the money lasts; toward the end of the month, when the money has run out, they are back in shelters or on the streets.
40. But see a beginning of literature on the topic by Cohen 1992, Rahimian et al. 1992 and Wolch 1992.
41. USDA report
42. Burt 1988, I:39
43. It is often assumed that the shelter counts are done fairly well relative to street counts (e.g. Taeuber 1991:102); however, the only evaluation of within shelter coverage (Sokolovsky and Belcher, 1990), in the Baltimore pilot test, was of an enumeration done under different conditions from S-Night (for example, it was announced as voluntary, instead of as mandated by law like the Census).
44. Jackson 1990
45. Both Washington, DC and Baltimore publish emergency food and shelter directories which describe the kinds of services each facility provides.
46. Clark 1992
47. Friskics-Warren 1990
48. Ethnographic studies sponsored by CSMR have documented many of the more common problems that lead to entire households being missed by the Census. Irregular housing is among the major factors.
49. See Hopper 1990
50. See Fleisher 1990 and Sullivan 1990 for more examples of this kind of homelessness characteristic of many inner city minority youth
51. cf. Gopelrud 1987

52. cf Hopper 1991
53. cf. Martin 1989
54. see also Wright and Devine, 1990
55. See Rahimian 1992
56. Burt 1988, II:21
57. Martin and Holt (1987) report that USDA's Hired Farm Working Force (HFWF) and California unemployment insurance data indicate that only about one-fourth of all migrant workers have annual earnings which exceed the LSC 125 percent of the poverty line cutoff for assistance." This means that three-quarters of the migrant workers fall below the poverty line cutoff!
58. See Gopelrud 1987
59. cf. Fleisher 1990
60. We know of at least one incident in which an interviewer was threatened with having her head blown off by suspicious neighborhood drug dealers. Internal Census memorandum.
61. cf. Wolch 1992
62. cf. Taeuber 1988
63. See Jackson 1990 for an insider's view of the number of things that can go wrong, even with an ostensibly straightforward enumeration of a finite, captive population.
64. Whether longitudinal methods should be used depends on whether the goal is to obtain a one-day snapshot count or point prevalence, which we believe to be practically impossible, or annual prevalence. The current Census objective is to provide the snapshot, but the annual coverage would provide a more representative picture of the nation's homeless since different kinds of people are homeless at different times of the year, and also for different reasons.
65. See Schwede et al 1991
66. Hopper, K. 1990

67. For a successful use of homeless persons as enumeration assistants see The City of Pasadena Homeless Count, 1992.

68. For discussion of screening questions also see Williams 1989

69. Robinson 1986; Dockett, 1989. In fact, credit card companies, in checking whether a new card has reached the right person, commonly use only two sets of matching information: e.g. the last four digits of the client's Social Security Number and the client's date of birth. For each unique identifier element added the probability of detecting matches is strengthened and the chance of inadvertently including duplicates is diminished.