

American Homelessness Notes: *Homelessness in America*, edited by: Robert Hartmann McNamara

-Public poverty has so many emotional consequences (17).

>The consequences:

-The intrusion of homelessness people into your field vision disrupts your train of thought; it derails the track of your own life.

-Feeling of guilt is prevalent (17).

-Fear

-USA lacks a national health care system, doesn't provide affordable day-care or reasonably priced public housing and it does not support families with a child's allowance (19).

-The social norm of being able to help women and children, but men should hold self sufficiently within American society (20).

-...Involves the American tradition of localism in social welfare. Admittedly, localities are most familiar with the social problems in their midst, and they do differ in their perspective and approaches. Nevertheless, all localities lack the resources of the federal government to tackle the local manifestation of a serious national problem, and the poorest localities— the communities with the heaviest concentration of poor people— usually possess the least resources. Moreover, if a locality does determine that it should address the presence of homeless people on its streets, it must then concern itself with the perception that too generous social provision could turn it into a magnet community (21).

-American individualism is an issue within how to make social issues come together and work together.

-“Now, however, global capitalism—a capitalism of small businesses—dominated the economy. Then, at least, it was possible to argue that hard work, an entrepreneurial spirit, and emigration westward would bring proportionate rewards. Now, however, global capitalism demands not merely individualism, but *hyperindividualism*. From an individualism that required production to push you up the economic ladder, we have transitioned to a hyperindividualism who concern with consumption revolves primarily around an atomized and antisocial conception of the self” (23).

>Commonly associated with characteristics such as narcissism, the inability to emphasize with others\*\*\*

-Issues are worst in rural areas than suburban for homelessness. Think about it, time and growth is slower in a rural town than it is in an urban area.

>Housing vouchers are difficult because rental options are not common among small towns for homeless people.

-“Obviously, homeless people, no less than people in general, self-select into the available living options based on what makes them feel most comfortable and secure” (53).

-“A veteran has a higher likelihood of experiencing homelessness in his or her lifetime than someone who never participated in military life” (61).

-Decrease in affordable housing to make way for luxury apartments and people with money.

### **About Women:**

-“Unmarried women had a difficult time proving to town officials that they were self-sufficient and moral— virtually any woman living on her own was immediately stereotyped as immoral, a probable prostitute, and a disease to society” (78).

-“During the this era (19th century), poverty was connected with criminality, insanity, and other moral defects creating ‘the morphology of evil.’ There was little tolerance of the homeless and the police often blamed crimes on the homeless in order to solve them. Poverty was seen as a moral condition that resulted from inferiority, weakness, or laziness, and offering relief to the poor was thought to encourage idleness and only increase the problem of homelessness” (79).

-Skid row: the name comes from street in Seattle that paralleled the log chute, or “skid” that the lumberjacks used to slide their cuttings down to the sawmill below on the waterfront of the Puget Sound. In time the area around the “skid” became characterized by its shanties, cheap rooming houses, and saloons. Somehow, in the cant of homeless men, the “row,” “skid row” became a synonym for the bottom rung of the urban social ladder (80).

>Would happen on the outskirts of town to hide them from townspeople (80).

-Page 80 talks about where the words hobo, tramp and bum are rooted from.

-“African American homeless women were not counted because agencies refused to acknowledge their need for help and simply turned them away” (84).

-“During the 1960s, the number of homeless women slowly began to increase, primarily as a result of increased divorce rates and the deinstitutionalization of mental hospitals” (86).

-1965 when Congress established Medicaid for poor patients, but the costs of patient in state hospitals were not covered because they were already paid for by the individual states (87).

-Supplemental Security Income 1972

-More women than men were institutionalized (87).

-1970s: A time when women started to have more respect within the work world, they were now more able to choose widely about who they want to marry because they didn’t need a man for financial support as much as they did before this time.

-“Without vagrancy laws, the homeless could wander through the streets of downtown without being arrested or sent to jail, and much of this wandering population was composed of females previously released from mental hospitals. It was during this time that the label of shopping-bag lady became popular in describing the increased visible female homeless population” (89).