INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

AGAINST THE WALL:

HOMELESS MEN IN A NEW YORK CITY SHELTER

by

CHARLES F. LYLES

A disseration submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1996

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/30/96
Date

William Kornblum
Chair of Examining Committee

4/30/96
Date

Julia Wrigley
Executive Officer

Charles Tilly

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

AGAINST THE WALL: HOMELESS MEN IN A NEW YORK CITY SHELTER

by

Charles Frank Lyles

Advisor: Professor William Kornblum

Shelters are seen as a principal response of municipal agencies to the proliferation of homelessness throughout the United States. This ethnography presents observations from a two-year field study in the largest men's shelter in New York City. Interviews with focal leaders and notes from focus group discussions, anecdotes, statements from shelter inmates and staff, and illustrations of the social dynamics observed provide the portrait of how a shelter, contrary to its public mandate, provides a congregate home that exacerbates social distress by accommodating family disorganization, chronic unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, sex, recidivism, and continued criminal behavior.

Inmates are identified as "ex-prisoners" and "ex-workers." Positions in the shelter are based on imported status. *Belongingness* in the shelter is achieved by belonging to one of two status groups: the "hoodlum/gods" or the "regulars." Resistance to violence among these two status groups has not reduced assaults against the two smaller, lesser groups composed of homosexuals ("queens") or comparatively

elderly inmates (the "pops"). The status groups and their activities persist in the process of *prisonization-shelterization*. Membership in the shelter cliques reverses some of the dislocations experienced in the larger community, and entraps people who have few options. More than 80 percent of the shelter inmates are ex-prisoners on parole, probation, or otherwise affiliated with the criminal justice system. Ex-workers who become shelterized increase their probability of ultimately entering prison, which is often perceived as providing more advantages than the shelter. The shelter provides some limited licit work opportunities, but only for those few who cooperate with the staff in achieving administrative objectives. For those who neither become "clients" or are not co-opted as institutional aides, the shelter erodes work values.

Recommendations for policy changes are made to help released prison inmates improve their limited options in a time of radically changing economic conditions, family deterioration, and widespread societal commitment to violence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation grows out of my focus on community research, a focus that dates to my undergraduate days at Morehouse College. Analyses of the speeches and protests of Morehouse sociology major Martin Luther King, Jr. led me to examine my responsibility to act in response to the immediate conditions around me. Several foundations and individuals made possible my graduate studies beyond Morehouse. The Southern Education Foundation sponsored my summer study at the University of Texas, and the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation made my year possible at Indiana University before I was admitted to the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

I had the privilege of being the student of exceptional sociologists. The late criminologists Edwin Sutherland and Alfred Lindesmith oriented me to the disciplined study of drugs, crime, and race. Charles Winick revived my interest in the study of behaviors defined as deviant. Lindsay Churchill assisted me in grasping how group members, including the homeless, construct meaning in ordinary conversations, a meaning often undetected by nonmembers. Through the field study assignments that William Kornblum offered me, I became persuaded that ethnographic field studies were powerful tools to help in understanding the behavior of social outcasts.

I appreciate the employment opportunity that Bruce D. Johnson and Eloise Dunlap gave me at the National Development and Research Institute's Special Population Research. I have had the friendly support of Charles Vert Willie, sociologist at Harvard University's School of Education, and Martin Luther King's classmate at Morehouse College. Avrama Gingold, an old friend of Charles Willie and William Kornblum, and now a friend of mine, edited this dissertation and I thank her.

Finally I acknowledge the constructive feedback that the late, eminent ethnographer Elliot Liebow gave me during a personal conversation at the 1994 Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association in Los Angeles. He will be missed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

More than one million people are behind bars in America, a total exceeding that of any other nation in the world. According to "Citizens Against Recidivism" (1995) in New York State "69 prisons house 68,400 prisoners in space designed for 52,100. By 1996, the prison population will exceed 70,000." In New York City, the increased number of ex-convicts who have been released from prisons, far overshadows the ex-workers in "a temporary emergency shelter for the homeless." I present anecdotes, drawn from case histories and field notes, to document this ethnographic account of men in a shelter for homeless men, the Atlantic Bedford Men's Shelter (ABMS). My observations are of ex-convicts, freed from prison, and placed alongside ex-workers in a temporary emergency shelter for the homeless. There is a focus on status imported into the shelter; therefore shelter residents are described as "ex" rather than as "former" prisoners or workers. The themes and questions I address in specific chapters are as follows:

1. Generally, what are some characteristics of the ex-prison inmates and ex-workers in the homeless shelter I studied?

2. What forms do status and stigma take in this shelter?

3. How do powerless men contribute to their powerlessness?

4. What is the progression from shelter client drift to prisonization shelterization?

5. What are the conclusions and implications for the free community?

The bonding of ex-prison inmates to chronically-unemployed workers in homeless shelters has increased due to efforts to relieve the mounting incidence of prison overcrowding. Therefore, in recent years, research on "prisonization" has increased since Clemmer (1940) hypothesized that prison inmates in the Great Depression underwent processes of socialization he called "prisonization."

> "Prisonization" is the taking on, in a greater or lesser degree, the folkways, mores, customs and general culture of the penitentiary. He suggested that every inmate undergoes some degree of prisonization due to the numerous deprivations of confinement. Although he argued that [sic.] degree of prisonization is influenced by the extent to which the inmate involved himself in primary group relations in the prison" (Faine, 1973).

Linking "shelterization," a related subtype of socialization that I observed in a shelter, to "prisonization" is an objective of this exploratory study. According to Sutherland and Cressey (1940):

> Shelterization is a process related to changes in attributes and behavior acquired previous to life in the shelter. Shelterization, in fact, is adaptation not only to the shelters, but to the total situation in which a man finds himself. The total situation includes being unemployed and dependent on public relief, living in the slum area of the city, being isolated from former social and economic contacts. . . .
>
> Shelterization becomes
>
> . . . manifest through a range of adjustments which include: subscribing to the "homeless" identity; striving to secure marginal benefits inside the shelter's impoverished and highly competitive social economy; focusing almost all attention and effort to immediate, tangible gains, and little on distant plans for escaping shelter dependency; and

> reinterpreting the uses of all available resources, regardless of their intended function, according to current, shelter-based needs. (Gounis, 1993, p. 19.)

Shelterization is documented in recent literature as an important process explaining increases in homelessness (Gounis, 1993). This category of the homeless has expanded greatly among unemployed males. "Prisonization-shelterization" is associated with changes in our market economy that limit individual choices. Macro-influences have been shown to trickle down, becoming a series of observable social problems in urban communities.

Ethnographic studies present two paradigms to explain shelterization. Psychological explanations focus on personal traits and interpret ecological and social interaction as background factors. An example of this individualistic analysis is found in Grunberg and Eagle (1990):

> . . . despite the dangerousness and depersonalization in the shelter, residents do not flee the building. Instead, they stay and develop coping strategies that provide them with a feeling of mastery unparalleled on the outside. For shelter residents, being ostracized by, and feeling alienated from, mainstream society is a fact of life. They come to the shelter with experiences that they can rely only on themselves.

Gounis, an anthropologist with the New York State Department of Mental Health, presents an alternative to the clinical perspective on shelterization:

> The idea that homelessness in New York City is equivalent to disaffiliation seems outdated; it is mostly derived from the literature on Skid Row and is not supported by current research . . . for only a subgroup does life revolve around the shelter system. . . . The interrelations between shelter and community are, in fact, fundamental to understanding the evolution of these institutions and the lives of the men who use them.

Members of the subgroup expanded as a result of the city releasing ex-prison inmates to the shelter. This dissertation describes my participation and observations of debilitating interactions among ex-prison inmates whom the labor market could not absorb. No support for clinicalizing models of shelter dependency was found in my investigation of the sheltered homeless. My sense is that shelterization reflects changed economic conditions and places the continuing racialization of poverty into a more comprehensive historical context. Interactions between individual shelter inmates are influenced by a mobile culture that is created by inmates who have achieved greater "personal efficacy" (Hughes and Demo, 1989) in the "prison-shelter" structure I have described as "prisonization-shelterization."

In addition to interpreting my observations, I analyzed interviews of twenty ex-prison inmates and drew on administrative reports generated by The City of New York, and on selected research literature on homelessness and the "underclass." The social and personal histories that inmates shared and discussed in a series of "liberation" focus groups added meaning that is not usually found in public discourses on homeless sheltered inmates. In America, the association of racial identity, poverty, and crime has been sufficiently well documented for all three to be recognized as major components underlying (and underlining) modern urban life. Although these "social facts" (Durkheim, 1895) have become part of the way Americans think about and accept their society, an almost cynical indifference to these threatening facts has also come to be expected. It is as if it has become "natural" or "normative" for increasing segments of Americans to get by without many of the

basic needs of every human being. This shift in normative expectations amounts to devaluing the worth of workers, and can be traced to 1985 or so, when public opinion started to revert to a worldview asserting there are not enough resources to go around for everybody. This attitude is conveyed in the title *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison—Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice* (Reiman, 1979). Of the poorest:

> In 1986, blacks accounted for 46.5% of all arrests for violent crimes while making up 12% of the population. A quarter of African-American males in major cities were in jail, prisons, on probation, on parole in the early 1990s (Dunlop and Johnson, 1994).

In my two-year field study in the largest shelter for homeless men in New York City, I noted that more than 70 percent of the total population of 1,000 had experienced various stages of prisonization. In the mid-1990s, legislative proposals are likely to increase the number of ex-prisoners released into temporary emergency shelters (*New York Times*, Editorial, June 3, 1995). Moreover, the interplay between prisons and shelters indicates that "prisonization is related to self-attitudes that are not conducive to effective resocialization" (Zingraff, 1975). However, there is also evidence that "as more and more research is done in the area of prisonization, it becomes increasingly clear that the normative system of inmates themselves is not necessarily negative" (Thomas, 1975).

Among the many subtle and complex interactions that are created by "prisonization-shelterization," attention is drawn to some of the contradictions between community expectations and realities emerging as prisonization-shelterization. Prisons and shelters do not pretend to rehabilitate inmates and the prospects for

joining or rejoining the economy are practically non-existent. "What criminal arrest begins, incarceration in America's overcrowded and violent prisons and jails finishes" (Myers, 1991). Shelterization does not reverse the effects of prisonization for members of the underclass. On the contrary, shelter stay augments dependency and keeps inmates marginalized, warehoused in the shelters as men for whom the labor market no longer has use. Generally categorized as "the undeserving poor," (Katz, 1989) and "the truly disadvantaged" (Wilson, 1987), in their "adaptation" to the shelter ex-prison inmates negotiated a social order among various status groups and staff. This "negotiated order" (Light, Keller & Clahoun, 1993) channels conflict among men committed to the prison culture and those valuing work. I documented solidifying formations among status groups in the city's largest shelter. For safety and for re-affirmation of their worth as human beings, inmates demonstrated strong inclinations to associate with like-minded others in the shelter.

This dissertation begins to address a void in the research on the increase of homeless ex-prison inmates being released to inner city communities. I locate my observations in the context of other ethnographic research completed on inner cities from 1970 to the present. Recently, Joan Moore (1995), a principal researcher in this area, shared with me her opinion that:

> There is virtually no direct evidence on this topic . . . interviews with inmates . . . do not help us understand the communities they leave behind. And community researchers are likely to overlook the effects of imprisonment because they study people who remain in the community, not those who leave or are removed.

My interviews with inmates help us understand the communities they left behind when they were incarcerated, and their failure to return to their home communities when released. Widely publicized survey studies, like Christopher Jencks's, ignored some of the factors that are illuminated in this ethnography. For example, in *The Homeless* (1994), Jencks devoted a chapter to answering the question, "Do Shelters Cause Homelessness?" After a comprehensive review of the "steady flow" of research literature on homelessness from 1989 to 1994, Jencks summarized his findings:

> As far as I can tell, the spread of homelessness among single adults was a by-product of five relates changes: the elimination of involuntary commitment, the eviction of mental hospital patients, the advent of crack, increases in long term joblessness, and political restrictions on the creation of flophouses. Taken together, these changes seem to me adequate to explain what happened during the early 1980s, but they do not quite explain what happened later in the decade. When the economy began to recover, homelessness should have declined. Crack was the only major new factor in the equation after 1984. While crack certainly made some people homeless, it cannot explain most of the increase. We must therefore consider another possibility. Perhaps improvement in the shelter system encouraged homelessness. The homeless are not just passive victims. They make choices, like everybody else.

Inmates' choices, however, are not made unilaterally in a vacuum. If the shelter encourages homelessness for some, it discourages it for others. I have used Jencks' survey findings as a point of departure to describe inmates who were segmented into status groups. I found it consistent with earlier ethnographies on black underclass men to think about sheltered homeless men as retreatists from the stigma these men have traditionally suffered.

> Retreatism occurs when people abandon both the approved goals and the approved means of achieving them. The retreatist is the "double

> failure" in the eyes of society—the vagrant, the chronic narcotics addict, the "skid row bum" (Robertson, 1989).

These retreats were composed of individuals in various stages of adaptation to the shelter. The least retreating inmates—the "regulars"—had more connections to the surrounding neighborhood. "Regulars" were more likely to conform to normative practices. In contrast, there were the "hoodlums" or "gods," comprising ex-prison convicts with longer periods of incarceration. The hoodlums were more isolated from their families and more inclined to be indifferent to society's rules (Robertson, 1989). Other status groups in the shelter, the "queens" and the "pops," composed about 10 percent of the total population, and played roles that supported the predominance of the "hoodlums."

I confirmed Jencks's findings that crack was a major element in explaining the persistence of homelessness in a shelter after 1985. The subject shelter was a site where the sale, use, and attempted recovery from crack were routine. Labor market changes limited the choices of workers in general, and in particular of those tethered at the bottom. This dissertation recalls what Kornblum (1972) referred to as "an ethnographic study of working class community settlements," as the "post industrial society . . . increasingly replaces . . . symbols of American society."

A generation ago, in the foreword to Kornblum's *Blue Collar Community*, Janowitz commented:

> The impacts of residential segregation, of ethnic identification, of age groupings, and of the subtle patterns of leisure styles produce a system of "ordered segmentation." The ordered segmentation has created fragmented groupings and delimited social worlds—rather than a pattern of alienated individuals.

The sheltered homeless created status groups whose segregated residence reflects their special positions in the community. Racial identity is a salient characteristic of the inmates and the neighborhood where they are segregated. Compounding the racial identity of a pariah political group are the stigma of serial incarcerations, and dislocations from the labor market. Age groupings are subordinated by race, and the use and sale of drugs are major preoccupations among most shelter inmates. The idea of "leisure time" has no meaning because there is no separation between work and play.

Several ethnographic studies served as precursors for investigating recent processes of relocations from prisons to associations of ex-prison inmates and ex-workers. Kornblum details some of the issues that have been investigated by the social scientists who view ethnic neighborhood associations as solutions to the social disorganization of underclass society. Therefore, his documentation of these issues gave me a framework for thinking about what happens when socially-disorganized people who need help get together. More than most social scientists have reported, I found that breaks in relationships with families, neighborhoods, and occupations discontinued the development of affiliations which as "local solutions to social disorganization" appeared reasonable a generation ago. Emerging processes of prisonization-shelterization call for a re-examination of some of the social forces by which Kornblum

> sought to view the issues of work and ethnicity in the light of the political institutions which both reflect and shape other communal institutions and sentiments. This is a point of view which seems especially appropriate for a community where local political institutions

so clearly play a major role in forming the ethnic and class consciousness of its residents (Janowitz, *op cit.*).

Despite the meager effects of make-work relief programs in the Sixties and Seventies on their social mobility (Patterson, 1985), working class families expected that their children would have a better life. After the end of *de jure* segregation, economic incentives that kept workers running after the American Dream became a legitimate element of black working-class consciousness. Accommodationist African-Americans seriously believed that hard work would overcome the stigma of skin color. Their hard work, plus their concentrated numbers in inner city political districts, were expected to result in payments for party loyalty dating back to the New Deal. Blacks claiming these debts expected to move into the middle class. In the exodus from their poverty to the promises of the American class system, they told those left behind that they had only themselves to blame. Among those blacks who had "made it," ex-prison inmates were likely to be kept at a distance. Felon family members, in many cases, were not welcome to return to their homes after getting out of prison. "He's always been different. Just leave him alone. If we can help we will, but he's on his own," was a typical attitude of many. However, the status differentials between ex-prisoners and the unemployed involved only a relatively small decline in community standing. The shelter accommodates these differences by using the label "homeless," but sheltered inmates react differently to their categorization. In the daylight hours, when shelter regulations require inmates to leave the building, their visibility in the general community is eased by traveling together. This visibility often appeared as an increase in the number of men idling on street corners, and in

other public places. In their associations with each other, these peer groups became, as they said, "tight." Many shelter inmates who were homeless and "hanging out" on street corners had families, kin, or friends in those neighborhoods. The corners the sheltered ex-prison inmates hung out on were often the corners around which they had grown up.

To become part of the sheltered homeless, inmates had to acquire some of the attitudes and practices of the prisonized-shelterized. The corner brought candidates for the shelter together. They differed from local, non-sheltered residents particularly by their appearance. The shelter inmates therefore created homelessness among men who entered and remained within its walls. Dirty, disheveled clothing alone, although often associated in the public's mind with homelessness, was not sufficient to be counted among the prisonized-shelterized. Throughout the inner city, a marked change in dress could be observed among street people after 1985. Shelterized inmates who had been in prison for many years often could be detected by their struts in a fashion of a bygone style. Increased shabbiness, loose-fitting clothes, scuffed shoes contrasted with the Edwardian look of the 1970s. Two decades ago, men could afford clothes that made fashion statements. "I used to wear clothes with little buckles in the back. I had forgotten about all that," an inmate in his 40s reflected.

As the Kennedy-Johnson period of "Camelot" gave way to the Nixon Administration and the 1970s, inner city youth joined the middle-aged in asserting the dawning of the "Age of Aquarius." This was a time when restrictions based on gender, race, or class were expected to be stripped away. Trousers flared with bell

bottoms. Shirts ballooned with flamboyant colors. Patterns and shapes denoted a consensus that diversity was "in." The rowdy, ragtag desperation of the Nineties bore more resemblance to the calculated displayed of nihilism in the beat generation of the 1950s. In the Fifties, rebellions against materialism were artistic statements of "baby boomers" acting out in an era of optimism. Clothes worn by the average inner-city person at the close of the twentieth century were "just something to put on," as a "regular" complained. For the homeless, clothes testified to ruffled times. Often, as they rummaged around to make ends meet, they wore their entire wardrobes. All of this is to say that, "The [the homeless] appearance denotes widespread disorder and instability such as follows famines and civil wars" (Kasinitz, 1989).

Leaving the deprivations of prison to enter the deprivations of the shelter involved retreats from normative as well as personal expectations. Abandoning both the means and the goals of mainstream society, retreatist behavior accommodated resource scarcities. Even these reduced expectations were difficult to achieve in the shelter.

> Even if you got a job, you have to be back in by curfew, and pay the guards to let you back in after 10:00. To receive the mid-day meal, you have to be present in the neighborhood where there are no jobs, no nothing, really.

The prison-shelter circuit functioned, therefore, to lower already dismal aspirations among people who reflected, "I never wanted too much anyway." In such rationalized ways, inmates held onto the idea that they could have gotten more out of life had they wanted it and simply worked hard enough. These men, who had "never had enuff of nuthin'," blamed themselves for their presence in the shelter.

The gradual deterioration of inmates's appearances accompanied a shift in their orientations to the future and to ways of earning an income. Approximately fifteen years ago, tendencies among members of the middle class to lower their aspirations were reported by several social scientists (Newman, 1988; MacLeod, 1986). MacLeod's assessments of the prospects for inner city minorities were especially discouraging. Trends to adapt to "just the way life is" were evident in media reports of vanishing jobs, crime, and prison overcrowding. In-depth news coverage on "get tough on crime" measures were at the same time supplemented with reports that such measures were holding the crime wave constant. An inmate advised me about why he sold crack cocaine.

> I lived in a housing project where nobody I knew worked. I don't know if my mother knew I was selling crack or not. She has two other children. The little money she got from welfare wasn't enough to take care of them. No, I didn't care what she thought. I had to help her and myself. No, the shelter isn't going to stop nobody from trying to take care of themselves. How many I know in the joint? More than I know out, I can tell you that. Yea, lots are in the shelter.

Resources that were marketable in low-income communities became identified, in the general community, with crime and poverty. For example, "rap music," produced by talented teenagers in inner cities, shaped their introjected community sentiments into new art forms. The "blues" of the Thirties became the "dues" of the Nineties. Government interventions that had provided safety nets since the Great Depression, in the Nineties became leaking ceilings. The shelter provided some cover but homelessness confirmed the depletion of personal and collective resources. Political requirements to reduce expectations at the bottom were strategized as

services to the deserving. Prisonization-shelterization perverted objectives of neighborhood organizations, keeping people with few resources dependent upon one another "through hook or crook."

Twenty years ago, social scientists reasoned that there were signs of collective actions to improve the political and economic resources of marginalized groups. It was assumed that outcomes of the human rights movement would lead to better treatment for "minorities." However, most of these analyses apparently were based upon the assumption that labor market conditions would remain structurally unchanged. Leggert (1991) took it for granted, for example, that work led to group solidarity.

> The city includes not only workplace but neighborhood, and when workmen are concentrated in residential pockets, the neighborhood will give their lives a collective quality as they become dependent upon one another. Today social scientists would be foolish to avoid the significance of the neighborhood, for block and neighborhood groups concerned with self-help are springing up all over industrial America, especially in the Negro ghettoes.

However, by the mid-1980s, as mounds of social science literature made clear, processes of deindustrialization had taken hold of America. The welfare rights movement had become stymied, while conservative principles of individual merit gained center stage. Subsequently, the restoration of the use of the shelter for the de-institutionalized and the "dejobbed" controlled political dissent in working-class neighborhoods. Inadvertently or otherwise, attention was distracted from major macro-sources of community disorganization to individual, pathological behavior.

Pursuing Christopher Jencks's question, "Do Shelters Cause Homelessness?" I found various adaptations among inmates that helped to explain increases in shelter populations. Findings from my two-year-long field observations report these increases as retreats from disorganizations in the wider community. However, in the off-the-beaten-path of the shelter, there was found a reorganization of the reasons for groups of men with mutual interests to interact. I discussed these observations as political restrictions; economic restrictions that showed up as crack use/sales; and retreats from racial and cultural exploitation based in the traditions of American racism.

Retreats from Political Restrictions

Sheltered homeless men seek affiliations whenever they can find them, and inmates were not reluctant to share information about the shelter with me. The veracity of this information is suggested by the number of accounts that were collaborated. In the interview that follows, the information was available from several independent sources.

> Morris ought to still be here. He could tell you more about this place than me. He was [an assistant to a New York State Assemblyman]. They caught him in a crack house with a freak. He went to jail like the rest of them. They sent him here after, I guess, it must have been for two years. He had connections with big shots. He left here last year to go to the [East Haven] shelter because he could work. He still had some pull. Yea, he's homeless. They busted Morris because he was for the 'po' people. They don't be bothering you if you kiss butt and sell out your own people. I sold cocaine to politicians right downtown here before; they didn't get busted. No, they didn't know I knew who they were. Nobody think we know nothing. I knew 'cause they be on T.V. talking shit. When I used to live near the "whore

> stroll" where the big shots stopped their cars at night to get [sexual favors] I guess they thought nobody knew them down there.

Crack use and sales were high among members of this warehoused population. Numbers of HIV/AIDS patients, as well as increased crime among women, became new threats to an old social order. Therefore, it was in the interest of political agents to restrain the spread of these populations. As Jencks noted, one cause for the increase in shelterization was restraint on the development of flophouses, single-room occupancy, and welfare hotels. Neighborhoods that had accommodated the "precariously housed" for generations were being transformed. The geographical spread of largely unemployed households could be contained by reviving abandoned armories in decaying neighborhoods. Gentrification had started to disperse the cheap hotel districts (Kasinitz *et al.*). Various activities associated with adult theme shops and movies, and other profit-making shops that had for years enlivened these neighborhoods, were declining. Populations of out-of-work workers, carrying on the neighborhood tradition of eating at "greasy spoons," sleeping in hotel cubicle rooms, and seeking recreation in diverse entertainment pursuits, were being scattered, and made more difficult to set up.

No longer needed were the large supply of men to work "off the books" and at below minimum wages, filling temporary jobs. Jobs for which the "mission," the "Bowery," or the "skid row" had been convenient suppliers no longer existed in sizable numbers. Community improvement and self-help groups straddled their sympathy for the homeless with pragmatic "funding" interests. Planning for the disposal of the exiled popularized the acronym NIMBY—not in my back yard. Zones

that had been inhabited, until the Fifties, by aging poor white men had become filled mostly by younger blacks and Latinos making up the "new homeless." More than other neighborhoods, these "downtown business improvement districts" were regulated by commercial interests at all levels of government. Efforts to simulate a humanized disposal of the homeless were organized by well-known corporations. "Professionals" were sincere about "preventing human suffering" (Guiliani, 1990). Others planned to profit from the din of change brought on by relocation, new developments, and new zoning.

The responsibilitiy of law enforcers in these districts had never been taken seriously. Activities that made up the "red light" culture were expoected to be confined within well-defined and mutually-understood boundaries. The word on the street was that crack sales, for example, depended on which cop was on duty and which ones were "on the take." Located near the fringers of the bustling entertainment and commercial areas of the downtown hub, restrictions on new flophouses and the demolition of old ones helped to unravel the tattered fabrics of marginalized peoples. They were unable to resettle in other Manhattan neighborhoods, and so the lure of the shelter became a light at the end of the subway tunnel in Brooklyn.

Getting Them Off the Streets

Residents who once had only occasional run-ins with the police had reason to wonder if they would get arrested "for any old kind of bullshit." Others who

reckoned that they knew how to manipulate the police, decided to get arrested by acting disoriented when they wanted to "disappear." For street people, there were new rules, especially for those returning from state prison. The tacit understanding had been that the police did not care "if we kill each other." Now more vigorously enforced vagrancy laws kept them moving. The principles of the quondam live-and-let-live philosophy were being revised as police followed orders to get "them" off the streets. Gentrification made formerly sordid neighborhoods either "exotic" or "historic." Red-light districts had been occupied not only by street people but also by those who worked as day laborers, handymen, office temps, restaurant helpers, and the like. The elite street groups were known as "slick hustlers," and among the younger homeless, as "big willies." The career of the male hustler included a variety of occupations that had thrived on the resources in the neighborhood. The most typical opportunities around the cheap room districts attracted pimps, male and female prostitutes, bouncers, stick-up artists, "hackers" or merchants of stolen goods, pickpockets, con persons, and highly placed drug dealers. Proud of their relative independence, hustlers did not consider themselves part of the system. Because they did not respect their relationships to political institutions, hustlers imagined these relationships were "jive," or of no consequence. Their prime asset had been their ability to exploit neighborhood resources. Among the street people, hustlers demonstrated their street smarts through competition with "the best of 'em out here." Their personal behaviors followed street codes, innovated from basic business practices that they understood.

> "You don't get something for nothing." "You win some; you lose some." "If you can't spend it, fuck it." "There are only two kinds of people in the world: the takers and the took." "I'm going to get mine. . . ." "You got me this time; I'll get you the next time."

A premium was placed on hustlers' ability to think quickly while working, and knowing these codes simplified their work. What appeared to be an inability to achieve rational outcomes was more likely a rejection of "rationality" because "it's all a setup, anyway," "it was supposed to be like that." They only had to follow street scripts learned from their fathers or other hustlers. They had watched these "slicksters" from their first times "coming out." Consequently, dislocations from the street led to reductions not only in housing but in ways to make a living. Work had been lost. The shelter provided a place for those "up the creek without a paddle."

> Rubin (1994), discussing community organization, emphasized that: Like communities, individuals need assets—economic, social and educational—to survive in the modern world. An individual without such assets, like the poor community, is doomed to be dependent. Yet the individual too requires . . . aid on which one can build. Assets enable community members to learn to invest in themselves; this, then, enhances their ability to survive in an increasingly competitive world. Poor people are empowered through asset creation.

Decisions to enter the shelter were considered to be personally empowering among some inmates no longer able to maintain themselves while unemployed. A typical expectation was that entering the shelter was a shortcut to getting an apartment or a job aided by the city. Unaware that through narrowed choices, "shelter rats found their holes," these inmates persisted in the shelter. From the perspectives of those who were forced out of neighborhoods that had been disorganized by gentrification, housing meant more than simply a place to live. The new "trick" or

skill to be learned was how to find and keep associated with "the people I be with." In a multi-storied SRO in a densely packed community, "where people lived on top of each other," one had only to go to the corner to maintain social relationships. Group affiliations were easy to establish, to break, and to resume. A covert function of their new "homes" was to provide belongingness, and that had to be earned. "If you want some, you gotta bring some" was an adage of street folk. Which one ex-prison inmate supplemented: "I want some, and I don't have none. But I'm going to git some, I bet you that."

The public shelter, hidden away in a community with meager assets, provides few opportunities for those resettled there. About a third of the shelter inmates were parolees. For ex-prison inmates, the shelter is a path back to the familiar life in a prison. One inmate said defiantly, "I know somebody wherever they send me." He then ran down a list of jails and prisons, as if reading from a quality resume. Officially imposed isolation did not prevent men who were threats to the public safety from access to valued public spaces. Herded together, extremely poor, uprooted, prisonized inmates together in the shelter with men who "wanted some" began to organize their retreats. Whereas before, some homeless men drifted aimlessly, sheltered homeless men now operated within boundaries that they helped to define with public officials. An information communication network among the nineteen public shelters allowed inmates to compare conditions and keep track of other information throughout the shelter system, As inmates were dredged from the changing currents of the post-industrial economy into the holds of a public shelter, a

consciousness of exploitation began to take shape. One inmate said, "You can't hold down the strings on all of us all the time."

Using What You Have

Time is among the scarce resources that have to be economized and negotiated. Rules have to be established, and informally agreed to: (1) for getting food and securing sleeping arrangements; (2) for maintaining an "in" with "the people I be with," for keeping distance from, or involvement in, the crack trade; and most of all (3) for trying to get respect. Activities associated with getting respect involve earning an income. This involves cultivating a *rep* for being on the "up and up" and not "bullshitting the brothers."

> Scarcity being the rule of shelter life, individuals and groups were always on the alert to secure and maximize resources. Commodities such as cigarettes, drugs and alcohol, clothes and shoes, linen, soap, or toilet paper; food and cash; access to a telephone; physical strength, weapons, and the safeguarding of personal safety; and control over space and time were all scarce goods whose circulation was dictated by the exigencies of survival within the specific institutional context of shelter (Gounis, *ibid.*)

An inmate who efficiently went about his business "hustling" made his ethics clear when a staff person gave him too much change for running an errand. He returned to the staff and said,

> I think you gave me too much money. The pizza was $4.23. You have me a dollar for a tip. That's %.23 out of a den-dollar bill. You gave me $6.45, you should have given me $4.77.

I asked him why he did not keep the money. He slowly shook his head, "I'm not a thief. I'm a hustler—not a thief." Respect also meant "keeping up your front." To

earn respect involved coming to some agreement about, as inmates often expressed in their greetings, "What's up? What it look like?" "When people know what you into, it's better for you."

Self-concepts included the idea that poor people were somehow special. they were going to benefit from their persecution, someday. Nature preferred the poor because the poor were more authentic. The cliché "God loves poor people because He made so many of them" was an example of that idea. Among those posing as more politically sophisticated, it was believed that their interests were promoted in the shelter because the system owed them. Their rhetoric contended that, "One day the deal is going down, and the bullshit is going to stop. The piper's gitting paid, but goddam it, you git tired of dancing to their tunes for nothing. If you got to dance, I'm about gitting something for it."

Articulate inmates expected to show, finally, that they were worthy of respect. These fantasized struggles could be traced to historical accounts of slavery and to biblical stories. Music borrowed from traditions of the Old Testament and incorporated into the secular and sacred music of the black community was a source of inspiration for many inmates. These songs included "Joshua Fit De Battle of Jericho" and "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?" These coded songs informed plantation slaves that underground liberators would be visiting so "Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home." Other culture-based philosophies about how slaves maintained their pride on slave plantations had parallel constructions in the shelter, for example, in the old saying that "the bottom's rising to the top and the

top's falling to the bottom." These bromides of the outcast were carried not in a collective consciousness, but rather in traditions and beliefs about the shared history of homeless men. These beliefs were woven into interactions, and reconstructed to maintain the sense of being human. Inmates used the shelter to achieve their main requirement to stay alive at all costs. Inmates' efforts not to be defeated by their situations were discussed by the black sociologist Charles Willie. Rejecting Wilson's argument that race is declining in significance in America, Willie (1989) wrote:

> Individuals arrive at definitions of their situations and determine appropriate action in terms of their self-interest. Self-interest is the fundamental basis of decisions and choices. One can determine why a system is organized as it is by determining which individuals are in charge and what are their self-interests. Thus, change in a social system is primarily a function of the definition of self-interests by the participants (p.32).

For man who have made the shelter their homes, their self-interests are not unlike the interests found in traditional households. A major difference stands out, however. The sanctity of the home is perhaps America's most cherished value. Shelter inmates, less committed to America's economic values, nevertheless subscribed to the idea that "A man needs to have somewhere to go." Contrary to their expectations that a home was a basic part of life, the function of the shelter was not to fulfill this expectations. What I observed was an alteration in the meaning of "home" for the prisonized-shelterized.

Without the respect that interactions in the shelter created, one could not "hand," i.e., one could not have a position in a preferred group. Certainly, one could

not have a home in the shelter, because "without somebody to be with, you are nobody really."

The decision by a segment of the homeless to enter the shelter and to remain there for over three months, whether they were aware of it or not, confirmed their dislocation in the community. No associations or neighborhood groups existed to assist inmates to rejoin the economy. Those neighborhood groups that showed concern for the homeless had no political influence. At any rate, typical community leaders conceptualized problems of homelessness as remediable to personal services. Their training made them especially adept at categorizing personal problems to make referrals. The construction of "homelessness," whereby "service providers" were required, ensured that there would be a modicum of social mobility within the working class. As such, the label "homelessness" created bogeymen in need of "services." Efforts by public and private social agencies to resocialize potential troublemakers into service consumers controlled dissent. Less understood was how potential dissenters became co-opted by those not concerned with inmates' self-interests. For example, inmates unable to find employment were recycled on the bottom rungs of our market society. Lowering their aspirations also defused discontent. "Dejobbing" (Bridges, *ibid.*) and some of its likely consequences were ignored. One reaction among workers who experienced these multiple strains was to retreat into a glorification of their history through cultural activities.

Participation in the rational, impersonal labor market of the post-industrial world had led to adoption of the values and aspirations of the dominant culture by

African-Americans. The inherent oppression of the dominant culture was manifested in continuing stigma of skin color, food preferences, political ideas, and other potential threats to European hegemony. Confronted with the fact that Africa cultural remnants were melting away into the integrated American society, those blacks who were least involved in the labor market were the most likely to espouse cultural revival, and "negritude," if not outright separation from the "man's house that's on fire." A generation ago, Kornblum (1974) noted that:

> . . . this renewed interest in the parochial values of ethnicity, race, religion, and neighborhood affiliation was stimulated by the study of ethnic politics in the multinational states of Asia, Africa, and southern Europe. In the United States, the revival of interest in primordial attachments is also a response to the apparent resurgence of self-conscious ethnic identity, not only among blacks and Latins, but among many white groups as well.

When one looks more closely into the course of negotiations by local status groups in the United States, it becomes clear that the resurgence of primordialism, or Afrocentricity, was an adaptation to social disorganization. In the shelter, inmates competed and cooperated to keep from becoming "has-beens." Although they sometimes constructed their pasts to explain their presents, situations in the shelter required a focus on the present. Consequently, the magnitude of conflicts among groups competing for status was limited by the immediacy of their situations. Planning for an indefinite future expended meager resources without immediate payoffs. So while work was still valued among men with work histories, the longer the unemployed remained in the shelter, the less interest they had in work. As the dependency of ex-convicts became institutionalized, their situations were explained

differently. Appeals to their stock of cultural knowledge alternated with "raps" improvised for the situation of the moment. These orations of grievances preceded vaguely defined charges against "The Man." Their prospects for remedial social action were hampered by their feelings of mastery cultivated by their close associations in their restricted movements within the abandoned armory. Their feelings of mastery developed out of their lack of competition with others in the wider community. Among themselves, "prisonized-shelterized" inmates excelled at "bogarting," i.e., aggressive and violent behavior. They also excelled at creating furious sounds and rhythms that confused expressive art with self-assertive, personally enhancing social action.

The result was inarticulated behavior among inmates whose favorite expression of emphasis was "Word!" Like much of the sheltered terminology, the expression, "Word," had several different gradations of meaning. Sensing that this expression would allow me to gain greater understanding of how inmates created their social worlds, I asked an inmate about how the expression "word" was used.

> Like it's just the "word." It's been spoken. It's you on the line. A man is as good as his "word." If you don't mean it, you don't say "word." You say something else if you are shucking and jiving.

He then made a gesture with his hands that demonstrated that he did not know a lot of words for his experiences and feelings. By his body language, I understood that the exclamation "Word!" or "Word Up" could be interpreted to mean, "Whatever language is appropriate for my perceptions, then fill it in where I insert, 'Word.'"" It was most likely that these dropouts from Judeo-Christian families had internalized

descriptions from the Bible as "The Word." In some cases, it seems to me that some of the more creative inmates needed a way to say, "Word," that would flash or pulsate like a neon sign or electronic impulse. At any rate, it was clear that the experiences of these inmates were not reducible to English, and probably not to any static conception of communication that excluded their interpretations of the worlds they were creating.

Living in the shelter was advantageous only when compared to the unorganized street homeless. Compared to the streets, the shelter at least offered something. Sheltered inmates were more social. "It beats a blank" was a theme. Despite the seemingly aimless content of their group activities, such interaction did lead to primary group formations among the sheltered homeless. Group interactions bounded men together. Occasional contacts with service providers and advocates from drug programs, church groups, social service agencies, and prison reform groups acted to keep in place a structure of "contact persons." But curiously, inmates did not act to become independent of the shelter, as many street homeless had, and few were conscious of how their activities bound them to each other. This binding, often expressed as personal attitudes, was action played out as primary group scripts. For example, a member of the shelter house gang, who usually appeared angry, was referring to staff when he told me,

> They can't put us all in jail. They gotta have somebody to fuck with, or what they going to do? They would have to get real jobs. The staff they put on us ain't no good really. If they could help some goddam body, they would help they goddam selves.

In many ways left to be analyzed, the shelter combined many social functions carried out in traditional occupational settings. The formation of these groups, however, in the prison-shelter setting recalls Kornblum's descriptions of similar processes in work-neighborhood groups.

> . . . bonds between people formed at work are carried into the outside neighborhood. Friendships and animosities formed in the steel mill interacted with ethnic and residential attachments to create an ecology of primary groups. These primary groups, in turn, created the institutions of the neighborhood, its church congregations, its tavern cliques, and its political associations. Group membership reflected a range of individual solutions to the dilemma of ethnic isolation versus occupational integration. These primary groups, in which the members "reconstruct" a history emphasizing commonality rather than differences, may then be enlisted into broader aggregations which are negotiated in the political organizations of the workplace and the community (1974.).

The ecology of neighborhood-shelter interactions took a form that Glounis (1993) calls a "hybrid institution." It combined the community's definition of dilapidated housing, which was common in low-income areas, with the city's responsibility to provide housing for the homeless. The shelter community contained no industry whatsoever, nor did it offer any legal opportunity to earn an income. It was thought of as a warehouse district. Inmates who succeeded in becoming permanent sheltered homeless reflected the public's appraisal of the neighborhood. The neighborhood covered up the lack of inmates' production. Because they were at the bottom socially and economically, the problems of inmates were reduced to personal pathologies. To residents who worked hard and conformed, the presumed character flaws that were identified with the unemployed proved that the jobless were undeserving.

> "Where do *you* work?" I asked him because he acted like he and his boys were better then me over there on Fulton Avenue. Later I saw the muther fuckas on the drill floor. So I said, "you live here? Where you work?" I was going to punch him out, acting like he was better than me. I said, "You going to sleep in the shelter, but you better than me? you done done everything the 'Man" say do. I paid for my time, and here you are sleeping here with me. I ought to knock you out, thinking you better than somebody." (field notes).

The Borough of Brooklyn, where the shelter was located, underwent a surge in influence. There occurred a shift of low-income workers from Manhattan to the less expensive housing in Brooklyn. A higher percentage of working-class black and Latino voters populated Brooklyn. And although Manhattan maintained a higher percentage of black political leaders, a new crop of political and community leaders vied to replace black Harlem's political prestige. These political facts made steadily-employed workers optimistic about their prospects. Barely able to budget from one payday to the next, they strained to be "middle class." By middle class they meant being treated with dignity. "Homelessness" and "welfare" were obscenities which largely displaced the disparaging "N" word. Even the term "poor" used to describe the average person in the neighborhoods bordering the shelter, offended some staff. Politicians avoided saying "poor" when referring to their constituents, preferring, I discovered, "low income," and better still, among black politicians, "racially oppressed." Charges that widespread economic forces put people out of work, and that these forces caused them to be rotated in and out of jail were becoming more tolerated. Moderates who branded these charges "conspiracy theories" were said to be finally gaining currency. Progressive blacks in the community were likely to refer

to moderate thinkers as "conservatives." The rift continued between blacks who read and wrote analyses based on the social sciences and those who were frozen in their constructions of Afrocentricity. By reifying the concept of culture, the Afrocentrists imbued it with sentimental attachments to sounds. Left unexamined were the basis, and the extent, of their powerlessness. Their reliance on the most powerful and organized social institution in the black community—the church—was troubling. Even among many churchgoers with a secular consciousness, there was a bent toward the nationalism of the Nation of Islam.

Ethnography as Prophecy

Despite the plethora of sociological studies dating from the Chicago School in the 1920s, and of work on the socializing effects of institutions like prisons and shelters in the Great Depression, the emergence of the prisonized-sheltered homeless population was not anticipated. Research on effects of the migration of black workers to the industrial North after World War II assumed continued ethnic successions. By the Nineties, what amounted to lowered political prospects were labeled by some as the "unmeltable blacks: (Takai, 1993). An inmate who said, "We are on hold," was more optimistic than evidence indicated. Kornblum (1974), however, saw looming beyond "the smoke stacks and blast furnaces" and the violent racial conflicts, that, "in general, sympathetic and unsympathetic observers alike have neglected the cultural diversity of the people, and the complexity of the community institutions they have created, in favor of more facile general labels. One of the more "facile general

labels" constructed since the 1970s was the catchy term, "homelessness." One of the community institutions that was recreated to restrict the options of dependent populations was the "temporary emergency shelter." Perhaps more than the other service categories, the "homeless" concept had become imbued with the connotations and denotations of finality. "I would be at the end of my rope if I had a damn rope," a middle-aged former dock worker told me.

I interviewed men, many of whom were born after 1970, for whom employment was not normative. For many of them, going to the shelter to "live" was as much of an alternative living arrangement as going to the Army was in 1950. In the world's wealthiest nation, the prison population was the largest of any other nation, bypassing the former Soviet Union and the former Republic of South Africa (Light, Keller & Calhoun, 1992.) In the largest shelter in New York City, inmates referred to a temporary emergency shelter as "my home." Subjects were tape-recorded making private claims to public spaces. Their voices intoned the defiance of an end to aimless "client drift," with their backs against the wall. These were more than personal reflections to soothe the pain of disgruntled individuals. Remnants of the 1970s' nationalist rhetoric survived in the shelter. A stream of thought continued—weary, undomiciled, and perhaps, in the short run, pointless.

In the 1970s, policies aimed at the reduction of riots and threats of violence were flavored with proposals for changes in the life chances of the poor. Since then, the control of marginalized populations has been achieved through clinicalizing categories that have bracketed society-wide dislocations like homelessness. To be

"rehabilitated," the "disadvantaged" required behavioral modifications comparable to being "born again" in Protestantism. The Calvinist script said that if a worker recognized his shortcomings and paid for them, then he would be "saved." The black community has absorbed sermons and lessons built on variations taken from Woodson's "Mis'education" theme, Fanon's "self-oppression," Malcolm X's "black separatism," and interpretations of Karl Marx. These lingering rationales contend that "helping" professionals were actually agents of exploitation. Herbert Gans's comment (1996, p. 175) is on target: "By being thought undeserving, the stigmatized poor can be blamed for virtually any shortcoming of everyday life which can be credibly ascribed to them." Community dissenters claimed that the purposes of "services" were to channel potential conflict into conformity. "Helpers," in fact, legitimated restrictions of unwanted segments of the population. I noted that some dissenters who, twenty years ago, had verbally challenged the system, now "lived" on the drill floor of the shelter.

I view homelessness as an association of competing status groups within the shelter and within neighborhood people. The political construction of homelessness is built on the assumption that individuals could, through a strong determination to be housed, accept total responsibility for their homelessness. To the contrary, I argue that homelessness has become one of many social practices intended to stave off political disruption. This dissertation describes what I saw, what focal subjects experienced, and what I thought it meant.

Infra Politics

As a sociological study, my objective is sympathetic to what Adolph Reed (1995) called an attempt

> . . . to counter the retrograde sham that masquerades as a leftist "cultural politic." Rather than an alternative to deep structural "infra" politics, the cultural politics focus is a quietistic alternative to real political analysis. It boils down to nothing more than an insistence that authentic, meaningful political engagement for black Americans is expressed not in relation to the institutions of public authority—the state or the workplace—but in the clandestine significance assigned to apolitical rituals. Black people, according to this logic, don't mobilize through overt collective action. They do it surreptitiously when they look like they're just dancing. . . .

My findings indicate that adaptations of shelter inmates were not to a shuffling, jitterbugging, butt-scratching conformity. Rather, evidence suggests that shelterization represents the retreat (Merton, *ibid.*) of ex-prison inmates and ex-workers from society's designation of them as useless. Inmates' demanded respect, that is, for usefulness and belongingness. I found these demands to be common core values among inmates moving to and from prisons, from and to a shelter.

Economic Retreats

Jencks's report of his literature review indicated that the crack trade was closely associated with the maintenance of homelessness. The patterned use and sale of crack was found to play a role comparable to Kornblum's ethnic tavern a generation ago, where opportunities to chemically escape harsh realities became one of the neighborhood institutions among white ethnics. The low costs of this cocaine derivative and recent innovations in marketing adapted well to street corner

associations. Street economics (Johnson et al., 1993), including drug sells and purchases, as well as other "hustlings" (e.g., the sale of stolen goods), among blacks and Latinos easily flowed with life inside the shelter. The crack trade also depended upon knowledge of the local territories and people who belonged and those who might be police. By the same token, comparable social skills were needed to live in the shelter.

It was not surprising that when many former workers living in the shelter were given the opportunity to sell drugs and to become wholesale crack dealers, they did not hesitate. A typical reaction heard among the younger inmates was, "Who wouldn't like to make that kind of money?" On the one hand, crack provided a source of income, albeit an illicit one, and many of these formerly employed men were now finding fewer choices open to them than ever. On the other hand, working in the illegal crack trade had the side effect of eroding personal commitments to work, leaving untouched the macro-issues of "Dejobbing." Men who worked in legitimate jobs, and also sold crack, described their drug sales as "on the side—not my real job." More than half the men who were homeless were said to be substance abusers. Some of the other men who worked said they used crack "sometimes."

Many inmates who had worked had been only tangentially related to the primary labor market. Inmates who had worked and helped support families with odd jobs such as shining shoes, loading and unloading trucks, as security guards, bartenders, custodians, dishwashers, and in many other ways, said that they had taken these jobs for granted until they "dried up." Processes of "Dejobbing" (Bridges,

1994) had led to non-economic ways of "getting over" to survive without the usual means. The shelter facilitated the desocialization that allowed men to adapt and to unlearn values they had always followed without much reflection. As even illegal mans of maintaining life dwindled, the formation of groups of men in their prime inside of a temporary emergency shelter was a significant social development. Beyond the limited provisions of workman's compensation insurance, no provisions were being made for the long-term receipt of an income among ex-workers in the United States of America. Moreover, what had been called the "criminalization of poverty" extended to ex-convicts who, after fulfilling what the law required of them, returned to a community where work had been transferred to cheaper markets or automated. Aronowitz and DiFazio (1994) have reported that:

> There are millions of unemployed, underemployed, and discouraged workers in the United States. Unemployment in the major industrial sectors seems to be out of control, and employed workers wonder if they will be next. . . . Technological progress and capital accumulation seen to disrupt the social fabric . . . competition in the world market guarantees that increasing numbers of workers will be displaced. . . . Women and minorities will suffer the most as the result of these changes. . . .

Although their social and economic developments diverged in many ways, those released from prisons into the labor market, and those who had experienced protracted periods of unemployment, found that their poverty placed them "in the same boat" (Rossi, 1989). Moreover, shelterization allowed staff and inmates to rationalize the pariah conditions in which inmates found themselves. Equating the shelter with the historic slave plantation fit in well with this view. Social and economic circumstances that had led to shelter adaptations were explained by using

accounts from oral history, popular culture, and human sexuality. Besides race, a common focus on personal identification was masculinity or its lack. In a setting where surplus populations were contained, emasculation was not. Some men who had abandoned traditional notions of fatherhood did so with much distress. It was common to hear that during slavery strong and healthy males were "lent out for stud services" to other plantations. Because they did not own themselves, they could not protect their offspring. In different contexts, the same question came up:

> "What kind of so-called 'role model' would a slave have made anyway? Others argued, "Why do you believe our African family was just like the families that would make slaves? It just doesn't make sense and it puts women down. Black women are stronger than that."

In one of my "liberation" group discussions, a rugged 6'4" former truck driver, who ten years earlier had come to New York from Pittsburgh looking for a job, said, "I worked in the steel mills 'til they let me go. . . . I care about my kids but I don't want them to see me in this condition." He had not found an alternative to work.

Demasculinization in the wider community accompanied chronic unemployment in the shelter. Once a man became a part of the wasteland of a city shelter, that broken-down structure incubated a process that mixed human pleasure with the agony of human pain. This process has been analyzed by Chancer (1992) in her book, *Sado-masochism in Everyday Life—The Dynamics of Power and Powerlessness*. Without jobs, men cannot be men. Yet even degenderized as sheltered inmates, the strong men can still inflict violence on the weaker ones. Frances Cress Welsing (1991), a black psychiatrist, has noted:

> As a result of this pattern of socialization, black males soon learned that it is easier to be a female than a male child, and more promising to be an adult black female than an adult black male. . . . Blindly, they seek out one another as models, and their blindness ends them up in trouble, in juvenile homes or prisons. Such settings feminize them. They are given orders by men to whom they must submit; they wait passively to be fed three meals a day; and finally, they have sexual intercourse with men. . . . One ex-prisoner told me, "It is easier to endure the life on the inside than to try to put up with the pressures of being a man outside."

Jencks's (1994) inferences associating economic recovery with increases in homelessness were supported by many of my observations and interviews. However, because he did not consider the uneven effects of the economy of marginalized groups in the shelter, he was surprised that he was unable to explain how sheltered homelessness increased. His analyses do not weed out the macro effects of the economy on personal choices shaped by culture. Jencks mistakenly associated economic recovery with more employment opportunities among all racial and age groups. The impact of cybernetics on the characteristics of workers and rates of employment is crucial. For example, as among most working class men, black men have traditionally linked high wages with hard physical labor. Education, especially beyond high school, has for the most part been considered a frill. Schooling has been associated with passive behavior. However, values leading to higher grade completion also lead to the acquisition of skills preferred in the labor market. More than men, black women have excelled in these areas. Their higher incomes, compared to black men who worked, may have a bearing on the current organization of the black family. At any rate, Jencks's focus was directed toward homeless families where there were relatively better-defined policies to protect mothers and

children with inadequate housing. The sheltered homeless I observed were single men largely separated from their families.

Retreats to Race and Class

Jencks focused exclusively on historical and political analysis but not on the specific aggregate "race." It was this politically-charged group to which Jencks, no doubt, was referring when he sought to explain why the homeless had become such a critical issue.

> Daily contact with the homeless also raises troubling and ultimately unanswerable questions about our moral obligations to strangers. At a political level, the spread of homelessness suggests that something has gone fundamentally wrong with America's economic and social institutions.

These economic and social institutions have been based on racial subjugations of "strangers" that have persisted in America since 1619. By ignoring that the predominant number of sheltered homeless were African-Americans, and not in fact "strangers," historical and political experiences that inmates took for granted were also ignored. Inmates took for granted that their racial status was intertwined with their homelessness. For the purpose of counting this phenomenon, Jencks depended on what he called "visibility." He said, "What I am really writing about is the 'visible homeless' people whose presence on the streets upsets the more prosperous classes."

Granted that the presence of white homeless women in many cases seemed to precede the homeless epidemic of black men, the aberration of the former has

declined, while the latter has become more critical. It is rare today to see white homeless, and only somewhat more likely to see black homeless women in New York City. In fact, Liebow's definition of homeless women was the exact opposite of Jencks. In *Tell Them Who I Am—The lives of Homeless Women*, Liebow wrote, "These are not the most visible homeless, not the throwaway homeless we see on the street."

The single men I described *were* the throwaway homeless we see on the streets every day. They *are* "strangers" to the American labor market, but not to American society's many deprivations, least of all the prison. The ability of groups to construct and maintain social meaning was especially significant because the homeless represent the "trash" of society. Shelterization therefore is an example of an uncompleted, although not necessarily failed, process of negotiations with the political and social order. It is reasonable to believe that as blacks' expectations for political succession are diminished by the economic transformations besetting all Americans, the disproportionate numbers of blacks and Latinos hidden away in shelters will lead to these shelterized groups becoming more allied with other groups of homeless and those Rossi called the "precariously housed." The stigmatization and victimization that separates by race groups of the homeless from displaced workers greatly restricts possibilities for the political liberation of workers from a work ethic made obsolete by the computer microchip.

Accounts of American efforts to control unwanted, and feared, populations are cornerstones of American prosperity. In fact, these efforts obfuscate the hidden

origins of slavery which are in class not race (Takaki, 1993). Nothing has happened in American over the last two to three hundred years to change this unpleasant fact. White homeless males were not found in the subject shelter; however, that does not lead to the inference that they do not exist in sizable numbers in shelters.

Takaki traces the separation of the white and black poor to the seventeenth century:

> The cultural gap between white and black workers had widened in the late seventeenth century. Where the early black arrivals had been "seasoned" in the Barbados and were often able to speak some English, new blacks were transported directly from Africa.

For no shelterized group can it be said that the overt official life of the shelter is an improvement over their previous habitat. It does, however, congregate them in a common space where their diminished life options become a basis for their structured interactions. With the general population being prepared for declining life chances for workers and people who conform to traditional values, the budding political consciousness of men whom the economy has purged, was being ignored. In Piven and Cloward's historical analysis of relief giving in the United States, the point is made that, "Only when the destitute becomes disorderly and tumultuous, often on a scale which threatens political stability, does relief giving expand" (Piven & Cloward, 1977: 307).

However, during this field study, no expansion of relief-giving was expected. Yet, I observed groups for which the theme was, "I ain't got nothing to lose." Groups with nothing to lose in a society with no meaning to offer are threats to themselves and to the order of society. From the stance of political economy, the

shelter accommodates potential conflicts which can be anticipated from the history of urban violence (Cose, 1993). At the same time, shelter inmates cooperate with their oppressors by legitimating the social controls used to keep them "in their place."

Current social and economic problems are more complex than they were when a "War on Poverty" was declared a generation ago in response to political pressures. Then, a consensus existed that the problems of the poor were amenable to expanded job opportunities. Then, there existed an organized movement of poor people (Piven & Cloward, 1977) that influenced the fiscally conservative government of President Richard Nixon in 1969 to propose a minimum family income. Today, in the mid-1990s, the converse of such a policy is emerging. Proposals to eliminate benefits for the dependent are being encouraged amidst the expansion of prisonization-shelterization. Gounis's (1993) study of shelterization supports my thesis. He asserts that adaptation can be a useful conceptual category in understanding the range of the behaviors to be encountered in the shelter if agency is properly assessed. If shelterization is to be viewed as an adaptive strategy, the factors that shape the social ecology to which one is adapting must be examined. That is, we must ask, "Who is doing what to whom?" We must also ask, "Who is allowing who to do what?" In this regard, Willie, a classmate of Martin Luther King, Jr., commented,

> The decision to cease cooperating in one's own oppression is decisive and is an action of sub-dominant people of power that probably triggers the decision by the dominant people of power to cease their oppression and to assume their appropriate responsibilities (Willie, 1981: pg. 176).

The obligation of government to stem community disorders threatened by displacements in the economy is recalled in this dissertation. By focusing on how

public shelters devalue surplus labor in collaboration with prisons, however, the control functions of contemporary society are made manifest. I contend that the resident who said that "I only have myself to blame for being homeless" was trying to accept more responsibility than he had the capacity to assume. Nevertheless, shelter dependency bogged him down in a quagmire, for which must of the public dismissed him as undeserving. In the rational tradition of the West, the undeserving are punished.

Research Methods

Ethnography I started out as a staff member from the outside to help men in the shelter get "life skills." After about three months, I realized there was a group of men who referred to the shelter as their home. The shelter was the place, other than the prison, where they found meaning.

To interview, I selected focal subjects who reported themselves to be employable and who were relatively articulate. I spent more than three months observing the men going about their regular activities before deciding whom to interview. I used an open-ended interview format that allowed the respondents to answer my central questions while talking about whatever they felt was important to them. Interviews lasted about one hour. I recorded interviews from June to August 1990. There was no scarcity of men to interview inside the poorly-ventilated shelter. I created fictitious names and used them during the tape-recorded interviews. It was noted that these men often smiled approvingly when I used these fictive names to

refer to them as if they had new identities. My taped interviews of selected shelter residents who had lived in the shelter for three months or longer were analyzed along with recorded field notes and observations carried out over 24 months for about forty hours per week. I also interviewed security guards and staff, and reviewed related ethnographic studies and administrative reports.

I held focus groups that I improvised, influenced by Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Friere had a mission which he described as follows:

> The central problem is this: How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be "hosts" of their oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality in which *to be* is to be *like*, and *to be like* is to be like the oppressor, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization.
>
> The oppressed, who have been shaped by the death-affirming climate of oppression, must find through their struggle the way to life-affirming humanization, which does not lie *simply in [shelter] and more to eat.* The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things.
>
> The struggle begins with men's recognition that they have been destroyed.

Prisonization-shelterization is the beginning of dependency on the increasing deprivations of public institutions. Such facilities do not improve these men's conditions, nor those of the general community. This dissertation describes men at the bottom of the American market economy on their way from little to nothing.

CHAPTER II

STATUS AND STIGMA IN SHELTERED SOCIAL WORLDS

Sheltered, homeless men arrive with achieved status, imported from along the life paths that led to prison from social and economic dislocations. Their rankings among other ex-offenders bond them together. Once in the shelter, inmates adjust the way they think about themselves to reconcile their self-concepts with the institutionalized stigmas of the "temporary emergency" homes. Just as this reconciliation separates them from the "free community" of workers, it also functions to bind together like-minded pariahs. Inmates entered prison with outlooks and expectations about life that were not merely different from those of the larger community, but antagonistic to them. In their interactions and encounters at the shelter, they looked for meaning inside an institution functioning as an extension of incarceration.

The majority of men entering the shelter in 1990 were already "prisonized," part of the largest wave of ex-prison inmates ever leaving American prisons, even more than during the Great Depression (Rossi, 1989). They had become "truly prisonized" (Moore, 1995) through contacts at an early age with the criminal justice system and other custodial facilities. Therefore, it was not always the case that

inmates enter prison with strong ties to the outside world. Moore (1995) has observed that:

> "State-raised youth"—whose adolescence involves frequent probation supervision and trips to juvenile detention facilities and whose young adult years are spent in and out of prison—have only the most fragile ties to family and to friends in the community.

The past provides more references to the future than their enfeebled visions of that future. Their day-to-day activities in the shelter involve contacts with other men who depend on them for a sense of belonging: ex-prisoners, parolees, crack abusers, and men who describe themselves as worthless, or "damned near." Such company hinders their chances of becoming productive, in addition to posing present threats to their well-being. Their assignment to a public shelter reinforces their personal and collective devaluation of their life chances. These devaluations are personally experienced as official efforts to keep them "out of sight," i.e., as official rejects or the "homeless."

Simply returning released inmates, who have nothing to lose and nothing to gain, to the disorganized communities where their low self-concepts had been formed does not contribute to the community nor to the rehabilitation of prisonized, shelterized inmates. The literature on prisonization documents the deleterious effects of the prison subculture on efforts to become habilitated (Bowker, 1994). City policies to get the homeless off the street accomplish more than reducing their visibility: these policies have begun to organize the dispossessed into status groups. The research literature documents the exportation of prison criminality as one of the negative aspects of the prison subculture. I found another aspect of that subculture,

which may or may not be negative, is the incipient organization of prisonized-shelterized inmates into groups advocating their interests. Among inmates, fears of recurring victimization justify their dissonance from community standards:

> It's no accident that all of a sudden people are using crack, dying of AIDS, filling the prisons. It's no accident that these are black people dying. Black people have even started committing suicide. Ain't that some shit? Black people never use to commit suicide. The shit's gitting to them.

The shelter provides the background for inmates of differing political expressions and philosophical perspectives, as well as sexual orientations, to become "differentially associated" (Sutherland & Cressey, 1960). Sutherland's (1960) study of "differential association" investigated the way individuals define situations that they consider to be adverse to their personal interests. Light, Keller, and Calhoun (1993) updated research on differential associations:

> The theory of differential association is based on the idea that just as people must learn through socialization how to conform to their society's norms, they must also learn how to depart from those norms . . . deviance, like conforming behavior, is a product of socialization. . . . Everyone is exposed to different and conflicting definitions of right and wrong. The standards that people eventually adopt as their own are learned through differential associations with others. . . . Through the transmission of norms within a community or group of people, people can be socialized to the drug subculture, the homosexual subculture, the so-called yuppie subculture that developed on Wall Street, and so on. Thus, some communities offer young people opportunities for education. . . . In contrast, other communities offer opportunities to learn how to hustle and to evade authorities, role models of people who have achieved success as gamblers and pimps, and contacts with people who control underworld career opportunities.

City officials had expected the shelters to function as "temporary emergency shelter." Instead, interactions of ex-convicts with each other structure groups in

shelters, evolving into camps of concentrated poverty in hidden and forgotten communities. The ultimate effect had been to extend the criminal justice system beyond the point where the men paid their legally determined debts to society. The resulting sedimentation at the bottom of a wealthy society imperiled its peace and structural order. For example, New York City's crime rate remained unchanged, but prisonization increased.

> The increase in prison population [size] does not reflect an increase in crime. It reflects the continuing and accelerating tendency to criminalize poverty. from about 1967 through the early 1970s we did experience a substantial increase in crime rates. This increase did not continue to escalate; rates of criminal activity are about the same now as they were 20 years ago. this is not a perfectly stable picture of course. Crack cocaine and the "War on Crime" have come into the picture, and violence by juveniles has contributed to an apparent, but not very great, increase in crimes of assault. In some years, property crimes are up and in others down, but there is no general wave of disorder sweeping our nation. Automobiles kill far more people than do criminals (Johnson, Kim & Schneider, 1990).

The understanding among ex-offenders that prison construction has become the official response to prison overcrowding added to their feelings of entrapment in a no-win situation. The more prisons were relied upon to solve social problems, the more social problems multiplied. For example, drug use and sales have become routine in prison primarily because there are not enough security guards and other personnel to monitor drug deliveries. Even with more personnel, more searches of visitors would violate the civil liberties Americans claim to cherish. Therefore, the greater the incidence of incarceration, the greater the magnitude of prisonization, and of opportunities to achieve positions defined by status group affiliation. Employment trends project a "Jobless Future" (Bridge, 1994) for many typical Americans, and for

large numbers of workers who had fallen to the bottom, their positions in the labor market had already become obsolete. Nevertheless, discourses on the future role of work were drowned out by oratory decreeing, "No work, no pay, no public assistance."

This savage brutality formulated in public policy, in particular the "benign neglect" of workers in general (Moynihan, 1988), actually cloaked hostility toward black men. Old and recycled policies bracketed the renewed degradation and exploitation of the marginalized. The "commodification" and exploitation of groups on the bottom of the economy allowed race to separate the downward mobility of white workers from the lowered expectations of the middle class. Ingrained values that made work a paramount virtue were obfuscating macro processes that idled individual workers. A community worker visiting the shelter commented:

> No matter how much you sweep the trash under the rug, no matter how big and smart you may think you have become, sooner or later you got to trip over that trash.

About 70 percent of the sheltered population is black, 20 percent Latino, and 10 percent white. This overrepresentation of blacks in the shelter reflects Rossi's (1989) reports from the Chicago Homeless Study. Yeager (1994) also reported characteristics of the homeless population in general that support my observations that single black men outnumber other cohorts of the homeless. I found it impossible to separate the analysis of the political disenfranchisement of blacks in American culture from their economic marginality. Therefore, to understand the social organization and dynamics of the Atlantic Avenue Men's Shelter, it was necessary to put the

concept of the prisonized-shelterized into the perspective of the experiences of black men in white America.

The shelter is more than a suspension from the economy. It is a "relevant site" (Loseke, 1993) where the search for meaningful human expressions continues to be exercised. Unquestionably, the shelter makes impossible the conditions for marriage and a family life that would provide for raising children committed to licit employment. How do individuals remain sane and maintain their concepts of self in a community where that self is not valued? To repeat, the shelter is more than a suspension from the economy. It is a search for meaningful human interaction that can connect the prisonized-shelterized with the rest of the human race. The search for belonging among men on the bottom of our transforming society has relevance for other downwardly-mobile Americans. That much of the behavior of the prisonized-shelterized may be described as "irrational" is an interpretation that denies the detrimental effects of "dejobbing."

Berman (1992) wrote a critique of rational judgment:

> We are witnessing the inevitable outcome of a logic that is already centuries old, and which is being played out in our own lifetime. I am not trying to argue that science is the cause of the predicament. . . . What I am arguing is that the scientific world view is *integral* to modernity, mass society. . . . It is *our* consciousness, in the Western industrial nations—uniquely—and it is intimately bound up with the emergence of our way of life from the Renaissance to the present. Science, and our way of life, have been mutually reinforcing, and it is for this reason that the scientific world view has come under serious scrutiny at the same time that the industrial nations are beginning to show signs of severe strain, if not actual disintegration. . . . During such periods, the meaning of individual lives begins to surface as a disturbing problem, and people become preoccupied with the meaning of meaning itself.

The movement of individuals from prison to the shelter and back again raises questions about the meaning of surplus workers in our society. Unfortunately, technologically rationalized meanings leave no room for the predicament of human beings "without a pot to piss in."

Berman chose Max Weber to make this point:

> Yet the whole situation is unstable for reasons already indicated. Not merely does our analogue side fight back, but purely digital knowledge, since it is never "ingested," never "sticks to your ribs." The whole situation is a charade because no real emotional commitment beyond economic payoff and ego gratification is involved. We have been bewitched into believing that these rewards are fundamental, but a deeper, nagging voice tells otherwise. Indeed, the danger of such a bloodless type of knowledge and the fact-value distinction in general, was not lost on one of its greatest defenders, Max Weber, in his classic essay, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; thus nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

Living and Letting Live

The secretary to the administrative director of the Atlantic Avenue Men's Shelter cooperated with my study when I told her I was trying to understand how the shelter attracted and held its residents. She had confirmed that there were distinct groups on the drill floor. She named these groups "the house gang members, the regulars, and, of course, the queens." She explained how her office operated:

> With almost 1,000 men here, it is hard to keep track of individuals. So you don't bother with them unless their behavior threatens disorder, like fighting or other disruptions. I try to remember which group they are in. They sleep in the same areas on the drill floor. If they are quiet, then what they do goes unnoticed. Permanent residents usually are assigned to the same beds on a nightly basis. On occasions there may be a discontinuity. . . . Yes, we know drugs are used and all the

other stuff that goes on. . . . There are only so many hours in the day. You can only do what you can do.

The different groups that negotiated inmates' interests into an order promoting shelterization are described below.

"Hoodlums" and "gods"

Three out of four of the shelter inmates had been to prison more than once. This was how I could tell who were eligible to become "hoodlums." For them, the shelter's organization was not significantly different from prison, and indeed, in their obverse value system, a prison record was an advantage. Hoodlums, especially "gods," referred to themselves as if they had responsibility for their personal situations, and control over their lives. Typically, they had been put out of their family households, dropped out of school, been involved in juvenile delinquencies, and "succeeded" in prison life.

"Triple A" described what it meant to have become a god.

> The gods are also called "Five Percenters." They are a group of black youth who embraced the teaching of a man named Fawd. He was a member of the Black Muslims and of the Fruit of Islam, the paramilitary arm or defense extension of the Nation of Islam. He was a ranking member who became disenchanted with his position and the inability to do as he pleased. Using the information obtained through his position and from the teaching one time they [his followers] numbered in the hundreds of thousands and could be found in any number of major cities across the U.S. Consisting of mostly black but with a sprinkling of Hispanics; whites were excluded. Most of them acquired the way of "Life" while incarcerated and brought it out of the prison.

A typical hoodlum projected arrogance about his prison achievements.

> I know somebody almost everywhere I go . . . on Rikers [the city jail] or upstate [to a state prison or federal penitentiary]. . . . You have to know how to fight or get your ass kicked in. You learn who to talk to and who to accept cigarettes and stuff from . . . if you get something, you owe something.

Both gods and hoodlums viewed the shelter as a place where the weak were ripe for exploitation.

> They be getting theirs. I'm gonna get mine. They can't put everybody out into the streets who raises hell because where would they get their money? If there is no homeless people coming out of jail they would have to go and get a real job. So they pick on the ones that are easy to mess with. These are the ways in the computer. The guys that do most of the fighting and the crack smoking and the violence are here illegally. Many of these guys are not in the computer and don't have meal tickets. You can't get meal tickets unless your name is in the computer. And if your name isn't in the computer, they can't put you out because you are not really legally here. Some of the guys who cause the most trouble have been here for years—illegally.

The rules of shelter life allowed these men to "blow off steam." As a guard said, "They can talk all the shit they want. Most of the time I have my radio plugged in my ear."

Some of the men, however, were known in the shelter as activists. I was referred to one inmate who was said to be an advocate for the homeless and for "Gay rights." When I went looking for this middle-aged man, I was never able to find him. But when he was ready to talk to me, he made contact. He had been in the shelter for more than five years, and did not hesitate to describe his experiences with the hoodlums.

> The ones I know are called "gods." They call themselves that. I hear them talk. One or two of them talk to me. Most of them don't mess with me. They call themselves gods, like the Five Percenters, you know, the Muslims. These are cliques among themselves. They are

> not suppose to participate in violence, but almost everything they do in this shelter is violence. According to their own teachings they are not supposed to attack anyone, homosexuals or others, but they do. They have little get-togethers where they talk about their teachings but they don't do what they say in their lessons. It's not Christianity but they are supposed to be able to repeat these teachings. Some of the security guards are with them. They give them printouts on various scriptures. Operations' staff know they are not supposed to be here, because they don't put them out when they are violent. They are afraid to do their jobs. They sell plenty of crack right here inside the shelter. You can also buy crack within two blocks to the left or to the right of this building. It's still all around here. There was a staff member on duty here who used to have these gods selling crack for him. I haven't been paying attention to the crack business 'cause I have so many AIDS cases to look after.

I personally observed a god attacking a slightly-built inmate, knocking him to the floor. This occurred in the middle of the reception area outside the drill floor, about 15 feet from the guards' booth. I waited for the guards to act. The assailant then drop-kicked the resident while he was down, and angrily yelled, "Don't you ever disrespect me!" Only then did the guards finally rush in a machine-like formation to pick up the injured inmate and forcibly eject him from the building.

I also observed a drill floor resident suffering an epileptic seizure. Another client went to get help from an administrator, who screamed, "Who do you think I am—a goddamned doctor?", indicating his indifference. While the man was having the seizure, the guards did nothing to assist him, and gang members searched through the victim's pockets. One resident told me that he had returned from work after the 10 p.m. curfew, with food he had brought from the fancy Manhattan restaurant where he worked. The guard demanded payment for re-entry, but the resident threatened the guard, who then backed down. The resident concluded his tale with what I

repeatedly heard as a key phrase among long-term residents: "They know not to fuck with me."

In response to my request for a description of the gods' "teaching," a rotund inmate I called "Heavy" took me aside and quietly said:

> You may think I am the leader, but that's one of our teachings. We each have to be our own teacher. We only know five percent, especially in here. That means there's ninety-five percent we don't know. People around me don't smoke crack. I mean it. I'm trying to save my money. I got some saved. If you'll smoke crack, you'll steal from your mother. You can't be trusted. Yea, I used to sell it, got busted two times. Yea, that's history. No more prison for me. I had just got out of jail the week when we met three months ago. A guy was selling crack from his bunk next to me. Even tried to sell me some. I told him to stop. He didn't, so I hit him. He called the cops, said I was trying to rob him. But he knew he had crack and he couldn't tell 'em that. I guess he wanted them to search me and take my money to give him. So I got busted for assault.

Heavy did not make it clear that he robbed crack dealers and that he supplemented his living by mugging men in the shelter and in the immediate neighborhood. When assessed at the time for entry into a shelter program, Heavy had been defined as employable. He could have been transferred to another, more comfortable, shelter, except that, as he explained,

> I don't want to leave here because my assets are here. The transportation is good to look for a job and to get back over to where my family and friends live. I'm here because it gives me a break and a chance to save money and I don't have to pay for rent and food. I get unemployment insurance.

Upstate, in prison, when men like Heavy were not released, they would gradually acquire "juice" (influence). Thus to the gods, their prison pasts were reference points for gauging their status. With status references based in the past, the present stigma

of the shelter was dismissed as "the shelter ain't shit." In turn, their deprecation of the shelter living arrangements maintained their orientation toward the prison culture. An ex-prison inmate said, "If the shelter is the best you know, then you ain't use to nothing."

Hoodlums included the people the public thinks of as "homeless," of whom the panhandlers are the most active and visible. I followed some of the long-time hoodlums as they panhandled in the Wall Street area, and around Macy's on 34th Street. These were areas where they invested a lot of their time. The latter in particular was a good spot, within two blocks of Penn Station, a major hub of subways and commuter trains, and teeming with affluent travelers and shoppers. Small groups from the shelter traveled to the business districts in couples, unlike the street homeless who lived in the cavernous train station and its labyrinthine corridors.

The techniques used to beg for "spare change" did not include begging from "just anybody." The selection of prospects was strategic. For example, several smartly-dressed black passersby who were not asked for change went out of their way to place money in an outstretched black hand. I brought up this subject in a focus group. One response was, "If one brother can make it, I should be able to, too." Consequently, this man said, he asked only white people because, "They've been free all of their lives." Some younger hoodlums appeared to be ashamed to ask other blacks. I noted that often when a black person gave them money, they averted their heads and looked away, as if ashamed.

Many hoodlums have been victims of violence, but some, like Maurice, a god, have managed not to get mugged. Maurice described muggings even while men were asleep. I asked him how he had managed to avoid this common fate. "I don't know. I just don't have any problems . . . they know not to fuck with me." Unlike Heavy, Maurice was not a weightlifter, but he appeared fit. By hints and allusions, he gave me to understand that he was one of the inmates who caused problems in the shelter. He let it become clear that he had not been mugged because he was among the ones who mugged others.

After our interview, Maurice wanted to know the hours I worked, where I lived, and other information that would allow him to size me up. He tried to get me to pay him more than the fee ($5.00) to which we had agreed. When he was unsuccessful, he ended the interview. "If you need more information about the shelter, let me know, 'cause I've seen lots of mugging, lots of 'em."

More than many other inmates, the term "jailhouse lawyer" fit Maurice. He could also be described as a chief negotiator for the hoodlums. He was smooth and his aggression low-keyed. Maurice, like many other inmates in the streets, could be charming. This charm was a front for his menacing approach when he was not getting his way. His close relationships with parole officers kept some of the inmates away from him, lest he learn and then provide damaging information to a parole officer, but I never heard anybody refer to Maurice as a "snitch," a most serious evaluation and accusation.

Maurice described his evening routine in the shelter:

> I take the sheet off of my bed, and shake it out. I make up my bed, and take a shower. I take out whatever food they have given me [as bribes and payoffs] out of my locker, and then I lay down and read.

A guard supplemented Maurice's account:

> His family won't let him stay with them. He has robbed even the members of his family. The last time his grandmother let him live with her, he pushed her up against the wall, and searched her bra and her panties for money to buy crack. The cops brought him here, that's how I know. When he's lying there acting like he's reading and being so cool, he's watching to see what the others are doing who have been away working or whatever. He's casing the drill floor for his friends who will later on find out who to rob. Then he will help them get away with it. He's always saying, "I witnessed the whole thing." If the cops want a witness, they use him. That's why nobody bothers him, not yet.

An attitude that was typical of most gods was that the only problem with selling crack was that it had to "be done big."

> You might as well try to go big time and sell cocaine. If I could meet the big guys I would sell weight. You get less prison time for being big time. They be "sho nuff" fucking with you when you bullshit around selling crack. Why? 'Cause they know you be poor. They be trying to get you left or right if you ain't hitting on much. I ain't got nothing going for me so like whatever rhymes with "Tin can in a bucket. . . ."

Bell was another hoodlum, and he had been in the Atlantic Avenue Men's Shelter for nine months. He came back into the 'hood from an upstate prison. As part of his parole, he had been required to participate in a drug program for eighteen months.

> I messed up several times before I was sent away. No, I never robbed nobody. I sold the shit and used up a lot of it myself. Like everybody else, sure, I shorted some bags. If I had killed somebody, I could have gotten the same amount of time. No, I couldn't shoot nobody. Well, I was good with my hands—still am. They have therapy in the joint and they have drugs. Any kind you want. Any amount you can pay for.

> Sure, I got high in there. I got the money somehow. If they found it in your system it was bad for you. It's not as risky as Russian Roulette. I had my system of avoiding detection.
>
> The first time I got out I went back to my wife. I thought "everything was everything." We had a three-year-old child born right before I left the first time. I noticed my clothes were gone. I had some fine "vines." She said she didn't know what had happened to my silks and mohair. She would be nervous 'cause she know I have a temper. I came one night and this guy was coming down the stairs. I didn't say nothing. Then, one time he was in the back room of the apartment. I asked what was up and he asked me if I couldn't see or what? He came at me with a knife 'cause I was standing by the door and I wasn't about to let him out. You kidding? He reached for his knife, I hit him with a right and then smashed him in the face with an iron pipe. He was really messed up. I called him a taxi and told the driver to take him to the emergency room because I was too busy. My wife naturally started crying, and telling me she had gotten lonely. The dud stole my clothes. She was having sex with him while my baby was in the next room. He was a drug dealer too. Naturally, I violated parole. This time I just stay here on the drill floor. You know I don't think I want to leave. Afraid? Yea, scared I may go back for killing a no-good sonnavabitch.

On my way home, a hoodlum from the shelter saw me on the subway. He had been going from subway car to car, telling passengers he had "just got out of jail" and needed "a little help." He stressed that he had just gotten out of jail to distinguish himself from the usual panhandlers. He recognized me and explained right away,

> You know this ain't my thing. I don't like to ask people for money, but can you spare a dollar? I've been in jail for three nights from a warrant from 1988. I'll pay you back when I see you.

It was clear that he was desperate for the dollar and that he expected me to be impressed by the fact that he had been able to get out of jail. It would also explain his unusually dingy appearance and the situation in which I found him. He felt

compromised by making an exception to his usual practice of not asking certain people whose respect he wanted for money. By begging on the subway where he moved quickly from car to car, he also lessened his chances of coming in contact with confirmed panhandlers. I gave him the dollar and we agreed that I would pay him $5.00 for an interview about his life, not to exceed one hour. Back in the shelter, he procrastinated for several days before a time was set for the interview.

I called him "Sporteody." He tried to take control of the interview by suggesting where I should sit. When I sat where he had indicated, he stood over me and began to negotiate the terms of the interview.

> Sporteody: You can tell I am not like those other deadbeats who go in and out of jail all the time. Now, for the kind and level of information you want, $5.00 an hour is not enough.
>
> Interviewer: We made a deal and I won't need more than one hour.
>
> Sporteody: You are asking me to help you. I am asking you to help me.

I stood up and explained that I would be around if he wanted to talk later. He followed me to renegotiate, and in a less demanding voice asked, "Well, how long will this take?" I replied that I was not going to interview him, because he did not seem interested. He responded, "I have money," all the while looking around to see if others were listening.

An older street hustler, ravaged by drugs and malnourishment, whom I frequently had seen speaking with Sporteody, said,

> Oh, he is always ungrateful anyhow. I appreciate what people give me. I know more about what's happening in the shelter than he does anyway. What you trying to find out?

These were among the typical personality styles of the hoodlums who had ended up in the shelter. Usually too proud to actively beg, nevertheless they were ready to take advantage of any chance to "get paid." Sporteody was about 50 years old. In his earlier years, his partner said, Sporteody had been a pimp on the East Side of Manhattan.

> We used to have them white girls who wanted to meet black athletes. The dude used to have tailor-made suits, and once he rented a limousine. He's always talking about what he had, but he ain't got shit now. He doesn't usually ask nobody for nothing. He just sits outside of those high-priced stores in Manhattan, and acts like he's reading, and people get to know him and give him change. He's a strange dude. But I don't beg either. I try to work for mine. I collect things to sell. I got these [building] porters who give me stuff to sell. The main thing is to stay on top. Even though you know you're down, you ain't necessarily out.

The Regulars

The members of the group who had the best chance of becoming independent and leaving the shelter were the "regulars." Nonetheless, that rarely happened. Regulars had more skills—social and occupational—than the others. Regulars were not the shabby homeless men seen on the streets who caused working people to cringe and look away with disgust. The regulars had more resources. Many made good presentations, but shelterization had nothing to do with these individual characteristics. "Mr. Z." is an example of the influence of the shelter on a newcomer.

Mr. Z. was able to leave and return to the shelter at will. He exercised this privilege even when he had nowhere to go. To keep his "rep," he had to appear to

have more choices than the shelter gave him. He had learned that wearing a shirt and tie earned him no respect from ex-prison inmates who favored hooded sweatshirts, but it did appear to win him more respect from the staff. From the other regulars, Mr. Z. had come to believe that, "Everybody needs somewhere to live. I could end up in prison myself if things don't get better." Whether he truly believed this or not, he seemed to feel it could happen the more he observed the steady flow of ex-convicts going in and out of prison. Mr. Z. said he was in the shelter because he had trouble finding a job. He wanted to do "office work" because he liked dressing. In fact, I had at first assumed he was on staff because he wore a tie. After four months in the shelter, he had come to the decision that "I'm going to get everything the shelter has to offer me as long as I'm here."

During our interview, Mr. Z. sat back in a folding metal chair, crossed his legs, and looked up as he composed his thoughts, "playing it cool." When he had originally left the small town in North Carolina where everyone knew him to come to New York City, he had planned to become "cool." He did not have a large vocabulary, frequently repeating the phrase, "I am a man among men." He often smiled during our conversation, satisfied with himself that he was the center of attention. Meanwhile, other inmates passed by, something approaching envy on their faces. Mr. Z. was clearly not the choice of the regulars for me to interview. He looked over at his peers to see if they approved, to see if "everything was everything." Late, the house gang processed "the word" that I had interviewed Mr. Z. They found out who Mr. Z. thought he was because they had not given him

the word. He sought acceptance by deferring to the way the shelter operated. Mr. Z. presented himself more humbly than did Sporteody, who had been part of the prison-shelter circuit for a longer time. Both men, however, intended to profit from their circumstances.

I explored what "conduct norms" (Johnson, 1994) distinguishes the status of hoodlums from that of regulars. A major value for the regulars is to keep "cool." One might say that in the hierarchy of shelter occupations, regulars are "hustlers." By their own account, regulars are not hardcore homeless. They believe they are able to alternate their sleeping arrangements between the shelter and their families. More often than the hoodlums, the regulars refer to their living arrangements as "here and there." Despite the impersonal forces of prisonization-shelterization, the regulars do not see themselves as defeated.

Regulars, although not as numerous as the hoodlums, play a major role in negotiating the order that allows the shelter to function. Their scripts (Goffman, 1959) are improvised, based on their definitions of the moment. They are expected to be able to think quickly on their feet. At least more often than the hoodlums, they examine their relatively more numerous options. They are more likely to appear rational, avoiding pain and maximizing situations to their benefit. Regulars find part-time jobs more often than the hoodlums. Further, as hustlers, regulars have reputations as players of the women.

Their more frequent personal contacts in the neighborhood help to keep regulars more flexible in their options. They go "home," or to other places, to get a

few dollars, to have their clothes cleaned, and to take showers. They treat the shelter like an extended bedroom. The people they respect are not in the shelter. "Keeping your front up" is a primary value because "people can tell you by what they see." Most inmates acted as if they did not care about each other personally. Non-sexual relationships were said to be necessary for protection only. Still, the men often exhibited moments of genuine, non-sexual attachment. Many such cases were reported to me as fond memories when inmates respected by regulars left the shelter.

> You should have been here when Maximillian was here. He got to be an "IA" and now he's got a city job . . . Randy met a girl who worked down the street at the woman's shelter; they come by sometimes now to bring me and JoJo something.

"A.J." was a focal leader among the regulars. After my first interview with A.J., he said matter-of-factly that I should interview "S.F.," who was his lover. S.F. may be described as one of the in-house gay rights advocates. A.J. had been referred to me by Heavy. A.J. was the epitome of what public opinion considered masculine. The stereotypical term, *macho*, fit him. Since his twentieth birthday, A.J. said, he had been "in jail more time than I have been out." He was 38 years old at the time of our interview, yet his speech pattern was almost infantile. He lacked the articulation of many regulars. The eighteen years he had spent in prison were further revealed in the way he walked, communicating an eruptive defiance. I asked A.J. to put into works what he thought his body language meant. With a loud, menacing syncopation of each word, he stood up, looked around, and performed: "It means, I don't give a damn about anything. Nobody better fuck with me—period." Then, as if proud of his performance, he laughed.

A.J. saw his father die when he was nine, he related. His brother, who had become a policeman, was standing nearby. At the funeral, A.J. said he had reached into the casket and beat his father on the chest, screaming,

> "You ain't dead. Wake up, daddy!" I was shocked. I was brought up in church, and all, but as we grew up, I started to doubt God. I went out to nightclubs and I sold cocaine to keep myself up and help my mother. She always kept us well-dressed. She was big in the church. I worked on the community patrol. That's how I could tell who to mug."

Eventually, A.J. and two companions were arrested. He spent more than eighteen years in prisons, on seven different occasions. Four months before our interview, he was paroled to the shelter.

> No, I have no cases pending against me. I'm trying to keep myself out of trouble. My brother is a cop, and I can't get along with him, or other family. But my mother needs me now. I've got to get myself together. One of the first things I learned in jail was how to outsmart the other inmates. When I first came here to the shelter, this guy told me he liked my blue goosedown coat. I said, "You do? Okay. Wait a minute until I put this package down. You like my coat, right? You want it, right?" He said, "Yea." By the way he and his boys were looking, I could tell he was going to try and steal it. I punched him in his mouth and knocked him out. I was weighing 210 pounds, after lifting 175 pounds at times, doing 200 pushups. I was healthy and strong. This guy spends his time in the bathroom doing drugs wants my coat. And the supervisors don't do anything about them. The place is filthier than where pigs live. No, I don't like it here at all. Some of the supervisors told me they would give me extra food if I took care of some guys for them.

I saw A.J. knock down an inmate who was known as a troublemaker, while staff watched. A security guard was also watching from a distance and signaled to me not to get involved. Apparently when A.J. entered the shelter, some staff members, whose names Heavy had already shared with me, tried to make a deal with

him to help them manage the troublemakers. The idea was favorable to him until he realized there was nothing in the deal for him. He started to "loudmouth" staff about the way they operated the shelter. A.J. thus explained that he had been paroled into shelter surroundings that he thought were worse than the confinement of prison.

A.J. explained how supplies meant for the inmates were sold to local stores, and A.J. objected to the shelter being used as a half-way house for ex-offenders. He made a point of calling out the names of supervisors whom he charged with being involved in various scandals.

> Three men died from exposure to extreme cold because they didn't have blankets. No blankets were provided because they had been sold by staff members. I know who did it. Their names are . . . . There have been two murders that I know about since I've been in here. They're being hushed up. The names of the supervisors responsible are. . . .

He again stood up and loudly yelled out the names, peeved that some staff had tried to exploit him without negotiating the terms to his satisfaction.

> They want me to help them for extra food? That's all they got to give me? Food? The shelter ain't worth shit. They do absolutely nothing to help you. It's worst than in prison. In prison, they make you get yourself together. Those crackers tell you, "You will go to school; you will go to work." The men on the drill floor would get their asses murdered right away in the joint. You don't be robbing in there. You don't be making somebody go down on you in prison. You can get stabbed to death. I prefer jail. In jail, you know they're going to try to help you and you are not going anywhere until your time is up. This shelter is a jail with freedom. If you do get a job, you get locked out after 10:00. They play games, 'cause they will let you out, but won't let you back in after curfew, unless you give them a bribe.

Like many inmates who hustled the contradictions and conflicts in shelter operations as a means to "get over," A.J. posed as a social reformer. His reformist

rhetoric alerted staff that they had not negotiated their control over him. A.J. was especially disturbed by seeing black staffers exploit black inmates. In the rural upstate areas of New York State where he had spent eighteen years of his life behind bars, community norms were based on the apparently defunct idea that prison could have a rehabilitative and redemptive character. In the Brooklyn shelter, A.J. knew his influence was based on his value to the staff. Because staff members and others valued being seen talking with him, his networks included staff, S.F.'s gay friends, and other regulars who provided him with inside information. Thus, he knew more about what was happening in the shelter than most. He described the personal dangers on the drill floor caused by the mixture of so many different kinds of people:

> A guy could be coming down from crack or he could be out of the medicine that kept him from acting crazy. Staff don't know the difference. Everybody enters the drill floor around 7:30, and a lot of fights break out; somebody's talking out of his head. A man could come up to you out of the clear blue and ask you for a dollar. You walk away saying you don't have a dollar. Well, you'd better not turn your back because you could get stabbed because he thinks you're trying to dis' [disrespect] him. I have had to learn to just program my mind to just stick with my friend. When the money is not right, we go to our little secret hiding place in here. When the money is right, then that's when we go to a hotel. We tend to our business and when I go to sleep I ask the Lord to watch over me and my friend. We sleep next to each other with our backs to the wall. No, I am not homosexual and I am not bi-sexual. I am heterosexual and I do what I like and people ought to tend to their business. I am a married man, with two children.

Most people deferred to A.J. He referred to members of his crew as the "people I hang out with."

> When I walk into the dining room, there is always somebody in line who wants to be seen as my "running partner." They try to be with me by saying, "Yo, home boy! What it look like?" Members of the house

> gang will walk up to their "main man" and start a conversation while taking it for granted that they are in line now, ahead of the rest. I wish some mutherfucka would try that shit on me. I need to knock somebody out daily to stay in shape. I'm strong. Sometimes I don't get a chance to do my pushups.

Few men complained about this kind of violence, although it was widespread. This kind of "bogarting" behavior made it clear, in front of inmates throughout the shelter, "who's who."

The Queens

Overt homosexuals were not very talkative, but when I met S.F. for a recorded interview, he first listened and then spoke up right away, clearly and forcefully. He did not fit the stereotype of the sheltered homosexual that the hoodlums described. I had taken notes on S.F. while he walked around on the drill floor. What I had noted as passivity in the openly-gay men was more accurately defined as effeminateness.

> That's the trouble we have. We stand out as very distinct, which is just what you are not supposed to do in here. There are guys in here who are gay but they are not feminine. They don't try to help stop us from getting attacked. You can't find them to interview because they are afraid to speak up.

The shelter is a demasculinizing environment. Manly, tough conduct is exaggerated. "Queens" appear passive, soft-spoken, clean, neat, and are usually seen traveling together. A queen who walks alone in the shelter walks quickly, hoping not to stand out so as to avoid attacks. Queens are easily identified by their tight-fitting, colorful clothing, and by their hair styles. They mimic their fantasies of women.

What was not clear to the casual observer was that S.F. was a strong component of the negotiated social order in the shelter. Evidence of the influence of S.F.'s crew could be found in their activities about the shelter. For example, they had maintained the same spaces on the drill floor as long as anyone could remember. Perhaps there was a perception that the space had somehow become soiled by their assignment there. The corner near the toilets where their beds were assembled was known as "the queens' territory" and conspicuously called attention to their presence. Three lockers paired with cots were decorated with large posted photographs of female impersonators, men dressed in elaborate costumes and heavy makeup. Thinking that these posters were of show girls, I asked S.F. about them. He explained,

> That is an ad for my group on tour. I am the one in the front. We were called the "Gay Supremes." We went all over the United States and Europe. That was when we were younger. I am 29 now. Several of us had to come here when we realized that we were too old. Your body changes, and you can't keep shaving your face twice a day without getting rough skin, and deeper voices. We had our day though.

The bold colors and flamboyant characters in these photos contrasted sharply with other areas of the drab, cheerless floor. In this section some twenty or so queens slept. Sometimes other men, who usually slept in different parts of the floor, would sleep there, but the last, least-preferred assignments of bed space were near the toilets and the queens' territory. It was an assignment of disgrace, one that intensified the tensions in men who had internalized images of women as objects of assault.

The work that some of the queens did in the shelter was also an indication of their influence. Among the operation's staff, some queens used their stereotypes to their advantage. Several of them had clerical skills, and because they were female impersonators were expected to be neater and more detail-oriented than the average inmate. This qualified them for the shelter's office work. Further, staffers were less intimidated by the queens than by the hoodlums who may have done clerical work. S.F. explained that he had access to the personal files of each inmate. These files were not released to operations staff because they had been known to use confidential information to personal advantage. The identities of several "big shots" in the shelter were known, and there was administrative concern that if their presence were to become public, it would lead to a media scandal.

Nevertheless, the queens were held in such low esteem that they were little more than optical scanners. S.F. shared information that was confidential with A.J., making both feel that they were doing something that helped the homeless. A.J. could barely read, but S.F.'s mother was an English teacher. He tutored A.J. on what some of the confidential information meant. Also unlike A.J., S.F. said

> I don't try to loud talk anybody. I guess some of the operations staff know I found about some of the things that they do are crimes. I did not read it either. I heard them talking. They didn't see me. I was sitting inside the door. They never even looked at me as they were ripping us off. I know what they are doing and they know I know because how would A.J. know about it? A.J. can get loud. It scares me because they could hurt him, although he doesn't believe they can hurt him.

Despite S.F.'s ability to maneuver, he had been attacked several times. A number of the men who slept in the queens' territory reported various kinds of abuse.

There was no way of telling if gays were attacked more often than "new jacks" or anybody else. The queens expected to be attacked, and, over time, I noted they were becoming more prepared for these attacks. S.F. explained,

> Each time Miss Fan-Fan got some money, somebody tried to take it. Well, one night she just got tired of it. She was crying but she was swinging. When she started winning, the guard broke it up. You're not supposed to win, just to be a punching bag.

S.F. did not mention that few of the queens used crack, or that they ate more regularly and were healthier than many of the emaciated inmates. Crack was believed to precipitate erotic behavior, such as homosexuality, that would not ordinarily be expressed. Because of the widespread abuse of crack among many "straight" inmates, sex roles were probably more flexible among them than among gays who were committed to "femme" personas.

A guard explained why he had "no respect" for them:

> Many of the men who say they are straight expect the queens to reverse their roles. Then they have to stay drunk and find a way to show that they are really straight, usually by fighting.

The sadomasochistic behavior (Chancer, 1992) in which ostensibly straight men forced queens to assume passive behavior bothered security guards so much that they squirmed and raised their voices when they talked about it. This was especially true for the West Indian guards, who had more rigid concepts of sexuality and gender. One such guard, a member of the Muslims' Five Percenters, or gods, said:

> Some of us used to be homeless although not in a shelter. Where else can we find work, at McDonald's? Most of [us] have a family, and we have to ignore lots of things that happen in here. On our days off, we can get drunk, and forget about this place. We have to put up with stuff that won't let you sleep night or day. There's a lot to tell. If you

> are a Muslim, you can't be messing around like that. Death is the penalty, especially in prison. We have to be true in situations like this. One guy messed up. He was caught down on a gay. He tried to fight off several brothers. He had to run. He ran into the streets and got hit by a car. [He paused, and whispered, "*Allah akbar.*"] Another time, on the drill floor, I saw a couple of guys fighting over a bed. One pulled out a knife, however he got it in here. We have that metal detector for weapons. You can't control everything. It's too much.

According to my interviews with security guards, no sanctions existed against theft from or other violations against the queens. If the police came, it would usually not be because an inmate called. Involving the police was among the greatest violations of shelter "conduct norms" (Johnson, 1994). Similarly, for a guard to call the police for reasons other than to protect the staff was "asking for trouble." A guard told me he had to be authorized to call the police to protect an inmate.

> That goes for gays or straights. For stealing, the rules allow them to come back in three days. In the winter months, when it's cold outside, what can you do, let them freeze to death? If they're here, the cops figure they know where to find them. Better for them to be here where the cops will know where to find them than for them to look for them outside. So a lot of things you learn to just let go.

The Pops

A few "old heads" were pensioners. Many still used drugs and said they "dranked." Most had been separated from their families for years. Others had formerly been workers who had drifted throughout their prime years without serious commitments. Employers often had not bothered with paper work, social security, so "pops" looking for benefits could not always qualify for them. Now they had become senior citizens housed in an increasingly youthful environment. In order to adapt to

the callous shelter environment they had to learn where to congregate to remain safe and, on the days when their Social Security checks or other retirement checks came, how to move from one area to another without drawing attention. Some had to travel to the house of a dependable relative or friend whose address they had long used to "get my check." Inmates whose checks were electronically sent to the local check cashing exchange sometimes arrived only to find that someone else had been clever enough to misrepresent their identity. Having survived for six or so decades, they also had managed to keep from being disrespected most of the time, a cardinal value in the shelter. They usually kept from being mugged, although they safely savored the joys of getting drunk. Sometimes they passed a brown paper bag among only those who "went in on the sip."

One pop, around seventy years old, said he grew up in a family of eight.

> When I turned thirteen, I left home. I lived here and there. I maintained contact with my family by stopping by home occasionally for food. One many taught me to drive a truck and by eighteen, I made my living as a truck driver. I never settled down with a female. I spent about ten years in prison. I take life as it comes. I made a mistake by leaving home so early. I never finished school. I never learned a lot of things I should have. It was a mistake. I could have had a better life. I was adopted when a man I knew's son died. People use to help each other more than now. But I never really wanted that much out of life. I always had work. Now there's no reason to leave this shelter. Many of the older guys left from here. No, they did not go back to their families. Try the cemetery. I don't know what they do to your body when you don't have insurance or somebody to bury you. I've seen them placed in body bags. I get very quiet because there is something about a dead man that everybody respects. I know more people here than I know anywhere.

Many of the older residents spent their days with social service workers, trying to get all of the necessary documentation for various entitlements, or for

referrals for medical examinations, etc. Many of these men, often frail and stooped over, traveled together. On those occasions when I observed one of the senior citizens walking alone, he was walking as rapidly as possible "to get out of harm's way." The predictability of the pensioners' check contributed to order in the shelter. However, many of the "pops" were well liked because they were activists. One such activist had retired from his job and spent his evenings at his union halls. He often came to the shelter after the 10:00 p.m. curfew. When he returned, it was his custom to bring bags of leftover food and drinks. He impressed the other inmates because "he gave it away free." One evening, an argument broke out about his bed assignment. Maurice told me that "he tried to squash the whole thing with the younger man. They were friends." But because the younger man was "coming down from crack," the older man felt compelled to protect himself and stabbed the other to death. When the police came they did not take him to the precinct. The next day he died of a heart attack. "There's more to this than meets the eye," Maurice concluded.

The Crisis of the Black Male: On the Bottom, Sinking Fast

I observed ex-prison inmates elaborating their sheltered lives while their options in the community were disappearing. I was only one of various observers in close and continuous contact with inner-city men, as American society began to focus on the crisis of the black male. Testimony before congressional committees and elsewhere reported the expanding discrepancies between black and white incomes.

> The wages of both white and black men declined during the period 1969 to 1984. For the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, American men born in 1960 may face lower lifetime real earnings than men born 10 years earlier. Among the myriad and complex responses to these economic conditions have been rising employment rates among women, but falling rates among men, while the unemployment rates of both men and women have been on an upward trend for three decades" (A Common Destiny). Among black men specifically, "black males, ages 18-34, with some high school but no diploma, earned on average $268 weekly. For white men of the same age and education, work conditions have been better (Myers, 1991).

Since the National Research Council published the above findings, prisonization-shelterization processes have added to the incendiary nature of urban problems. Score of other reports have been issued describing the morass in which poor and working class black men find themselves. In his 1991 testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Marc Maurer of the "Sentencing Project on the Problems of African-American Males in Urban America" highlighted the following points:

- Almost one in four African-American men in the age group 20-29 is under the control of the criminal justice system—either in prison or jail, or on probation or parole.
- Black males in the United States are incarcerated at a rate four times that of Black males in South Africa.
- The United States now has the highest recorded incarceration rate of any nation in the world, having surpassed South Africa and the Soviet Union in the past decade.
- There are more young African-American men under the control of the criminal justice system than there are African-American men of all ages enrolled in higher education.

- We now spend $16 billion a year to incarcerate the more than one million Americans in our prisons and jails, and almost $7 billion for the estimated 454,724 black male inmates.

Thus, a profile of the black male on the bottom of the economy has been clearly sketched, if not widely disseminated in its entirety. To this profile, I added the accounts of group interactions that I observed, interactions that sustain the relationships of the actors. The inmates' sheltered world was seen to be composed of differing ranks and statuses, e.g., gods and "shitheads." This social recognition is confirmed through face-to-face interactions, and includes rewards as well as penalties for violating the prescribed method of doing things. Inmates released into the shelter from prison bring into the shelter population attitudes and behaviors that function to maintain the order of prisons and their socialized products. As such, the orientations of these inmates are to neither long-range nor short-range problemsolving. Personal planning for the future was not a feature of their pre-prison socialization, nor of their subsequent development in the institutionalization of the prison or of the shelter. Hence, their aspirations are to "get through the day," and to "live one day at a time."

Various studies commissioned by the New York City government legitimized the widespread notion that public policy should respond to dislocations among shelterized men by holding them responsible for their situation. For example, in the City of New York report, "Reforming New York City's System of Homeless Shelters" (1994), the planned reform overlooked the simple fact that the shelters were housing men who had no function elsewhere in the community. As such, the impact of personal dependencies generated through primary group affiliations were not

factored in as social effects that fuel prisonization-shelterization. Clearly, policy analysts were not concerned that inmates released from prisons to the shelters carry heavy social and political baggage that does not match their administrative concerns and concepts. Jencks (1994) was correct when he said that the sheltered homeless are not passive. He was not clear, though, when he stated that "Single adults have more choices about their living arrangements, although these choices are pretty grim" (p. 105).

In this chapter I have described how entry into the shelter is based on more than the need to manage one's economic dislocation. The search for personal and social meaning moved men from deteriorating families, from transforming neighborhoods, from public dependencies situated in prisons to those found in temporary emergency shelters. I began to document the impact of informal group interactions among groups bottoming out along a prison-shelter path. I express my concern that in their search for meaning in the larger community the homeless whom I have termed ex-prison inmates and regulars are publicly segregated. A tacit individualist perspective underlies New York City's policy of "mutual responsibility" (1994). This phrase summarizes the expectation that prisonized men assigned to shelters would be held responsible for their situations. A shelter official quipped, "They have to bring something to get something. They have nothing, so they get nothing."

Conformity to this public dependency, for the majority of releasees, is accommodated by parole violations that return inmates to prison. Prisonization-

shelterization, then, is the creation of policies that narrow choices among men at the bottom who are expected to act in their mutual interests. Among impact of prisonization-shelterization has been inmates' reaction to political mandates to seek services. The city's "get tough" policies for the homeless have been camouflaged as professional services. The 1994 reform plan stipulated that:

> Mutual responsibility will be established through an agreement known as an independent living plan, signed by both the provider and the recipient, which indicates the homeless person's acceptance of the responsibility to participate in programs provided to assist them in resolving their crises and in moving toward independent living.

Such official expectations suggest that a conflict looms between rational political planning and an emerging order of inmates with shrinking options. The city's "reforms" continued:

> Adults who refuse placement in programs offering a rehabilitative treatment or other services, as appropriate, will be referred to a municipal facility. . . . Payment for accommodations in such facilities will be required. Those who reject all the options offered will not be permitted to remain in an emergency shelter, and will no longer be eligible for temporary housing assistance.

Fools in "Post-Industrial" Settings

Among African-Americans, and other pariah groups, the construction of the "fool" (Klapp, 1948) as a social type has functioned to control the emergence of disruptive power relations. In my focus group, an inmate asserted that if an objective of the civil rights movement had been to get rid of so many "Uncle Toms," then it had failed. A younger inmate, puzzled by the group's reaction, asked what we were laughing about. He did not know what it meant to be an Uncle Tom. A second

inmate reflected, "I had forgotten about 'Tom' myself. Before 'Tom,' it was 'Sambo' who functioned as the 'fool.'"

The second inmate had been exposed to "cultural studies" in prison and the shelter. From the body of cultural studies, Takai, a Japanese-American, in *A Different Mirror* (1993) reminds us that "Sambo" was a "made in the USA" black fool.

> Unlike Indians, blacks were not outside white society's borders; rather they were within what James Madison called the "bosom" of the republic, living in northern ghettoes, and on southern plantations.

Blacks still live in the bosom of a white society that shelterizes them. One function of the black fool in America has been the continuation of the public image of African slaves and "freedmen" as docile and therefore easily managed. The minstrel in white face appeared at the end of the slave era to restrict competition between poor blacks and poor whites.

"Ole Yankee," one of my focal subjects, mimicked memories he had stored away in his consciousness during his youth:

> It was like, "I may be po' white trash, but I'm better than a nigger." . . . People believed Step'n Fetchit was real because he was one of the only black faces they saw in the movies. That was a fool, he couldn't think or talk. He scratched his head and looked to whites to keep him out of trouble. He was very afraid of ghosts and when he saw ghosts they made "Fetchit" up to look like he turned white. My mother told me to speak his name correctly, "Say Mr. Stephen Fletcher." I found out it was "Step and fetch it," spoken real fast. My mama thought everything would be okay if you just spoke properly. Fetchit was really a fool. You had to act like that in front of your boss otherwise they got scared of you. You could be a fool like Uncle Tom and Aunt Jemima, or you could be a "big bad blackass." But then you didn't live as long.

Ole Yankee died on the fourth floor of the shelter in 1990. No one knew how to contact his nearest relative. It was that crafty man in his seventies who pointed my thinking toward the social stereotyping of the fool as one way to describe the inmates.

Takai writes:

> Sambo-like behavior may have been not so much a veil to hide inner emotions of rage and discontent as a means of expressing them. Lying, stealing, laziness, immaturity, and ignorance all contained within them an aggressive quality: they constituted, in effect, resistance to efficiency, discipline, work, and productivity. Sambo was a stereotype of the fantasized black slave from "de massa." The stereotype fitted plantation owners' need for reaffirmation of their worth which conflicted with their best moral selves.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL IMPOTENCY IN THE SHELTER

Moving From Tomorrow

Public policies, crafted by social scientists and administered by bureaucrats, have helped shape the consciousness of the prisonized-shelterized men. When these men finally "got it," they acted out scripts assigned to the "homeless." As I have shown, prisonized-shelterized inmates shared long-term unemployment with other members of the homeless and extremely poor. In the shelter, however, many of the inmates with the most experience in prison, most disaffiliated from their families, and most likely to abuse crack also demonstrated peer leadership. Their leadership often was informally sanctioned by staff. Consequently, what appears to many members of the general, check-cashing community to be the disaffiliation of prisonized-shelterized inmates is, in fact, a form of adaptation to a changing, if not disintegrating, way of thinking (Berman, 1983).

The subculture of the shelter promotes the separation of groups of former workers and the community residents who are "precariously housed" (Rossi, 1989). These precariously housed persons include people who are employed, unemployed, underemployed, living with family or friends, receiving public benefits, who believe in God, committed crimes, and are otherwise temporarily housed. Meanwhile, the

shelters serve as the "roofs over the heads" of escalating numbers of city, state, and federal prisoners who formed "schools of crime." Released convicts return to the free community as the "homeless" (Mathiesen, 1990). In this context, an overarching question asserts itself: What are the political prospects of prisonized-shelterized inmates to gain more independence? I found that the principal effect of the shelter has been to socially disable its inmates. Housing ex-prisoners alongside the sheltered homeless does more than figuratively put all the homeless in the same boat. The shelter continues their substantial dependencies and excludes inmates from traditional American folkways. Since 1985, a considerable amount of social science research has heralded weakened communities, the rise of an underclass and the decline of inner-city minorities (Moore, 1995). Public policies, that a decade or so ago seemed intended to ameliorate extreme poverty, now seem to justify lowered expectations for a humane society in general, and the accommodation of reduced employment opportunities in particular.

In *The Limits of Social Policies*, Nathan Glazer (1988, p. 3), a nationally prominent social analyst, offered his version of the transition from liberal social policies from about 1970 to the mid-1990s.

> . . . as I worked on our policies in housing, health, social welfare, quite a different point of view impressed itself upon me. . . .:
>
> 1. In our social policies we are trying to deal with the breakdown of traditional ways of handling distress. These traditional ways are located in the family primarily, but also in ethnic groups, the neighborhood, the church.
>
> 2. In our efforts to deal with the breakdown of these traditional structures, our social policies are weakening them further and making

> matters in some respects worse. We are making no steady headway against a sea of misery. Our efforts to deal with distress are themselves increasing distress.

I have argued that one prevalent adaptation to changing traditions in our post-industrialized economy dates from the sociological research of the Thirties as "prisonization" and "shelterization." In Chapter 1, I introduced the compounded concept of prisonization-shelterization to explore what too unreflexively has come to be popularized as "the homeless." In Chapter 2, I described one source of inmates' construction of meaning, in the collectivities its members call "house gangs." These gangs consist of former prison inmates, mostly "hoodlums/gods," and fewer "regulars," with some support from a small number of "queens" and "pops." Another source of scripting, or self-construction, from which the prisonized-shelterized developed ideas about who they are and why they are in the shelter, was the stigma that they were exposed to, adapted to, and repeated in various social settings.

One of the sources of ambiguous scripting has been the "data" interpreted from social settings in which sheltered gangs were pitted against each other as "deserving" and "undeserving." As I have noted in Chapter 1, and elsewhere above, few studies are available that explain the associations of former inmates housed side-by-side with ex-workers in shelters for single homeless men. Although Rossi (1991) has pointed out that prisoners and homeless men have long been forced to share public housing accommodations, his recent comprehensive survey of the homeless presented less than one page of empirical data on the current incidence of this

association. Freeman and Hall's (1987) profile of the homeless in New York City reported that large proportions of the homeless have spent long periods in jail. Timmer (1988) found that in ideology and function, shelters were quite close to correctional facilities. Studies of homeless men indicate that, besides being without a permanent home, they also suffer unemployment, lack of significant relationships, excessive drinking, and drug abuse. Sending the homeless to jail is for some judges a humanitarian act, as it allows the men to receive food, shelter, and medical care (Marshall & Fairhead, 1979).

I contend that many of the current social problems that homeless men face may be attributed to the various ways they adapt their behavior to the way they construct their identities. Their histories of attempts to meet life's needs have socialized them into current adaptations in prisons and in shelters for the homeless. In so many different ways, prisonized-shelterized men envision their world, and their behavior, as predetermined. "It wouldn't happen unless it was suppose to happen." Retreat to the shelter isolates inmates from others dislocated from the labor market, some who are still housed with families, or who have doubled up with friends. Sheltered inmates who are isolated along the prison-sheltered margins, base the definition of their social and economic circumstances on their individual experiences and aspirations. Thus, their personal circumstance of being "oppressed" has led to their identification with their "oppressors" (Freire, 1988). Self-concepts crafted from internalizing these social facts are popularly referred to as "self-hate" (Fanon, 1967).

Inmates in the predominantly "black city" whom I observed survived the antipathies they internalized from the wider society and faced each day by developing what W. E. DuBois described a century ago as a dual consciousness, one that coordinated their status with their stigma. This confusion appeared in typical transactions.

"I didn't know if I was going or coming."

"Who me? Ain't much happening with me."

This study did not include emotionally disturbed inmates; however, the inmates I observed were under tremendous stress to keep "cool." Their social identities were not actualized in their interest. I asked how sane, insightful men, mostly in their prime, were able to repeat, and maintain, observations of men forging a path between the prison and the shelter. Chancer's (1992) sadomasochism thesis was insightful in illuminating how men continued to participate in behaviors that had no economic value. She writes:

> Uniting all of these examples, I will argue, is the constructed nature of the sadomasochism in each: it must be literally structured out of situations that are initially not structured. . . . An opportunity for the expression of sadism (and, by extension, for the establishment of persons situated masochistically, usually not of their own choosing) arises or is generated, differing from situation to situation, and rationalized before or after the fact. Some justification or rationalizing idea would likely be called up, since no justification (such as, at the workplace, a chain of command) exists to legitimize the sadomasochistic tendency a priori.

The race of the prisonized-shelterized group of men that was over-represented in the Atlantic Avenue Men's Shelter is a form of bias that has come to characterize interactions in the United States. Race in America is among one of our society's

most effective means of exerting what Chancer (1992) calls control by negatively labeling others.

> Within both sociology and philosophy, numerous well-known writers have posited versions of the following thesis: an important reason for the creation of others may be to provide boundaries and definitions for groups otherwise amorphous, insecure, in their sense of self-certainty. In the course of defining outsiders, a given collectivity transforms this uncertainty into a perception of superiority, with others rendered inferior human beings in comparison.

In following Weber's emphasis on the social and historical significance of meaning construction, I found in my literature review that the practice of splitting the labor market into white and black markets in the United States dates back to 1619 (Takaki). When acculturated black slaves were separated from newer cargoes of Africans to work inside their owners' houses, labor market segmentation continued among new African immigrants. The three status groups among blacks were composed of those who lived and worked with whites, those who worked at a distance in the fields, and those who worked illicitly as escaped slaves, i.e., "outlaws."

Residential patterns of homeless African-Americans, that had been forged by peripheral associations with dominant Americans, continued as prisonization-shelterization. Inmates' places in the economy were not based on trivial lifestyle preferences, nor on their personal character traits. Rather, their wretchedness in the urban poverty of the 1990s is rooted in historical adaptations of which prisonization-shelterization is the most recent example. Evidence of this historically based exploitation can be observed in surviving inmates' group behaviors. Getting respect is a paramount value of inmates, probably because there is the perception that it has

not been achieved. The importance of respect nevertheless is routinely rationalized among inmates as, "It's all I got." They admit that their strongest motivation is to get respect, and analysis of my notes suggests that these men believe that the search for respect transcends almost all of their other social interactions.

> Respect is all a man's got. You take that away and he ain't got nothing, really.

Inmates were tireless and ingenious in their efforts not to be "diss'ed," or disrespected. Therefore, descriptions of homelessness over the last decade that have neglected analyses of ex-prisoners as political creations have not been attentive to the traditional social relations that have characterized structured distances between "oppressors" and "oppressed." So ignored, the social and economic rejects from today's economy contribute to the oppression of homeless inmates. "We're being screwed" is heard, along with "Somebody should do something."

Politically imposed conflicts between whites and blacks in the workplace have been shown by Kornblum (1973) to carry over to the workers' residence. However, the lack of work complicates problems brought on by the lack of residence. By 1985, dejobbing, economic transformations, crack, prison overcrowding, and downward mobility among the white middle class again made blacks convenient scapegoats. Conflicts among the sheltered homeless, and other urban cohorts at the bottom of the social policy agenda, began to replace traditional conflicts between whites and blacks. In the black and Latino communities, displaced workers were split between the "homeless" and those in prison, which effectively disqualified the political claims of these populations for employment. Patterns of residence, in turn, shape ideas of the

self and project personal views about "the way things are" on the world. Public concern about crime and homelessness accompanied rises in unemployment, as well as growth in the number of blacks earning middle incomes. Major changes had taken place in housing arrangements in these communities among workers and non-working blacks and whites.

Implications of the release of prisoners to the shelter vis-à-vis the homeless epidemic as public issues remained bracketed as an unrelated issue of low priority. Higher rates of unemployment in the inner city intensified calls for personal responsibility. This idea suggested that the inmates I observed had been equal participants in the market economic and should therefore accept equal responsibility for their dislocations. More to the point, problems of the prisonized-shelterized are problems of differential access to the labor market. Labor market characteristics are the definitive source of social meaning in the 1990s as they were in 1865:

> The political storm over slavery almost destroyed the nation. Since the Civil War and emancipation, race has continued to be largely defined in relation to African-Americans—segregation, civil rights, and the underclass, and affirmative action. Constituting the largest minority group in our society, they have been at the cutting edge of the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, their struggle has been a constant reminder of America's moral vision as a country committed to the principle of liberty (Takai, 1993).

More than merely a passive ragtag bunch of ne'er-do-wells hanging out in backroom communities, members of the "new homeless" (Rossi, 1989) pose an ideological challenge to American values and hopes. In this chapter, I examine ideas publicized in the general community and in the shelter, that keep former prison inmates shelterized and out of the economy. Shelterized inmates engage in discourses

that give them a sense of mastery inside the shelter unmatched in the general community. The potentially damaging effects to the self-concept of "dual consciousness" is moderated by retreats to the shelter. And a group participant recalled what my grandmother taught me long ago, "It [consciousness] just doesn't come out of a clear blue sky. It has to come from somewhere."

Inside the shelter, therefore, the false sense of power that emerges may not be helpful in gaining personal independence, but it does congregate inmates. These congregations begin to give diverse groups of poor inner-city men more focus "to keep on keeping on," even when they do not understand how they contribute to the [perhaps false] sense of confidence that keeps them alive. Often, shelter activities are an expression of the distresses of inmates who do not understand how they can be expected to achieve "like everybody else." The braggadocio of men who have been de-masculinized by limited choices, nonetheless, is an attempt to prevail in their definitions of meaningfulness. When these individuals become visible, public opinion holds inmates responsible for their "personal choices" (Jencks, 1994). What appear to be personal choices to become "homeless" or "convicts" are choices narrowed by stereotypes in the public's mind, animated by policies and administrative actions to pacify political pressures. On the other hand, inmates "freed" from prison choose to live at whatever costs to themselves or to the public. Their resources include their persistencies in a culture that still claims to value all human life.

> They see you walking around like everybody. You have to be breathing like them, and you must have to eat like them, except they can't deal with that. They know they're wrong because they know you are human like them. You don't have to shit like them.

> They are not the same as me 'cause I have not slaughtered whole tribes of Indians, Africans, Caribbeans, and Asians. I did my wrong and I'm still paying for it with my life. They forget the poor white, but they have never written in you and me.

Their political discourses are encoded, not by the content, but by the structures of what appear to be distracting sounds of pulsating, rhythmic rhymes. "Rap music," a new clamorous and cantankerous pop art form channeled the volatility of inmates' desperation. Besides "rap," and the ways it has become structured in the activities of the sheltered homeless, another example of the replacement of the African drum as modern folk communication is the T-shirt. One inmate's T-shirt emblazoned his slogan: "Getha Fortune; Fucktha Fame."

Inmates of African descent absorbed and reflected their descriptions as "crazy" and "irrational." Hustlers adopted these definitions to exploit or "to play on." Frequently, there were incidents that reinforced inmates' attitudes that they held some negative influence over mainstream America. An example is seen in the following anecdote:

> They just looked at us and started heading up, looking back with this phony smile, like they scared to death. Buster looked around and hollered something like "Greatgoodamoogadoga!" They jumped in their car, and rolled the window up. Yea, they were still smiling that phony grin. We scared them.

Another anecdote related in a group session reported that:

> I was a child when the Governor of Georgia died. He died at the same time black people were praying for him. When he died, the governor's son replaced him and later he got sick too. He went on the radio and told the colored people not to pray for him, please.

Outwitting others is the work of the "hustler." In the working class communities, the hustler is considered less violent than many other criminals. The hustler is regular in the streets. Skills, intelligence, and courage are required to outwit "straight people" who work. A main objective of hustlers is similar to that of others in the community, to get through another day.

> You win some and you lose some. Today was my day, though, I got over.

The inmates who were less skillful than hustlers rejected rational philosophy as "white." They based their behavior on what could be explained as "unreflective inspirations."

> If it feels good, it's good. I know people. I can just look at them and tell things about them. I don't need to listen to the weather report. Shit, if it rains get a goddamned umbrella, they told me. I'm a "taker." Why don't you go take your dues? It's cause you're a "took;" better be a "taker" than a "took."

Rational ways of making sense that had been formulated during the industrial revolution had rarely paid off for inmates of de-industrialization. Their histories of labor market segmentation had excluded meaningful contacts with the people of the modern "Enlightenment." Ideas like "hard work" had functioned more for inmates' families when they were sharecroppers. The presumption that a profitable relationship existed between means and ends led rural migrants to the city where more than 70 percent had previously been able to find work. Concepts advising deferred gratification are not reasonable for men whose career tracks lead them from prisonization to shelterization. Putting off until tomorrow what one needs today

makes no sense for persons who have no future. Inmates then referred to the shelter as "jive" or nonsense because they could see "through the bullshit to the real deal."

The modicum of power needed to make their insights public issues seemed to be within grasp during the civil rights movement. Common to each group of inmates was the simple idea that the world had room for each of its inhabitants. To paraphrase the statement made by Rodney King, the black man who was seen on international television being brutally assaulted by the California state troopers, "Why can't we all get along?" Therefore, criminal behavior in the shelter and the surrounding neighborhood was a way to resolve the dual consciousness. "What you're saying is I have to figure out what the 'Man' thinks about me and become a nigger. You can kiss my ass, but I 'sold him 'what's up with it?'"

Delinquent behavior that was stigmatizing among mainstream Americans could lead to being "somebody" in the social worlds created in the shelter. Moore reported that:

> Several studies find the degree of stigmatization also depends to some extent on the incarceration rate in the local community. Working class and inner-city neighborhoods, where arrests are more commonplace, are likely to be less censorious of an inmate's family, unless the family as a whole is defined locally as "bad" (Achor, 1970; Fishman, 1990; Moore & Long, 1981; Schneller, 1976).

Inmates, clinging to constructions of Afrocentric attachments, dwell in a social world that Berman (1983, pp. 57-58) would say was "enchanted."

> The hallmark of modern consciousness is that it recognizes no element of mind in the so-called inert objects that surround us. The whole materialistic position, in fact, assumes the existence of a world "out there" independent of human thought, which is "in here." And it so assumes that the earth . . . has been roughly the same for millennia,

> while the people on the earth have regarded the unchanging phenomena around them in different ways at different times. . . . Modern consciousness thus regards the thinking of previous ages not simply as other legitimate forms of consciousness, but misguided forms of world views that we have happily outgrown. It holds that the men and women of those times thought they could not help but be childish and animistic. . . .
>
> . . . the scientific worldview is integral to modernity, mass society, and the situation described above. It is our consciousness, in the Western industrial nations—uniquely so—and it is intimately bound up with the emergence of our way of life from the Renaissance to the present. Science and our way of life have been mutually reinforcing, and it is for this reason that the scientific worldview has come under serious scrutiny at the same time that the industrial nations are beginning to show signs of severe strain, if not actual disintegration.

Frozen Consciousness

One of the supervising security guards, a white ethnic, was also an ex-cop. I recorded the following statement:

> I had a chance to resign or to come up on charges. I can't tell you for what but I can tell you that cops are human too. They see more than their share of shit. At first you want to have your folk say that you are a policeman. Then you realize you have to socialize with other cops because nobody else wants you. Families don't want to know the stuff you have to go through to bring home the bacon. You arrest a drug dealer. He gets back on the street and your life could be in danger. You learn to take the dope and the money, tell 'em to go and forget what happened. You have some crack now, and you may try it yourself and you got some extra money too. The folk loved the extra money. They want more . . . .

Shelterized at the bottom, the psychopharmaceutical effects of crack cocaine use also keep homeless inmates dependent on the "prison-shelter circuit." After a couple of hits, inmates could become fixated in one spot, looking intensely down at the ground. Standing almost motionless, silently, unresponsively, eyes glossed over, this behavior did not arouse the concern of people standing by. Among crack users,

this behavior was known as "stuck on stupid" (Randolph, 1995). Inmates experiencing these "highs" appeared to be in private states, i.e., "in their own worlds." I interviewed six inmates who informed me that they had been in contact with their surroundings when they were "high like that." Unlike the effects of alcohol or marijuana, which sometimes led drunks to report that they forgot that they were not sober, inmates "stuck on stupid" informed me that they were aware of the influence of crack.

> I know what you are talking about. I tried to control myself but I kept thinking I was seeing something that I had not seen before. Something that I had seen every day took on a slightly different appearance. I kept thinking that I was not seeing anything unusual, nothing new. Then I would look again and again imagining that there was something that I was missing. I was not reacting quickly enough. Only if I just would react faster. After a while, you forget it so you can get another hit. Yea, then I would go back and look for what I thought was something I was seeing. Like, there was something between the blink of the eyes that I could see if I did not blink. I was standing there frozen. You think: "That's probably nothing down there. You try to move on, and you take another look, thinking it could be something down there. You think, I could have dropped a piece of crack. . . .

Eljah Anderson (in *Street Wise*, 1990) described his understanding of the behavior of crack users that I have referred to as "stuck on stupid."

> After leaving the crack house, addicts may roam the streets looking for yet another "blast." Their eyes are cast down, scanning the ground for anything of value. If they spot a penny, they stop abruptly to pick it up, then linger to look for more. Local residents, who sometimes "see and don't see," have spotted them down on their hands and knees, inspecting something they think may be dope: they finger it, taste it, then get up and move on. . . . The zombie is a recent addition to the streets. . . . At night, community residents say, the zombies come out. . . . In some ways, this behavior is not so unlike what has come to be expected of more conventional drug addicts. One important difference is that that have new boldness with which the zombies approach criminal activity: they seem to lack a sense of reality and of the

> immediate consequences of their behavior. . . . For instance, they beg aggressively from passersby, they are known to engage in hand to hand combat with the police, or they may break into a car or house in full view of others who might call the authorities.
>
> With their sense of reality drastically diminished by the drug, they will take greater risks than other criminals, who are generally believed to be more sensible. The presence of the zombie introduces a strong element of irrationality, further complicating public relations among anonymous passersby.

Anderson's observations were recorded at the beginning of the crack epidemic and therefore suffer from some of the problems described in Johnson, Golub, and Fagan, *Careers in Crack, Drug Use, Drug Distribution, and Nondrug Criminality* (1955).

> Much of this early coverage often sensationalized the problem and emphasized an urgent need for action. Clearly, the Crack Epidemic had become one of our most pressing concerns of the 1980s. The media, politics and politicians provided a seemingly endless supply of unverifiable assertions about crack: presumably, many of these claims were widely believed. However, these claims were based on rather incomplete information derived from police records and individual accounts, often second-handed, collected by reporters.
>
> Paramount were myths that crack was instantly addictive and thus was much worse than heroin or cocaine powder, "drug innocent" persons were being converted into compulsive crack smokers, use was inevitably leading persons to robbery and violent crime . . . persons were dropping full-time jobs to become crack sellers. . . . As a result, public pressure mounted on politicians to stop crack sellers and crack abusers.

My two-year field study in a homeless shelter did not turn up the zombie-like behavior that Anderson described. His descriptions are more reminiscent of the "downs" of the heroin epidemic during the sixties than the hyperactivity that I did observe among shelterized crack addicts more than twenty years later. More to my

point, however, were the restricting effects of media accounts supporting public policies of prisonization and shelterization of predominately crack users and salespersons.

Terry Williams's (1992) analysis of crack abuse was a part of the descriptions of the transitions that other sociologists have presented since 1985. Williams noted that:

> As the 1980s progresses, crack use exploded on the New York Scene. The sale and distribution of small vials of crack—color coded to mark a particular dealer's product or territory—became a major form of employment for out-of-work and out-of-school youths. Today, the underground economy, and the drug trade in particular, is possibly the largest single employer of minority youths . . . 150,000 persons may be selling or helping to distribute.
>
> Like most inner city areas, [the] neighborhood suffers poor community health. The churches, the press, the family have lost power.
>
> The increasing popular view among minorities . . . is that they, as poor people, are viewed by the larger society as superfluous and expendable, and that they are being killed off in a sort of triage operation, victims of [a] kind of low-intensity war.

Shelter inmates adapt to their lack of significance in the community in many ways, other than through crack use. Inmates often are unable to get many of the ordinary basic human needs, e.g., toilet tissue, toothpaste, and other items taken for granted to maintain basic hygiene. The absence of these supplies also keeps inmates immobilized, "frozen" to their grievances. These complaints make much of the "bitching" in the shelter predictable. Without organization, little thought was necessary, and less action possible. Therefore, rhyming and rapping, or aimless talk, preoccupied inmates with their situations. After complaining about missed

opportunities that he insisted he had had, an older inmate mused, perhaps reflecting some of the sadomasochism in the shelter, "Sometimes I just don't think I like doing good. When I am worried, I know everything is going along as usual."

Without abstract speculations about it, the world was perceived as a grievance for which blame was usually turned against one's self. Other times, fierce violence was projected onto a society that wanted to forget them. Again frozen with grievances of social mistreatment, an ex-prison inmate, 6'5", about 265 pounds, sat in my group exasperated that he did not have the resources of the prison.

> I was a ward runner. That meant I worked outside of the cells, doing different things. I had the keys to files and stuff. All the "police" knew me. I was never searched. I sold half pints of Scotch, name brands for ten dollars each. I could get reefer better than what they had in the streets. The Rastas used it for their worship. You could get top quality cocaine in there. We got the shit in there in the [rectum]. Well, you had to put it up deep. The guards didn't want to be looking up somebody's [rectum]. I was somebody in there. Out here, I'm nobody. But I won't hurt nobody like before when I killed. Now I have to help people. Yes, I am on parole and I killed, so I have to really show the parole board that I can be released. Before though, I did not want to just hurt them. I wanted to put them in their graves, deep into it. Unless they bother me or my sister or my three daughters, then I am going to put them away. In this place, nobody is worth anything. Where do I go? I visit my daughters, and my sister. The job I do on a grant ends Friday. I can't do too much. It's easy for me to hurt somebody even when I don't want to. I'm a Sunni Muslim, not a five percenter. I pray five times a day.

Presence in the shelter for long periods of time meant that inmates were idled. Idleness is a prime evil in Western society. After five hundred years of industrialization, "dejobbing" challenges the supremacy of work in what has become a "globalized economy." Ex-prison inmates, always teetering on the bottom, had become "leveled with the ground." In a private conversation with me, a mature

urban ethnographer who has spent much time on skid rows throughout America said I was focusing on a theme in African-American arts as well as letters that said, "Been down so long, getting up ain't crossed my mind."

The aim of public policies in New York City in the late eighties was to keep the prisonization of the shelter hidden. Gounis pointed out that:

> The gradual transformation of city shelters from temporary makeshift arrangements into enduring institutions is linked to an emergent social agenda that seeks to regulate the disruptive effects of urban displacement and marginalization on normative social practices. The administrative professional and ideological mechanisms of control that are deployed by the domestication of homelessness exemplify the intentionality of a politics of marginality aimed at the survival economics of the new urban poor.

Sights of Invisible Men

I heard a panhandler preparing to leave the shelter to work the streets. He always looked the other way when I was around. His group was fragmented from the hoodlums, and he walked with a limp and his mouth was twisted as if he had suffered a stroke. His companions, whose appearances offended the average shelter inmate, listened to him, however. "Keep it in front of 'em. Let 'um see you gotta live too. Keep the shit in their faces."

> I asked a focal subject about these men.
>
> I call them "vets." They were in the war I guess, Korea, and in the 'Nam too. Many of them use to hang out in the streets. During the winter, they were brought into the shelter.

I asked the focal subject to talk about the street homeless.

> I never really think about it. I saw a homeless man all piled together with his stuff in the subway tunnel. It was cold like a "mutha." I told the cops but the man told them to arrest him or to leave him alone. He said he was scared to sleep in the shelter. Those men don't belong in the shelter, though, they don't want to get help. They just want to be left alone. The shelter isn't for everybody.

With the boundaries of personal space shifting as the homeless began to be seen as threats to public sensibilities, if not the public order, definitions of public and private spaces were also changing. These changes were part of the discourse on shelterization.

> I would leave home in the morning looking for a job and when I got back in the afternoon, I was hungry like a "mutha." One time, my grandmother said not to come back home without a job. She said if they could come from overseas to find work she knew I could because I've been here all my life. So I didn't go back because I wanted to eat the little food that she did have. First, I slept on the subway. I wasn't dirty and I looked down on the homeless like everybody else. They have a public bath over in Manhattan so I washed. Sometimes I would just walk and eat at different soup kitchens. I slept in the park, in the doorways. It was near Thanksgiving when I came here, of last year.

Urban Homesteaders

Jencks's study of the homeless (1994) ignored the fact that many economically dislocated sheltered homeless men in urban areas had limited experience as city dwellers. My impressions were that some homeless persons found their personal adaptations to city spaces were made easier *because* they were relatively recent arrivals to the "Big Apple." From rural areas, and small towns, inmates' backgrounds did not make them strangers to sleeping in open areas on the ground. In the 1990s, homeless persons often represented the first or second generation of post-

World War II migrants from southern farms. Sleeping outside in natural surroundings, or coaxed inside to shelters, was not as aberrant to many of these migrants. The stereotypical anonymity of urban relationships that policymakers took for granted did not always exist among the shelterized homeless. At the bottom of the proverbial half-filled glass, homeless inmates settled. It may be that prisonization was a coagulating condition that formed the sediment of shelterization. Rossi's (1989) surveys are very helpful in moving us towards understanding the demographic question of migration.

> Today's Chicago homeless are clearly not the migratory workers who inhabited the Skid Row of history. Most have been Chicagoans for some time and have a personal history in Chicago that reaches back a number of years. At the same time, the homeless were also [more] likely to be migrants than other Chicagoans: 11% have lived in Chicago less than one year, whereas only 7% of Chicagoans generally have lived there less than five years.

A major difference between the "prisonized-shelterized" inmates and the average citizen for whom public policy was designed was that the inmates have little political influence. Their dislocations from the economy had bracketed them as a special population. Hence, there was no focus on their needs. A public administrator commented:

> They like that life. We may not understand how but if they did not like it they would not accept it. Everybody knows that the squeaky wheel gets the oil. The market will take care of it. They smile more than you and me. Don't take it so seriously. They have never had it so good as in the shelter.

My study challenged apparent policy assumptions that inmates would not adapt to impersonal and anonymous public spaces unless they liked it, and that the public

would remain indifferent if they did. It was not from the physical structure of the shelter that inmates gained belongingness, it was from the feedback they received from each other.

The More We Get Together

Inmates could be counted on to assemble quickly for many reasons, but the arrival of evangelists from local storefront churches was always a sure one. Sometimes, the "saints" brought "goodies," southern fried foods, and homemade cakes and pies left over from Sunday services. Many of these evangelists were downgraded in the black middle-class community as "jacklegged preachers." Much like the rural itinerant preachers whom some had known "down home," many of the visiting "prophets" and "bishops" had served long prison sentences. "Shad Rack," an evangelist who made regular appearances, preached to a group of assembled inmates:

> As children, you learned that foxes and rabbits have holes in the ground to rest, and that the Son of God had no place to lay His head. Hold your heads up. God was homeless too. He was crucified but in three days he came back to prove to you that the *tombs* [the city jail] was not the end. When you were a child, you spoke like a child, but now that you are men, it time to put away childish things.

An inmate entered the room, and winked, signaling that something was going on in a different part of the shelter. A new "drop" of crack had been made and for those with some "ducats," it was time to "re-up." Several men quietly got up and left while others waited; it was almost dinner time. Inmates were shrewd in using whatever cover was convenient and available to take care of their business. In the shelter community their visibility was optional. They could be "seen or not seen," as

Anderson explained, "depending on who wanted what." Personal identities were subordinated to status group membership. The inmate who said, "I just go with the flow, that's all," was an example of the merger between the person and the group about which Berman wrote.

> The view of nature which predominated in the West down to the even of the Scientific Revolution was that of an enchanted world. Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment. The cosmos was a place of belongingness. This type of consciousness [that] I shall call "participating consciousness" involves merger, or identification with one's surroundings, and bespeaks a psychic wholeness that has long since passed. . . .

Shelterization held together many inmates who believed that the political succession of racial minorities would improve their personal situations. Thinking about themselves as group members, "we are all black," some inmates expected support in the shelter from blacks who were influential. These inmates appeared "rational."

"I am here because I am disadvantaged. I am going to get an apartment from this." Subtle processes of shelterization that promoted these inmates' identification with dilapidated city property were not recognized. Attempts at solidarity among shelterized peer groups disassociated inmates from neighborhood political and economic associations. Shelterization was, as middle income people assumed, ". . . better than being on the streets." What appeared to be sympathy for the sheltered homeless was therefore debilitating because the shelter was neither a house nor a home.

By 1990, I had compiled several pages of notes about inmates' complaints about shelter conditions. Among even the most manipulative hustlers and hoodlums, I found self-selected leaders expressing their restlessness with shelter conditions. I recorded several violent episodes that grew out of conflicts that inmates had "to take to the wall." These conflicts festered among staff members who wanted to advance their careers with the city and inmates who wanted concessions in their living conditions. Speaking directly to a theme of this study, Berman says, "Perhaps nothing is more symptomatic of this general malaise that the inability of the industrial economies to provide meaningful work."

Among most African-Americans who work, the social assemblage of the church, more than the workplace, is the source of meaning. Social redemption by the church rationalized economic shortages among lower-class blacks. Meaningful work for black men seeking it in urban areas since 1950 had never been plentiful. Among blacks in general, personal greetings had not usually included the kind of status canvassing commonly observed among the white middle class. "What are you doing these days?" was asked to determine how status was to be conferred or denied based on occupation. Thus middle-class rites were ridiculed by ex-prison inmates who ended up in the shelter. Meeting a college graduate who had lived next door to him as a boy, an inmate related this episode:

> He asked me where I worked and I made up something. But then he asked, "What do you do?" I wasn't sure what he meant. "What do I do?" He wanted to find out if he was better than me, I guess. He works but he ain't got a pot to piss in and I ain't got a pot to piss in. But he was always trying to outdo somebody, trying to be white.

Without adopting an Afrocentric political construction, it is certain that the importation of Africans to the Americas by "enlightened" Europeans did not eradicate animism from the captives' worldview. An example of this legacy of non-economic—i.e., "irrational"—thinking is popularized by George Gershwin's caricature in his musical *Porgy and Bess*.

> I'se got plenty of nuthin' and nuthin's plenty for me . . . . Well, I'se got the moon, I'se got the stars, I'se got the whole day through. People with plenty of plenty, they just work all the day.

It is difficult to tell whether it is materialism, more than spiritualism, that forms the basis for segmentations among the prisonized-shelterized. Campbell (1989) detailed the brutal desocialization that took place in the "New World" to rid slaves of their original African religions. Somehow the belief in a world beyond the senses of plantation overseers was strongly objectionable to them. Christianity, as imported from Europe, allowed for signs from the world beyond the senses to be detected as wealth. If the blessings of wealth had eluded one, then one had to work harder. To be saved from damnation, one had to be of exemplary character, "blameless," "spotless." Salvation was equated with being "washed as white as snow." Improved personal visibility, of course, was assured through close association with one's owners, especially through "lightening up the black race" through illicit sexual relationships that produced "brown" and "high yellow" offspring.

Many blacks never experienced the upward mobility, or respect, associated with a free market, or other benefits of capitalism. Consequently, pre-scientific, non-economic ideas were kept alive in prisons and rewired through the circuitry of

shelterization. These ideas hold that there exist basic human rights unrelated to dislocations in the market. I asked an inmate what he thought about the idea that there were just too many people in the world. He looked curiously amused and laughed, "You mean there aren't enough shelters for everybody?"

Ethnography allows this process of ideological rewiring to be illuminated. Occult beliefs that occupy homeless men in the abandoned library of an abandoned armory, however, are more than throwbacks to feudalism or animism. They are new efforts to re-create outmoded models of connectedness. Frayed remnants of damaged group experiences survived in dimly lit corners of the abandoned fortresses we know as homeless shelters. For those for whom the marketplace and the penitentiary have no room, images of the slave plantation are quietly conjured. In the shadows of the twenty-first century, seduced by the promises of the cybernetics revolution, Berman's visions may seem absurd to the outsider, but I was inside.

> The prevailing scientific methods are clearly insufficient because they leave the observer and his entire range of behavior out of the investigation. The research undertaken by a future holistic science would take incompleteness and circuitry as axioms; would seek to uncover the cybernetic properties of a situation while including the human investigator in the circuit being studied.

The mounting literature on the cybernetic revolution agrees that the job, as the industrial revolution creates new means of getting work done, is becoming irrelevant. In addition, cybernetics is leading to the collapse of normative separations between public and private spaces, e.g., Internet piracy. And if there is a diminishing supply of the jobs by which private property traditionally has been acquired, how is public property to be understood? It is no wonder then that for most of the men I observed

issues of the debilitation of dependencies on prisons and shelters had been resolved. For them no option other than dependency existed. Inmates have started to go beyond these issues. In a memorable interview, a man who had been in and out of shelters for more than a decade said:

> Why we be trying to rob each other? None of us got shit. We're all we got. We got to watch each other's back. What it look like for the homeless to rob the homeless?

Jencks's commentary appears responsive to this inmate's question:

> In debates of this kind one needs to distinguish between scientific and political numbers. This distinction has nothing to do with accuracy. Scientific numbers are often wrong, and political numbers are often right. But scientific numbers are accompanied by enough documentation so you can tell who counted what, whereas political numbers are not.

Jencks defined homelessness as:

> Everyone who slept in a public space or shelter during a given week, and I treat welfare hotels as a species of shelter. I ignore people who are in jails . . . concentrating on the people whose existence most worries the public.

Typical shelter inmates are the people who most worry the public. They are black, in their prime, impoverished, substance abusers, and hold attitudes of indifference for both their own material interests and those of others. An example of the rapping rhyming that allowed inmates to get through the day ran: "Here I is, ain't no tears! Just out here with no fear . . . and I don't bit more care. . . ." The rapping rhyming reduced stress and allowed inmates to show their creativity and worth as "somebodies." What is missing is the do-woping, i.e., singing in harmony, without

accompaniment, that characterized the Fifties. I asked an inmate if it were not unusual for "us" to spend time together without singing.

> That's a generational thing. The younger guys try to find out what's up with the older crew so that they can be "down" with it. These days the older guys ain't got time for that, so they take the lead from the younger ones. The older guys been in prison so much, they don't be down with a lot of stuff. The new crew ain't got it together yet, except for "gangsta rap," like one member shooting or stabbing another.

My understanding was that "gangsta rap" involves more soloing, "ego tripping," in which each performer takes turns rapping rhythm, while the others look on until it is time to compete with the last performer. Nonetheless, "gangsta rap" is interactional in that inmates acting out meaning that is understood among themselves. Consequently, gangsta rap differs from "do-woping" among street corner men in the 1950s and 1960s in that do-woping caused groups of men to harmonize by listening to the lead and blending their voices with his. To blend, the performers had to move closer together, listen to the leader and to the others in order to match or contrast their voices. That is, gangsta rap signalized the social distance that the inmates had learned to expect and still make meaning. Finally, do wop was smooth, and usually about love themes. "Gangsta rap is a hoodlum kind of thing. It's about shooting a no good MF."

Power of the "Bloods"

Even the merest semblance of organization among the prisonized-shelterized implies there was some influence to get things done that was decided by the inmates. The social interactions that structure individual choices in the shelter imply a power

distribution on the bottom. The potential productivity of this power has been documented in the history of "poor people movements," as in Piven and Cloward's *Regulating the Poor: The Function of Social Welfare* (1971), Susan Yeich's *The Politics of Ending Homelessness* (1994), and MacLeod's *Ain't No Makin'* (1987).

MacLeod's quote of Willis in *Learning to Labor* is especially relevant in this chapter to understand how even the search for power on the bottom continued to imitate the search for meaning among those with addresses in the American mainstream. Willis writes that the working class does not have a structurally based vested interest in mystifying itself, but in the United States, at least, the working class is so fragmented that only the lowest strata have no use for ideology. For the poorest segments of the population, both white and black, the only defense against the dominant ideology is to turn it on its head and attempt to salvage as much dignity as possible via the redefined criteria for success. This is a struggle that will never be completely won, for the judgments of the dominant culture are capable of piercing the thickest individual or collective shells. Willis captures the issue:

> One of the time-honoured principles of cultural and social organization in this country as it is enacted and understood at the subjective level is that of "them" and "us." That the term "them" survives in "us" is usually overlooked. Even the most "us" group has a little of "them" inside. Ideology is the "them" in "us."

The impact of the history of African-Americans on their over-representation in the prison-shelter circuit has not been apparent in analyses of the current epidemic of homelessness. To describe these men from the point of view of the self that they present in everyday life (Goffman, 1961), without some interpretation from somebody

inside would be to "fall for the okeydoke," that is, to be tricked. The inability to distinguish "fronting" behavior from the self "that be real" when they are not "shucking and jiving" is a failure to enter inmates' perceptual fields. This lack of privacy in a congregate shelter was described:

> Here, they don't have a room for you to go and shut the door and just be real. You have to always be watching your back about something. People you hang with don't always care about you for yourself. Sometimes people you done wrong are the ones who do the looking out for you. If you go back to the joint you have to have a good report card. People be waiting to know are you going to be able [to] help out with the business when you get back. If you don't have visitors coming to visit you then, you ain't as much help, either.

Ex-prison inmates who could not read or write had learned to remember long intricate legal procedures. One inmate said, "When I hear something once, I can repeat it word for word." This skill is demonstrated by "jiving," "harmonizing," and "lying." Meaning is often communicated through "just bullshittin' 'round," or "playing the fool." The meaning was inseparable from the process of making it. Unlike the analytical requirements of western science that is able to atomize matter, the shelterized inmates' approach is more intersubjective (Berman, 1984). Inmates did not always think of themselves as separate individuals, but as integral parts of settings. A common example of this merger of self with objects is found in references to inmates' personal information being recorded in the computer.

> You can't get a bed in the shelter unless they put you in the computer first. If you are not in the computer, you are not here legally, really.

Another example of the almost inseparability of inmates from their "cliques" is explained by this anecdote:

> In prison cliques you have real standup guys. When something breaks out, they stand together. You don't postpone it or have a meeting about it. You deal with it right then and there. The guys who can't fight or protect themselves get sent to PC [protective custody].
>
> Sometimes an inmate will put a note in the warden's box saying another inmate's life is in danger. The warden sends the guards to place you in PC. Most standup guys threatened the guards if they set foot in their cells. Everybody believes that you if you'll let them place you in a PC that you are a punk, weak.
>
> To be a stand up guy, you have to be ready to fight the guards. Now they are going to club you down with those nightsticks while they are taking you down that corridor. But it's better for them to beat your ass once that for the inmates to treat you like you're punk.

Another example of inseparability in prisonization-shelterization is the fact of circumscribed relationships within a same-sex institution. Thus, retreat to the shelter often involves retreat from normative sexual interactions.

Sexual Economy

On the bottom, in the shelter, where there were few chances to become part of the production of a booming economy, non-economic incentives were powerful in defining and giving meaning to social situations. Chancer, in *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life: The Dynamics of Power and Powerlessness* (1992), provided a rare sociological analysis of how sexual sadomasochism has become one of many expressions of male dominance in everyday life in America. Seen from Chancer's clinical sociological perspective, prisonization can be described as a sadomasochistic reaction of public administrators to the well-documented epidemic of prison and shelter overcrowding, as well as the increasing use of other public and private spaces

as a human habitat. Sadomasochism is conceptually useful in providing a framework to analyze "relations of domination and subordination that runs [*sic.*] the gamut of the behavioral spectrum." Because prisons and shelters are same-sex facilities, the concept of sadomasochism's usual association with sex conceptualizes the problems of homelessness in the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, crack use, and family violence (Johnson & Dunlap, 1994). I have used the hyphenated phrase "prisonization-shelterization" to describe life in a "hybrid public institution" (Gounis, 1993). Prisonization-shelterization has become a highly-entrenched political structure that recycles a preponderance of African Americans. As an "inside" observer, I found that

> . . . even though the word *masochism* has been used very problematically (that is, blaming the victim by accepting the simplistic definition of the masochist as taking pleasure in pain), it implies a dynamics in which the masochist has a choice to participate or not.

My empirical observations of prisonization-shelterization may be reduced to Chancer's theoretical, abstract references to "sadomasochism."

> The idea of sadomasochism—and the open acknowledgement of one's own sadistic or masochistic inclinations—immediately suggests agents, existential subjects, who act out a dynamic that is not determined or static. . . . Sadomasochism's own fluidity thus makes the masochist's victimization not inevitable, but an alterable social fact. The experience of victimization is thus confronted straight on, noneuphemistically, so that change becomes an authentic possibility.

Chancer's social interactional analysis allows for the racial and cultural; characteristics of the sheltered inmates that I observed:

> It is not only workplace experiences that are stratified into layers of power and powerlessness, but racial, ethnic, and gender relations as well. Thus, as often noted, racism may comfort poor and working class whites in their powerlessness; sexism and homophobia may substitute for the anger a poor white or person of color may really feel;

> children may become the butt of their parents' social ire: in each case, discomfiture about one's own powerlessness is displaced into the satisfaction found in possessing some degree of greater power relative to others.

"Bre'r Rabbit

Using the preceding presentation of Chancer's sadomasochism thesis as applied to analyzing the prisonized-shelterized, the abuse of crack cocaine in the shelter may be said to be self-inflicted masochism that leads to subordination and victimization. The self-inflicted pain of crack abuse has been described among crack users as "stuck on stupid," and may be equated with masturbation.

As Mr. Z. left my interview, "Old Yankee" asked, "what does he know? He just got here. Where you from yourself, anyway?" From his expression it was obvious that he was about to have some fun. "You ever heard about the rabbit and the tar baby?" he asked. This was a typical way of getting "in," or setting me up. It was his way of letting me know that he had some "smarts," that he had "been around." I nodded eagerly, waiting to hear his version.

> Then, you know this rabbit stopped to chat with what he figured was a baby sitting alongside the road. When the tarbaby didn't say nothing, the rabbit got mad. Striking him once, the rabbit's right hand got caught in the miry tar; striking him twice, he couldn't move his left hand; kicking with the left foot and then the right, the rabbit had gotten all stuck. He got caught by a hunter hiding under a bush. Now that teaches you not to stop and talk to everybody 'less you want to get stuck.

We both laughed. He had given a new twist to a tale that slaves used to tell their toddling masters. We both could see some meaning related to the shelter's seduction of inmates into patterned interactions.

I repeated the "Bre'r Rabbit and the Tarbaby" tale in a focus group. The younger inmate, a "new jack," wanted to know how a rabbit could talk. He knew there was a message to be decoded, but his logic did not lead him anywhere. Yet nobody laughed at the inmate's lack of imagination and education. I asked the group,

> Why did the quick rabbit stop to talk to a lone baby alongside the road? Did the rabbit needs glasses to see the trap? Since there was no movement, no sounds, no commercial. Why did the rabbit get stuck playing 'round with a trap? Isolated in the backwoods, did the rabbit thing that he had found his chance to slow down and relax. Maybe he thought that he did not have to be on guard against buying something he did not want.

More incredulously than before, the new jack repeated, "A talking rabbit?" His friend, a more experienced hoodlum, asked impatiently,

> So what be's with this rabbit thang? That rabbit must've been some kind of freak stuck on stupid.

"Stuck on stupid" described the physical fixation that froze crackheads who stood in one spot for several minutes. Sexual preoccupations, indulgences and intimidations ranked only slightly behind crack use and violence as the points of focus for most men in the shelter. New jacks, freshly released from prison and paroled to the shelter were especially likely to be sexually assaulted. An experienced inmate who had been in and out of the Atlantic Avenue Men's Shelter described the problem with being a new jack as a problem of powerlessness.

> Like they don't know nobody. Nobody really knows them, really, even tho' they may have been in the joint. How could they be in jail and not know some of the men here? They may have been in PC [protective custody]. To be in PC means you are a no-no. You are an untouchable. If you can't fight, you can't stand up. Nobody wants you in their crew. It's the same in the shelter. You have to hang in with a crew or it's more dangerous. You don't stay here like that.

Studies of economic insufficiencies among shelterized men who previously had been socialized to prisons have overlooked the obvious fact that economics is not the only explanation of behavior. Sexuality, often disguised in the form of violent assaults, was another indication that inmates were social beings in need of social responses—even when these men were warehoused in an abandoned armory.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING MEANING: THE END OF DRIFT

In previous chapters, I cited some factors I found keeping homeless men powerless and in their politically assigned places. In this chapter, I present evidence that suggests that the adaptations of extremely poor persons to the bottom rungs of the community are more than "disaffiliations" or "drop outs" from the mainstream. Among the men I studied, treks between prisons and shelters accumulate experiences for them that become amassed as realities in a changed economy. My findings are in accord with David Wagner's theme of resistance in a homeless community.

> The subjects I have studied remind us that the problems of the poor are not simply insufficient work, insufficient housing, and insufficient social benefits, but also include the structure of institutions such as the workplace and government services. More minimum wage jobs at workplaces at which employers completely dominate unorganized employees, more wretched flophouses from which landlords make large profits from the poor, and more service workers to run large warehouse shelters are clearly not answers to the problems of the poor. The vast power of employers, landlords, and government officials over the poor was resented as much by our subjects as was the lack of affordable housing, good jobs, and adequate social benefits.

The history of the newly emergent social groups I described as prisonized-shelterized is documented in this chapter. Before social scientists and policy analysts, in association with the media, drew attention to the homeless, "drift" existed as a less

structured, less visible, and unorganized group of former workers dependent on a welfare state. Moore (1995) affirmed that:

> The resources—external and internal—to deal with these problems, and those caused by widespread unemployment, have been disappearing since the late 1970s. Though most inner city communities exhibit vigorous self-help efforts—through churches and ethnic organizations—bootstrapping is very difficult for them. . . . Meanwhile, a steady flow of political demagoguery stigmatizes the poorest African Americans and Latinos, groups with little capacity for political influence.
>
> But, paradoxically, these very changes make the neighborhood a more salient feature of life for inner-city residents. . . . The gradual informalization of the labor market places more emphasis on friendship and kinship networks. . . . The rise in racist rhetoric from the larger society combines with economic deprivation to revitalize and deepen the defensive coping strategies that people of color have developed over the centuries.

In the largest "temporary emergency" shelter for men in New York City, the latest "defensive coping strategies" took the form of retreats to a shelter, which surreptitiously became an extension of the criminal justice system. Rossi (1989), Jencks (1994), and others have documented that inmates expected that the shelter would provide "freedom" just as the prison provided punishment. Consequently, policies releasing prisonized inmates to the subculture of the shelter put inmates in what their street ways defined as the "okeydoke." The okeydoke is a predicament not of one's making. That term, denoting awareness of having been "tricked" or "gotten over on," is a rationalization for many of their failed actions. Taking refuge in what Heavy called a "free hotel," the shelter gives inmates a roof overhead, "three hots and a cot," belongingness, and a short cut back to prison. It also gives many of them

a sense that they are being rewarded, inadequately perhaps, but nonetheless getting more than they are giving.

I observed inmates coming to accept the line from Wordworth's "Humanity" that "Stone walls *do* a prison make, but not a *slave.*" My subjects are predominantly homeless residents who were released from prison with consiousness of their cultural heritage as slaves. Hence, my reference to *ex-prisoners*, and not to *former* prisoners is deliberate, and represents more than semantics.[1]

Former prisoners presumably become resocialized from processes of prisonization and gain a modicum of status in the larger community. If these men enter the shelter, they usually leave within the first three months (Rossi, 1989), and thus do not become shelterized, at least not immediately upon release from prison. Resocialization is facilitated by associations in the community among family, friends, and often in places of employment. However, release to the shelter of ex-prisoners helps these men preserve what meager resources they have.

Extremely poor black men are socialized into a community where reparation for centuries of unpaid labor during slavery is an unsettled political issue. Release from prison is part of what many ex-prison inmates think of as "getting paid." This "cultural" perspective conflicts with normative ideas that the penalties for crime are atonements for criminal violations. Among black Americans, therefore, politically

---

[1]A colleague points out that saying "ex-prisoner" rather than "former prisoner" makes a sad kind of sense, because these men's status as *people-who-have-been-incarcerated* is an integral part of their identity, both vis-à-vis the other inmates of the shelter, and vis-à-vis the larger society.

instigated penalties for many crimes are perceived not as the result of moral failure but of standing up to the system, i.e., the inmates are political prisoners.

In interviews, I collected information that either directly or indirectly supports the contention that shelterization helps structure meaning for men who have no rationale for their lack of productivity. "Bro'Man" is one example of a shelter resident who has been "in and out of the shelter" for more than five years. By the time I met him, he had begun thinking about himself as someone who had squandered his time and resources. His interactions with others in frequent face-to-face contacts reinforced this perception, just as those interactions also helped to define his options. I found him waiting for dinner in a room about 9' x 12' with about thirty-five other men. The temperature was about 85 humid degrees. Although there is a 'rec' room where residents watch television and another room where GED classes are held, and still other men wait in front of the Armory for dinner, this small room provided no activity. I stood in the middle of the floor and announced that I was looking for residents from the drill floor to interview for one hour and I would pay five dollars per interview. Several men raised their hands. The following is excerpted from my interview with "Bro'Man," an Army veteran with one and half semesters at a local community college.

> I've been in jail from one to six months. Never no longer than six months, but I been to jail a lot. I'd say that I am a fuck up because I've messed up a lot. In here, I spend most of my time with N.A., and A.A. I have had lots of jobs. On my last job, I saved a man's life like I learned in the Army. I was a porter in a fancy restaurant. This guy started choking. I grabbed him from behind and pulled up on his waist to force the food out of his throat. Later some of the employees got Christmas bonuses. I only got my regular pay. I guess I had not been

> there long enough. I found out that the customer sent a check to me for two hundred dollars which I never got. I got mine. I'm going to get mine. How? That's my business. . . . I'm here because I can't live up to what my relatives expect from me. I have this drug problem. I know I have potential. Will this [interview] take long? I have a meeting to go to after I eat, you want to come?

I went to the meeting where a retired resident discussed complaints about the shelter director. The speaker spent much of his time in a labor union office, and the men listened to him because they believed he had connections. He also brought "free food" to them after the union meetings. The inmates' interactions in various group activities like this meeting created an understanding among these homeless single adults that sometimes they could negotiate (and perhaps ameliorate) many of the conditions under which they lived. I found no basis for Jencks' claim that shelter improvements cause shelterization. Stabilization of relationships within an inmate organization, however, does help account for increases in shelter populations and the lengthening of inmates' stays.

A recurring theme among inmates was that the shelter stifled their disappointment for not having gotten what they thought they were entitled to. Because they were no longer incarcerated, they had expected to be able to earn the freedom, and the respect the community said a person deserved. Accumulated grievances of focal leaders, for example, could be noticed to lead them to identify with each other around the feeling that, "We are all in this shit together." Frustrated by the pestering illusions of freedom, A.J. fumed:

> I mean it when I say I'd rather be in prison than in the shelter. There's no freedom here. They want you to kiss ass, brown nose and all that

> shit. For what? A piece of chicken?. They are supposed to give that to you anyway.

Another inmate said that he was a part of a group that was trying to make the shelter better. He expected that he would soon get a job in the shelter because more ex-prison inmates were expected to be placed in the shelter.

> They got them sleeping three in a cell at Sing Sing, and out on Rikers Island, the guards are going to strike because they need protection. They want to be cops but they ain't no power really, and they only make $6.00 an hour.

The elaboration of primary-group ties led to organized crews or gangs. To me, many of these efforts seemed reminiscent of the formative years of the student movement, thirty years ago. Few of the older inmates said they actually had participated in the mass demonstrations of the Sixties and Seventies. In some focus groups, however, one "pop" did get the attention of a few hoodlums when he talked about discrimination in public accommodations "down South." Even so, many of these men who had spent much of their lives institutionalized expected that the forces which appeared to be "making it better for us black people," would have some personal benefit. Many "pops" and younger residents believed that was progress, by which they meant being able "to just get over". Interpretations of their personal situations were based on what they understood about traditional Protestantism. These ideas kept many of the sheltered homeless defining their situations as ones where they expected to be able to assume personal responsibility for their distress. Many of the younger men, however, believed they were in the shelter to take advantage of

opportunities to scam or simply because of a "beef with the cops." "They got me with a gram of crack."

The increased release of felons to the shelter, the crack epidemic, and the loss of jobs have brought together men whose movement from "client drift" to shelterization appears to be undetectable by survey methods like Rossi's comprehensive study *Down and Out In America, The Origins of Homelessness* (1988). However, more recent investigations like Susan Yeich's *The Politics of Ending Homelessness* (1994) look at how general, *macro* forces are linked with individual, *micro,* effects. Yeich writes:

> As Barlett and Steele (1992) described it, the economy operates under the framework of a "government rule book," a system of rewards and penalties set by Congress and the president that influences business behavior and, in turn, has profound effects on the lives of all individuals within the system. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the rule book was dramatically altered to serve the interests of the privileged few at the expense of all others (Barlett & Steele, 1992). [T]here is no question that government policies worked in conjunction with structural economic changes to greatly intensify the inequitable distribution of wealth and to encourage the gentrification of cities.

In the following analysis, I compare my observations of the emergence of prisonization-shelterization as a process in one shelter with an administrative report investigating "client drift" in another.

The Structure of Drift

The problem of drift in public shelters was the focus of a comprehensive report by the New York City Office of Policy and Program Development. My study of shelterization was conducted just as city administrators were replacing "drift" as a

principal concern of people seeking shelter care. In its place, policy analysts and planners identified "shelterization." Janice M. Hirota, Ph.D., an anthropologist, was the Project Director of the report *Life and Work In City Shelters*. In that report, a major finding was the exploration of:

> A pervasive social psychological characteristic of the resident population, one not captured in available statistics, but one with broad service implications. This is the phenomenon of drift. . . . Drift means a basic lack of self direction. Drift, found among all social groups, is more widespread in some groups than others. . . . As the Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (1990) indicated, the adult shelter system has undergone extensive transformation both in goals and in operations over the past decade. To be explored, confronted, and resolved are such matters as who comprise the homeless populations. Even as the transformation process is underway, then, it is important to continue assessing what life is like in shelters.

City analysts studied their clients' behavior as operating on a dimension separated from the "transformation processes underway." Shelter residents were investigated as objects, not as actors becoming aware of their options, and moving to enhance their interests. This dissertation challenges that static, passive view of the sheltered homeless. The emergent order that inmates negotiated in the Atlantic Bedford Men's Shelter is an adaptation not merely to an abandoned armory, but to a political process. It "takes to the wall" unresolved grievances in the black American community with historical impact on the work ethic to which practically all segments of Americans agree: Human beings have the right to a job.

In her analysis, Hirota's report described "drift" as essentially individualistic. By way of contrast, in this dissertation, I contend that an investigation of the process I call prisonization-shelterization can expand our understanding of collective behavior in

the post-civil rights era. It is a well known and well-documented fact of American history that:

> Blacks [have] usually been the victims of collective behavior. They [have] been terrorized by lynch mobs, vigilante groups, and gangs of street toughs, and the violence directed against them has helped maintain their position as a separate caste in American society. But in the Chicago riot, as in other riots that took place about the same time, blacks stood their ground and fought back. And out of the fighting came a heightened sense of their own power and a determination not to allow themselves to be treated as inferior. (Kornblum, 1988, p.230)

The exploitation of homeless men in New York City's largest shelter is one example of the disorganization of black Americans movement for fair and equal treatment. The fact that most of the sheltered homeless are single, black men addicted to drugs, at the same time as large numbers of blacks are now part of the mainstream transforms traditional racial conflicts into class conflicts. However, the underlying collective behavioral dynamics is a question of classification not substance. This point was made clear when a security guard ended our conversation by referring to "the clam before the storm" because "You can't keep human beings down all the time. People get sick and tired of being sick and tired sometimes."

Reclassifying the behavior of an escalating number of people from drift to shelterization carries a political payoff. It allows the incidence of "client drift" to be reported as decreasing so "services and programs" may be justified. I am reminded of the shelter manager who was characterized by Heavy,

> He makes you feel bad if you ask him something. If you didn't have problem before, after talking to him you do. He must have it made with somebody somewhere else. The men say he doesn't want to help. Yea, he's the one who asked, "Who you the hell do you think I am, a goddamned doctor, or something?

A strong and recurring theme in my notes is that shelterized inmates are often more politically sophisticated than I had imagined, if for no other reason than they expect "something for something." Focal leaders, certainly, routinely asked, "What's in it for me?" Observations like these led Gounis (1993) to call the shelter "a hybrid social institution." It combines a pragmatic response to the shrinking supply of flop houses with the need to relieve the overcrowding of prisons and relief rolls, and to accommodate dejobbing. Like any other social order, the order in the shelter is the result of negotiations among key social actors.

By the end of my field investigation, the process "shelterization" had been identified as a major issue by social scientists and service providers. Attention to the increasing process of shelterization was the beginning of the end of an emphasis on drift and meaningless inmate behavior.

Politically constructed "services" require "clients," and the "prisonized-sheltered" are aware of this. I looked for the patterned interactions by which "clients" became "inmates." In describing the problems that the other parties, i.e., the helping professionals, had in these negotiations, Hirota commented:

> The programmatic emphasis in the shelter on rehabilitation means that staff find clients with drifting behavior extremely difficult to serve. Certainly there are sharp limits to the impact of current services when clients resist, for example, developing plans, budgeting, following up on referrals, or committing themselves to programs. Given caseworkers' occupational orientation, institutional mandate, heavy caseloads, and the voluntary nature of services, the inclination to focus on responsive, rather than non-responsive, clients is not surprising. There are neither institutional nor professional rewards for pouring energy into a client who will not reciprocate; moreover, it does not seem reasonable to make efforts if one has other troubled clients who will take action. If a client is generally not disruptive, caseworkers

> hesitate to do anything that might endanger a client's stay in the shelter. For at least some drifting clients, this means extended shelter stays.

Inmates whose decisions led them to become "clients" were relatively more passive in their acceptance of "services". Estranged from their families, "prisonized-shelterized," sons and fathers, needed the setting, and the affirmations the shelter accommodated for their powerlessness. As a public institution, the city had a commitment to the maintenance of services and clients. Hirota understood this city function but left the issue of the reproduction of services, or "power," essentially unaddressed. Gans (1996, p.175) alluded to this phenomenon:

> By being thought undeserving, the stigmatized poor can be blamed for virtually any shortcoming of everyday life which can be credibly ascribed to them.

The general public, policy analysts, and others, defined dependent populations according to their commitment to the Protestant Ethic, as expressed by willingness to work. Hirota wrote:

> As it happens, clients frequently raise the topic of work at nine-month reviews. This occurs for a variety of reasons, including a determined desire to find a job; an assumption that when shelter staff ask about the future, they are really asking about work, an effort to appear cooperative and sincere; and a desire to get a job rather than, for example, enter a drug program.

Often staff played their roles in such a way that regulations about getting a job were not taken seriously. However, Hirota's formal obligations made it irrelevant for her to explore the alternatives to unemployment among inmates who were "difficult" and "resist" services. There was no acknowledgment that inmates were acting on their perceptions of power in the shelter; that they were failing to comply with official

regulations and had, in fact, negotiated an informal order in the public facility. The problem public administrators faced dealing with this informally negotiated order was not unlike what an inmate said about the merits of being "cool," that is:

> Waiting for the right time to make your move is hard. Keeping cool and not being a fool takes work. You know we are creative. You can rhyme and make sense. You can't be a tool when you're cool-fool. See. Just get your act right and you won't be absurd. The deal is "on" at the end of your tongue. The bible says so.

Perceptions of inmates' disaffiliation from the mainstream became so prevalent that the first objective of shelter policy was to describe exactly who the dependent homeless were. However, among the "regulars" in the shelter, there are inmates who are able to articulate their loses as downward mobility, not unlike some members of the middle class. For example, Newman, in *Falling From Grace, The Experience of Downward Mobility in the American Middle Class* (1988), made this point forcefully.

> Longtime members of the middle class . . . suddenly find everything they have worked to achieve . . . slipping through their fingers. And despite sustained efforts to reverse this slide, many discover there is little they can do to block their descent.

One thing that is happening on the bottom of the wealthiest society in the world is that the richest are getting richer and the poorest poorer. Among black Americans, over the past twenty-five years:

> Despite its very evident prosperity, much of America's black middle class is in excruciating pain. Again and again, I heard the same plaintive declaration—"I have done everything I was supposed to do. I have stayed out of trouble with the law, gone to the right schools, and worked myself nearly to death. What more do they want? . . . Why am I still not allowed to aspire to the same things every white person in America takes as a birthright? Why, when I most want to be seen, am I suddenly rendered invisible?"

That quotation is taken from the introduction to Ellis Cose's book, *The Rage of a Privileged Class-Why Are Middle-Class Blacks Angry? Why Should America Care?* Cose is a black journalist and probably middle class. I use that quotation to suggest why I am concerned with the invisible black homeless in light of the generally accepted belief that America is a land of opportunity for people who work hard and conform to basic norms. After two years of gaining subjective awareness of how prisonized-shelterized men make meaning on the bottom of a rich, democratic society, it should not surprise the alert and concerned to find that sheltered status groups, or, to put it plainly, criminally addicted gangs of homeless felons, are looking to themselves because they too do not know what could be expected of them.

Gangs at the Bottom

Prisonized-shelterized inmates are not, in the main, aimless drifters. Their presence in the shelter is a means to maintain the status which in specific, face-to-face interactions gives them personal direction. This personal direction led to group formations and maintenance. Hirota's study of drift asked:

> To what extent do the organizational structures and programs that shelters currently provide to clients "play into," that is, intermesh with and help to bolster the social psychology of drift? Conversely, to what extent do such organizational structures and programs help clients to make choices that will break the pattern of drift and thus discourage them to take control of their own lives?

This ethnography describes the effects of an organizational structure that replaced the dehumanizing impact of labor market exclusion. In its place, prisonized-shelterized inmates innovated the achievement of their social needs for belongingness.

These social needs appeared stronger than sanctions against committing acts leading to arrests and prison. "Hoodlums," moving in and out of prisons to shelters were committed to the notion that, "They [oppressed] my father and my grandfathers, but I be damned if they gonna do it to me."

Shelterization incorporates more than the social problems of those temporarily in need of housing due to transitions in the economy that "dejobbed" them. The shelter provides more than a setting in which prisonized men congregate. Their assemblies in a collective shelter created primary groupings organized and maintained by status group leaders. I share Hagedorn's belief that our observations are reflections of:

> demographic trends, deindustrialization, the continuing problem of race in our cities. . . . Our study, somewhat eclectically, has tried to pick and choose from past theories, while standing firmly on the ground of our own research. Like Thrasher, Suttles, Moore, and others, we believe gangs are spontaneous products of local communities, best understood by analyzing local conditions and group processes. . . . Unlike Cohen and most others, we found gangs to be composed of both juveniles and adults. . . . With Cohen, we believe gangs have a rebellious aspect, but the rebellion, unlike the "class consciousness" or "racial solidarity" predicted by Cloward and Ohlin, is often cynical and directed against the gang's own community. Unlike Whyte, Suttles and others, we find some of today's gangs have become alienated from their neighborhoods and have not played a functional role within them. With Moore, we see "hustling" and petty crime as endemic to minority gangs and their depressed communities under present economic conditions.

Despite the prison-shelter link that clearly joins many inmates, the image of violence and crime associated with the proliferation of shelters in urban areas—critical, if not epidemic or endemic—exaggerate the prevalence of violent, hardened criminals in the shelter. Social perceptions among white and black workers

persist that "homeless" men are depraved primarily because they constitute the bottom of an economic hierarchy. My field investigation provided a qualitative confirmation of Rossi's quantitative observation that the shorter the length of time out of prison and in the shelter, the greater the chance of becoming once again imprisoned. The longer the individual remains out of prison (and in the shelter) the more likely he is to stay out of prison. Such a finding does not demonstrate how, or whether, processes of collective behavior become attached to the perceptions and attitudes of men moving back and forth from prison to the "free community" where I found them becoming shelterized.

Homelessness As Protest

A community activist, whose name sometimes appears in the weekly community newspaper, visited the shelter looking for his younger brother. Somebody told him the brother had been seen around the shelter, and a security guard suggested he speak with me. After our conversation, the activist said he expected that the sheltered homeless, and the conditions in which they lived, could not be kept silent. His own vehicle for becoming "somebody" had been the 1970s movement for community control. He wondered why the inmates had not been more demanding, because "this place is a damn shame."

In Poor People's Movements, Why They Succeed, How They Fail, Piven and Cloward noted that among the social gains that urban dwellers had benefited from in the 1960s was:

> The rise in demands for relief. . . . A great many of the southern black [and white] poor who were driven from agriculture in the 1940's and 1950s did not find jobs in northern cities; extreme hardship rapidly became pervasive. . . . The magnitude of the gain can be measured by the numbers of additional families aided by the additional billions of dollars distributed through the relief system. In 1960 there were only 745,000 families on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rolls and they received payments amounting to less than $1 billion; in 1972 the rolls reached 3 million families and the payments reached $6 billion.

Piven and Cloward argued that the growth in the relief system twenty years ago, especially in the northern cities, was due to the efficacy of social movements. They thus refuted the widespread notion that poor people have historically failed in efforts to organize themselves to gain concessions from our economic system. They note:

> Except for the rioting that swept from one city to another, one would have to conclude . . . that the urban poor were inert. This oddity is all the greater given the tendency of many analysts to define the riots as forms of rebellion; by similar reasoning, the great rise in [shelterization] can be understood as a rebellion by surplus workers [and ex-prison inmates released from prison overcrowding.]

Ethnographic research over the past half century has chronicled the adaptations the descendants of ex-slaves made in America. Essentially, such research has involved studies of men emigrating from southern farms in the hope of finding work in cities (northern and otherwise). The cohorts I saw on the drill floor could have been the descendants of Elijah Anderson's customers at Jelly's Bar and Liquor Store on Chicago's South Side a generation ago. Or as Anderson (1976) said, "Social order exists because people stay in their places, and they do so because other people help keep them there."

A seldom-discussed function of shelters, and the behavior of their inhabitants, is the maintenance of powerlessness at the bottom of the American society. In effect, the shelter population subsidizes the downward mobility of other workers, white and black, by diverting attention from the fact that, "..we need an entirely new approach to the social wage, and more generally, 'welfare policy' (Aronowitz and Difazio, 1994).

> Between the onset of "desocialization" from normative expectations to a "resocialization" beyond "drift," there existed a dimension for which Durkheim's concept "anomie" applies. In this dimension, social forces bracket the disassociation of "poverty" from "class" in America. Consequently, the socialized work aspirations of blacks, Latinos, and disposable whites were contained as dejobbing proceeded.

The shelter is a setting that publicly finances and sanctions downward mobility. Anderson's account of men thirty years ago who had lost jobs was recalled.

When jobs are not available, living up to rules of conduct based on the values of "decency" becomes difficult, and those rules based on residual values become a more viable alternative for maintaining self-esteem. When what might be called "decent" avenues for gaining respect have been exhausted, ex-offenders found it possible to be "somebody" in the outback neighborhoods of the shelter. A prisonized shelter inmate who worked as an "institutional aid commented:

> They act the same way they did in prison. Most of the people confined usually gravitate towards some one who is culturally similar or the same interests. . . . Blacks are the only one who are made up of all colors.

If it is appropriate to say that retreats to homelessness are chosen, it is equally appropriate to say that the shelterization is a more adaptive option than many others

offered by a confused jobless role in a rapidly transforming economy. Calling a former worker an "ex-con" implies more respect than saying he is "laid off" because the former suggests there is an opportunity to start over. Thus, prisonization-shelterization can be perceived as the effective abandonment of rehabilitation and subsequent re-entry into the world of "legitimate workers" as a practical goal. Prisonization-shelterization allows inmates to be compared with their peers of similar status, and eliminates some of the stress created by competition for a diminishing supply of jobs. At the same time, a consciousness of their powerlessness emerges as a recognition of "homelessness." As one inmate put it, "We are all homeless. None us have nothing, and don't look like we gonna get nothing. Ain't no sense fighting each other."

Unlike local neighborhood activists, most inmates are neither oriented, nor prepared, to appeal to the "powers that be" for "redress of grievances." Few inmates made consistent appeals to law to improve their situations. Nor were most of these men associated with well organized advocates for the homeless, or advocates for the poor. Some exceptions to this generalization could be found among the focal leaders. Thus, "Mr. Z.," "A.J.," and "S.F." had more awareness of the promises of the promises and potentialities of group cohesion and solidarity than any of the other inmates. My attention was drawn to them because they appeared to be leaders of the inmates. From interview data, it became apparent that unorganized appeals to shelter staff were ineffective. Traces of organized status group leadership created some influence among sheltered inmates. Because security guards did not need approval of

the inmates to eject individual troublemakers, the relationships the guards had with the focal leaders legitimated the influence of those leaders. Similarly, the guards could allow whomever they wanted to enter or leave the shelter. Residents who were called "shelter shit" or "shelter rats" did not complain, for complaints would deny them even the little that the shelter allowed. The political adroitness of "house gang" members was expressed in only thinly controlled rage. This controlled rage communicated their adeptness as trouble makers. The achievement of this status was expressed by the threats implied in a typical aphorism, "They know not to fuck with me."

S.F.'s influence in the shelter was produced by his contacts with the HIV/AIDS community in and out of the shelter. He had seen many of his friends die from the HIV/AIDS infection, and felt he had to do something, because "no one was telling anybody anything." He was one of several gay rights' advocates who mobilized shelter staff to take some precautions to slow the spread of the AIDS epidemic. Their frequent absences from the shelter to attend meetings about the epidemic kept them in touch with mainstream peers with more efficacy than could be among in their shelterized status groups. S.F. distributed HIV/AIDS prevention information, and his parents visited him occasionally. He told me:

> They didn't want to let me come home and they didn't want to turn their backs against me. They asked me what I needed. Sure, I took their money. They always gave me what I needed. I am not one of those who suffered from not having the things I needed. But they never touched me, like hugging. I was sick one time when I was 11, I wanted my mother and father to just sit and talk to me. My mother would come in and ask if I wanted the channel turned or something. My father had to work.

S.F.'s mother is a public school teacher and his father a salesman. S.F. is one of the few who returned to the inner-city neighborhood where he grew up. He remembers it from before his parents moved to an outlying area. In the shelter he says he has found his mission:

> Nobody asked why they've got so much AIDS, crack and homelessness in here. I speak my mind. This is another way to get rid of us all. I don't know "who's doing who?"

He continued:

> About 60% of the people who were here when I came here are still here. These are the troublemakers. They get their way. They could get you 'coded out' for standing up for what is right. But the house gang can do no wrong. We are both men so we should both respect each other. These guys stay here because they don't have the help they need to get out.

The network among the various status groups keeps inmates aware of each other even when they are not in the shelter. It was unusual when one inmate did not know where to find another.

"He's over at Greenpoint." "Oh, he violated parole."

"You didn't hear about it, he died." "Oh, he was coded 86," meaning the inmate was not allowed to return to the shelter for thirty days.

Bell had been in ABMS for nine months. He had come back to the "hood" from an upstate prison. He had been required to participate in a drug program for 18 months.

> I messed up several times before I was sent away. No, I never robbed nobody; I sold the shit and used up a lot of it myself. Like everybody else, sure, I shorted some bags. If I had killed somebody, I could have gotten the same amount of time. No, I couldn't shoot nobody. Well, I was good with my hands—still am. They have therapy in the joint and

> they have drugs. Any kind you want. Any amount you can pay for. Sure, I got high in there. I got the money somehow. If they found it in your system it was bad for you. So I didn't give a reason to test me.

Bell's appearance was neat and clean. He kept a smile on his face all the time. He smiled even more when anticipating what he would do to a shelter troublemaker:

> They may have to take me beyond the joint. I am not coming back here no more. I can tell you that. No more. Is it true that the city experiment on corpses when there's nobody to claim the body? I know you can sell your blood to them. I know 'cause I sold 'em mine.

Personal Responsibility

Inmates, staff, and my personal observations all agree in describing the shelter as dirty and filthy, overcrowded, dangerous, and exploitative. However, one common core value does exist, and was spelled out by "Heavy."

> Either you take showers or you get out. Period. Enough said. What do I mean? You're not going to be in here dirty and stinking up the place. If somebody think they're going to sleep next to me with bugs, they're got another thought coming. I don't have to do anything. Somebody will turn them over in the bed to give them the message. You have to take a bathe or get out. It's my rule too, the guards can put you out if you are dirty. It's a violation of my space.

Jencks, Hirota, and many members of the employed black community have dismissed the plight of the homeless as failure to assume personal responsibility: "if they would simply stop using alcohol and drugs, clean up and get a job, they could afford housing." As the number of inmates increased in the shelter and in the prison, the impact of mounting social disorders has pitted powerless groups against each other. A split between staff perceptions and inmate perceptions of who is doing

what to whom has emerged. One impact of efforts to "do something" often manifests itself as abstract critiques of social services. For example, Hirota claims:

> There are two divergent philosophical orientations at work among social service staff in the City's shelter system, what might be called a rehabilitative approach and a time-limited out-placement approach. The two approaches take contrary stances toward the delivery of social services:
>
> — The rehabilitative approach assumes that most shelter users have serious problems that must be addressed for any possibility of real change. Staff emphasize dealing with problems before worrying about job issues or independent living.
>
> — The time—limited approach deals specifically with the issue of getting appropriate clients out of the shelter system in a timely fashion. There is, in fact, a programmatically—determined limit to the length of time a client can remain in the shelter.

What Hirota has called "drift" or "a basic lack of self direction" in what I observed is, I argue, less the "expression of extremely vague goals, coupled with an absence of planning for the future," than what history and the theory of collective behavior can explain as a continuation of the movement blacks were forced to adopt during the American slave trade. The behavior I observed among the sheltered homeless is described by Hirota as "a willingness simply to leave situations that seem difficult or threatening; and reliance on the push of external events to dictate courses of action." Retreat by the prisonized-shelterized people in the ABMS was more than a "lack of motivation." Rather, it functioned to retard habilitation to a community that has become ever more disorganized by the coalescing pandemics of joblessness, crime, crack, HIV/AIDS, and prison overcrowding.

Between efforts to rehabilitate and efforts to get inmates out of the shelter as soon as possible, studies that clinicalized impoverished persons have tended to overlook the basic reality of those macro forces of which the prisonized-shelterized inmates are products. There is, of course, no way to know whether the inmates Hirota studied in the Borden Avenue Veterans Residence were comparable to the ones I studied in the Atlantic Bedford Men's Shelter or not. Hirota asserts:

> Here, the example of client drift again provides a point of entry into a larger issue for the shelter system—this is the issue of client behavior and stances that tend to the social services efforts. For example, long term users of City shelters, clients who move in and out of the system or who move around from shelter to shelter (Known among residents as "shelter rats"), and clients who move from one rehabilitative program to another ("retreads") pose different problems for staff who are oriented to rehabilitation. Workers often do not want to put clients out of a shelter, yet find it frustrating to attempt to provide services to people who need but will not use those services.

The programmatic confusion brought on by uncoordinated perspectives is part of the social ecology that I noted in my efforts to find "my spot" (Kornblum, 1992) to find the answers to my research questions. I do not believe I got too close to inmates of the shelter to be able to make the point that the "prisonized-shelterized" inmates did not reject the "service" that they needed, to wit, "a j-o-b." Hirota conceived of shelters as "simultaneously places where clients live and places where staff work." My ethnographic findings presented inmates as essentially men in their prime who had "never had enough of nothing." Deprivation was routine, and the paramount deprivation was the lack of gainful and lawful employment. Shelterization provided a licit, that is, justifiable and legal retreat from goals that could not be achieved through any of the attenuated options available. Staff, too, were "shelter

dependent." Their shelter dependency was rationalized in the black and Hispanic communities as, above all, a reason to hold highly valued employment with the city. For many of these city employees, the shelter was a scam for the poor, a way to "get over" and manipulate the system. In neither case was there any understanding or appreciation of the problems and prospects that are integral parts of the process and structure of shelterization. The more recent complications created by policies that release ex-prisoners into "temporary shelters" had not been considered.

The interaction between some of the staff members and some of the inmates had succeeded in crafting relationships that were not only complementary but were also instrumental in creating a cadre of resistance to the formal policies that "dissed" inmates. "Chuck-a-luck" was coordinator of a program to provide work incentives. After two years, he grew frustrated by the many "guidelines,", "procedures, and "regulations" that had to be followed in any attempt to provide real benefits to needy inmates.

> It's all just papers. I have to get my "stats," and the men have to get what they need. We work together. No, I have never had any problems. We are all just "home boys," taking care of the business. What's the problem? You can't take this shit seriously.

Susan Yeich was a newly trained social scientist whose studies of homelessness led her to join Michigan's Union of the Homeless movement. In *The Politics of Ending Homelessness* (1995), Yeich has penetrated the core of the problem that many others have finally started taking seriously. Yeich's project involved the study of the political nature of homelessness and poverty.

> The more I considered the politics of the issue, the clearer it became to me that homelessness and poverty were like any other form of oppression. Policy makers would never willingly create the changes necessary to end the problem because doing so would undermine the interests of their more powerful constituencies. . . . [Change] would have to be forced by a uprising of the oppressed group.

Yeich was concerned that since the re-emergence of homelessness in the early 1980s, virtually no meaningful action had been taken to solve the problem.

Unlike Hirota, who blamed "client drift" for the increase of urban homelessness, Yeich's perspective parallels that of this dissertation.

> The fact that the causes of homelessness can be traced to changes in the structure of our society attests to the political nature of the issue, and reveals that homelessness is not a problem that can be blamed on its victims, but on an unequal and unjust society.

Consequently, shelter activities are not so much a reflection of "drifting" behavior, for which better options exist, but situations guided by public discourse on homelessness. Looking at "prisonized-shelterized" subgroups of the homeless often amounts to only a form of "blaming the victim." The price paid to enter the public shelter was an acceptance of the understanding that they themselves were held responsible for their condition on the bottom of a transforming labor market. Some inmates used this awareness in the attempt to politicize their wretchedness. Others battled their consciousness of exploitation with self-inflicted rage. "I used to be looking to go to work. Who would hire me? I'm too cheap for 'em."

The deteriorating effect of shelterization on inmates' self-concepts as workers was understood as being beyond their personal control. This was especially true among the younger men who believed that "a man should be able to feed himself,"

and used the shelter as a hideout because they could not comply with their own personal code of conduct. At least by entering the shelter, "opting to be sheltered" as it were, they ensured being fed within a recognized structure. In the warehoused social worlds I observed, the shelter engendered a sense of mastery that could not be sustained in the non-sheltered community. Thus, much of the behavior that public officials, media pundits, and members of the larger community commend reflect the widespread notion that men in the shelter have more options.

> My parents wanted me to go to college, and make them proud. I always felt like I had to prove myself, or they wouldn't care about me. Nothing I did was good enough for them. I worked better with my hands than with my head. I can draw almost anything I see. I can make almost anything out of wire. When I get some money, I may do a few hits of crack. I can leave the shelter when I get ready. I've been here for three years.

The speaker relied upon his associations with other inmates, and this restricted any meaningful interaction with the outside. How and whether these status group formations were reproduced as members moved from the shelter to the prison and out again was not clear. A related question is how the organizational structure of the prison and the shelter retarded or promoted inmate dependencies. It seemed clear, however, that prison inmates were more frequently visited by family land friends than the shelterized, whose whereabouts often were unknown to anyone outside the shelter. The prison, therefore, may generate more reinforcement than the shelter does to its inmates who ostensively have more options, and are perceived to be "free" in the community.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to pursue themes of how shelterization, as a form of institutionalization, has functioned in industrialized society to accommodate historical placement, replacement, and displacement of workers. However, it should be noted that the syntactical association of the construction "work" with the Protestant ethic call to be industrious has linked those two ideas with a third, i.e., technological development, or "progress." Inmates as real persons were not factored into the equation *technology displaces workers to increase productivity*, except to the extent that their plight served to divert public sympathy from those still holding jobs, and therefore cast as "deserving" and "hard working." The public's unexamined and unquestioned reliance on the ethics of work, despite the existence of widespread "dejobbing," has persisted. The shelter's version of Calvinism was expressed as, "That's the way it is. You got to have something to get something."

Increasingly more members of a downwardly mobile working class "bump" each other, replacing the workers who are nearest the bottom, displacing them even more. In this process, technological innovations have routed members of the underclass to prisons and to shelters. Therefore, to maintain their internalized ideas about what the world is like, "the prevailing people of power" (Willie, 1989), with the implicit cooperation of the inmates, describe them as less than refuse, transforming them into bogeymen and spooks. Conservatism has assigned responsibility equally to individuals regarded as "trash" and to the so-called "self-made." The attitude expressed as "I got mine" was challenged by the benign use of public space by homeless people with "nowhere to go."

Unlike the traditional displacement of lower-class workers in the labor market, the post-industrial forces that ushered many into the homeless shelter are not based solely on the unequal distribution of economic assets, as Jencks (1994) and Murray (1994) would have it. The majority of the inmates were the descendants of former slaves, whose only reason for existing as far as the majority society believed was to provide the free labor needed to create the wealth that developed the New World. Once freed, the former slaves sharecropped in rural areas, geographically but not socially proximate to their white overseers. The migration of the former slaves and their children to the North has been to benefit from work offered. Their households were congregated in neighborhoods that became ghettoized, set aside in dilapidated communities, while their employment was located in distant and impersonal settings. Thus, the impact of African-American's' work in the cities did not greatly change the underlying social patterns that traditionally had kept blacks and whites segregated. Were it not for the memories of some of the senior citizens in the shelter, an inmate like "Ole Yankee" would have been mistaken for a slouch.

> We always worked. We were farmers until after World War II, when my folk moved to the North. I lived with my grandparents until I was 8, when they sent for me to come to New York. It was after the World Fair. We were sharecroppers in North Carolina, everybody worked from "can't see to can't see". I still look at the sun to see what time it is. My mother wouldn't know what you were talking about: food stamps? Medicaid? She made her own medicine out of herbs and nobody locked their doors. We always had guns to hunt. They knew about how the plantations had been, but not a shelter like this.

Idled in the shelter, inmates retreated to thoughts of the past, for example, to thoughts of their historical tenuous relationship to the economy of strangers.

Therefore, I observed much of the inmates' braggadocio and rhyming noise-making as functioning in ways related to the fear reduction ceremonies of simpler societies, preceding battles. Nonetheless, I agree with Terry Williams, who pointed out in *Crack House* (1992) that much of the behavior of "crackheads" can be interpreted as innovative and very creative efforts to adapt to the here and now.

> In the changing great city, center for both the drug and finance industries, many people have sought to attain the American dream by inventing a range of money—making activities. . . . For example, "tagging" (scribbling names or tags in public places), graffiti writing, breakdancing, and rap were four separate but interrelated phenomena that combined Latino and African—American cultures to form a new teenage aesthetic called "hip hop"

Some achieved fame; many others, including some pioneers of the movement, were left behind. Others responded to the rule of the Protestant Ethic by deciding that the only way they could make the money they needed was to sell drugs. Their work orientation included the expectation that they would, and the resentment that they would not have "a better life than [my] folks." Since the 1960s, when many of the younger prisonized-shelterized were born, the assumption had persisted that racial and social disabilities would be remedied by social policies. Social policies, based on the growth of progressive political coalitions, were expected to improve the lives of all, especially those whose histories began with slavery. By 1990, the vision of a Great Society had disappeared, replaced by an awareness of the forces moving inmates from prisons to the shelters, forces that left blacks, Latinos, and poor whites (e.g., Appalachian whites) separated, impotent, and above all, marginalized. Blacks were overrepresented in the prisons and shelters almost as

much as they had predominated on the slave plantations, and as much as they later were as sharecroppers and factory workers in declining industries. This long history of low level employment and underemployment among poor blacks was obscured by economic progress among black "professional service providers." Moreover, the effects that African-American claims for human rights had had on interpretations of the United States Constitution, and on the conscience of a nation with traditions of espousing "liberty and justice for all" (the ideal of "equality for all" was less frequently endorsed) were being put aside as "losing ground" (Murray, 1984).

> Billions for equal opportunity, not one cent for equal outcome—such is the slogan to inscribe on the banner of whatever cause my proposals constitute. Their common theme is to make it possible to get as far as one can go on one's merit, hardly a new ideal for American thought.
>
> The ideal itself has never lapsed. What did lapse was the recognition that practical merit exists. Some people are better than others. They deserve more of society's rewards, of which money is only one small part. A principal function of social policy is to make sure that they have the opportunity to reap those rewards. Government cannot identify the worthy, but it can protect a society in which the worthy can identify themselves.

Murray's policy proposal was clear:

> Our philanthropic institutions know how to multiply the effectiveness of people who are already trying to help themselves. In short, American society is very good at reinforcing the investment of an Individual in himself. For the affluent and for the middle class, these mechanisms continue to work about as well as they ever have, we enjoy their benefits. Not so for the poor. American government, in its recent social policy, has been ineffectual in trying to stage-manage their decision to invest, and it has been unintentionally punitive toward those who would make the decision on their own. It's time to get out of their way. . . . When reforms finally do occur, they will happen not because stingy people have won, but because generous people have stopped kidding themselves.

Charles Murray, an acknowledged representative of conservative social thought, shares one critical idea with William Julius Wilson, the much cited black sociologist, to wit, that the significance of race in America has declined. Murray, like Jencks, and Wilson, and others, seemed to have mistaken the success that some blacks were allowed to make during boom periods as indications that ours had become a color blind society. The meager political concessions that blacks perceived to be "crumbs" during periods of disorder were often "found" to be evidence of reduced discrimination when times got hard. However, research on the association between rising group expectations and political movements demanding increased economic opportunities suggests that these expectations followed group perceptions of status improvements (op cit.). Therefore, the lag between political demands for concessions and the bestowal of opportunities may be attributed to a lack of organized protest negotiated by segments of the bottom of the American society since the beginning of the slave trade.

Consequently, it was not in a "color blind" society where I found African Americans in a shelter. These men were not recruited, nor did they freely choose to leave flop houses or other lodgings. Because they offered little opposition, they became the pawns of political agents, compelled to sell crack and to become jobless and homeless, alternating with life behind bars. Had these black urban dwellers been employed, they would not have been warehoused. Had they not been black, they would not have been traditionally, and routinely, excluded from earning a livable wage.

As "dejobbing" proceeds, prisons and shelters can be expected to be used more frequently, especially to contain potential troublemakers. There are implications for the next round of "negotiations" between those on the bottom and those who are "making it". These historically based practices of racial exclusion have not been defined as social problems to which solutions might be found. They will become definitions for what has to be done in order to promote the greater political good.

America's historically segmented labor market has left large numbers of economically oppressed ex—workers isolated and excluded and has become a threat to the vision that Americans have had of themselves. As the standard bearer for a "free and just society," America's dilemma about race is being resolved by abandoning, first of all, the workers who descended from the west coast of Africa.

Blassingame (1979) estimated that ten million Africans were brought to the New World from 1619 to the middle of the nineteenth century:

> Although a few chiefs sold their own subjects, household slaves, or criminals, most African slaves were prisoners captured in wars, or kidnapped by slave raiders. . . . Many committed suicide or lost the will to live. . . . Some mutinied while being transported to the New World and killed their captors. In spite of their chains and lack of arms, they rebelled so frequently that a number of ship owners took out insurance to cover their losses from mutinies. On the record, it does not seem that Africans submitted tamely to being carried across the Atlantic like chained beasts. Early records indicate that the Africans continued to resist even after they landed in the New World. . . . *When they did not run away, the Africans were often obstinate, sullen , and uncooperative laborers. . . [they] were taken from a society where their status was assured, and thrust into one where customs and languages were totally different and where their prior status was of no import.*

Prisonized—shelterized inmates, then, were the descendants of unrecompensed political prisoners of war. The ancestors were brought to the United States, and their descendants have suffered the effects of that oppression for the past three centuries.

> Prince and peasant, merchant and agriculturalist, warrior, and priest, Africans were drawn into the vortex of the Atlantic slave trade and funneled into the sugar field, the swampy rice lands, or the cotton and tobacco plantations of the New World. Most Africans brought to North America were members of agrarian politics in West Africa, accustomed to hard, continuous labor and a sedentary life (Blasingame, 1979).

It would be a mistake to assume that once on these shores, kidnapped Africans did not find a way to express their rebelliousness. An even greater mistake, perhaps, would be to assume that this rebelliousness is not reproduced as substance abuse, crime, and other activities that amount to non-participation in the economy. The behavior I have called "retreatist" is an example of surviving resistance to continuing oppression. Rebellion continued to be a crime, but one that offered status among those not accommodated by the larger society. Because they could not become part of the labor market, it was acceptable to justify inmates' separation from the ranks of employed minorities as operating in their self interest. Criminologist Edwin Sutherland's (196) concept of "differential association" is a useful tool in conceptualizing how differences between assimilationist and separatist African Americans, for example, reproduced rebelliousness, retreats, or its other variants, from one generation to the next. My focal groups turned up descriptions of family lore about cultural survivals:

> My grandmother did not let any of the girls in my family straighten their hair. She didn't want us to go to public school. We couldn't eat

> just anything we wanted. The first time I saw a white man I was so afraid, I started running. She was born in the Islands. We had to stay to ourselves. We were Garveyites. Garvey wanted the government to pay Africans for being brought over here, yes, "reparations," so he could take us back to Africa. I remember seeing a picture of his ship. I think one uncle did go back. It seemed like so long ago.

In 1990, the African-American population of the United States constituted about 12 percent of the total population. Still lingering in the consciousness of members of the black underclass, and of those who had only recently acquired middle-level incomes, were the promises of the civil rights movement. In *A Common Sense: Blacks and American Society*, Jaynes and Williams (1989) framed the problems prisonization-shelterization posed to the nation:

> We write 45 years after Gunnar Myrdal in the *American Dilemma* challenged Americans to bring their racial practices into line with their ideals. . . . Foremost among the reasons for the present state of black—white relations are two continuing consequences of the nation's long and recent history of racial inequality. One is the negative attitudes towards blacks, and the other is the actual disadvantaged conditions under which many black Americans live. These two consequences reinforce each other. Thus a legacy of discrimination and segregation continues to affect black-white relations.

It can not be emphasized enough that the centrality of race relations in the affairs of Americans has been downplayed in analyses of the homeless. Instead of race, behaviors that Paulo Friere has referred to as "self-oppression"—e.g., crime, crack, violence, HIV/AIDS, family disaffiliation—have been used to victimize the poor. These multiple epidemics continue the marginalization of sheltered men, who resistance to political organizing led to their cooptation by and cooperation with their oppressors. Public policy cannot be indifferent to impoverished African-Americans,

or to other minorities, without immense cost to the moral consciousness of the prevailing people of power, and to the political interests of "the good white folk."

The Jaynes and Williams (1989) report, commissioned by the National Research Council and completed before the widespread use of shelters to accommodate prison overcrowding, documented that:

> Racial and ethnic differences have had crucial effects on the course of American history. In particular, black Americans' central role in several constitutional crises—their past status as slaves and the debates over slavery during the Constitutional Convention in 1787; the fighting of the Civil War; the denial of blacks' basic citizenship until the civil rights' movement of the 1950s and the 1960s—has frequently focused international attention on black-white relations in the United States.

Therefore, the increasing "blackening" of the homeless shelters is not simply a question of widespread economic displacement. Particularly affected were people with nothing to lose. Again, dreams were deferred. Or, to paraphrase the question the black poet, Countee Cullen asked: "What happens to a raisin in the sun? Does it dry up or run like a festering sore, or does it explode?"

A People's Method

Since the 1970s, a consensus has formed among social scientists that economic and social trends defining the "post-industrial" economy have peaked (Kornblum, 1993). Aronowitz and Difazio (1994) and Bridges (1994) have brought clear and provocative analyses to fermenting processes that had already reorganized both the rationale for work and observable practices in the workplace.

> The new technoculture in the workplace emerges on the ruins of the old mechanical, industrial culture. From the perspective of the

> worker, whether in the factory or in the office, the second phase of automatic production—computerization—is merely a wrinkle in the long process of disempowerment. No exciting new skills are needed to operate the console that controls the robot on the floor of the assembly floor.
>
> The old industrial plant resembles more the closed institution of the asylum, where every movement is strictly monitored, than the democratic streets of the large city. . . . Aspects of time are strictly regulated, for time is money. Within these shackles develop a culture of resistance that has become the occasion for innumerable studies. . . . The old factory was a prison, and the job dulled the mind and wore out the body. But it was not lonely. . . . After two decades of the computerized office . . . sustained work at a computer can be dangerous to health.

Among the people's evolving method in the shelter was the development of a language that was different from street argot. The most prominent members of the "house gangs," those who had spent the most time in prison, had a better control of shelter communications than did many "regulars." The latter would have been made even more disabled by assimilating this specialized language because they made deliberate efforts to "keep their fronts up." The "hoodlums," having greater expectations of returning to prison, had more reason to look for ways to be "cool" or "down" among their peers. Their idiosyncratic use of language created a world where "everything is everything," and therefore they believed it to be controllable simply through their articulations.

Some examples of the shelter's specialized language follow:

I can slide it. (I have no problems with it.)
The po po is down. (The police are here but there is no problem.)
He be hawking like something's up. (He's looking at me.)
Stuck on stupid. (A frozen crack high.)
Your main woman's downstairs. (Your mother is in the lobby.)
BID (To complete one's prison sentence without complaining.)
He's a "god." (An ultra five percenter who may also be violent.)

A *taker.* (Either a thief or a passive homosexual.)
The *Life* (Street society and values.)

The inmates' penchant for rhyming and lyrical discourses should be examined more closely than is possible within the scope of this dissertation. Merton's functional perspective assumes that all behavior is purposeful. The "rapping," creative uses of language among the men, in and out of prison, on their way back to and from the shelter, held meanings that may have been bracketed by our emphases on inmate "pathology." Inmate language, therefore, required decoding of "the people's method." Consider this dialogue with a 19-year-old adolescent:

> I spent more than seven years in a family homeless shelter at two different times. That's why I'm behind in school, but I'm cool. I learned how to do without. Now I want to learn to do with. My brothers, they are "siblings in rivalry," because my mother is my 'ole lady. They say my mother is bad. I don't get sad. She is a teacher. When I am with her, we play chess. When I was eight I had my [technique] to get subway tokens out the turnstile. I knew it was wrong. She needed money. I used to bring home ten or twenty dollars. Why holler when you get collared? The cops took the tokens and told me not do it again. They let me go because I kept quiet. It was like I wasn't suppose to know about the constitution and my rights to be searched or to have a lawyer. I sometimes act like I am agreeing with them. You can't let [them] know how smart you are. They don't know what to do if you just keep quiet, and don't act like you are so bad. Turn off the recorder, and let's talk off the record.
>
> *How are you doing in your school work?*
>
> I am two years behind. I should be graduating. I need help with math. I asked for special help. I use to be in a special education class. The teacher showed me what to do, but I still didn't understand it.
>
> They don't care. Its just a game.
>
> *Then shouldn't you play to win? Don't you want to finish high school?*
>
> What you say?

You know there're other ways to graduate without going to your regular classes (interrupted)

You mean the "GED"? That's the easy way. I want to do it the right way.

What do you do in your spare time to have fun?

There's no never mind. I don't sweat, get wet. I don't have a girl friend and I don't associate with dogs (men). When I feel I'm getting into my groove, I meet girls. Not the ones who use crack. I call them, 'yea yeas.' The other ones I call 'ya, yas.'

You mean like, 'Papa was a rolling stone. . . (interrupted)

"Wherever he laid his hat was his home?" No, I don't have a hat and I don't have a home.

Maybe like, "Bip Bam, thank you mam"?

Not even, "Thank you"—it's more like just, "Get up, and get out."

One of the problems I had with "dispassionately" observing the activities of the prisonized—shelterized inmates was that many of their behaviors appeared to have "latent functions" that to me at least appeared to self-destructive. Therefore, while resisting facile explanations that posited conspiracies, I chose to look at inmates' activities as adaptations to political restrictions. I observed interactions between groups of organized community groups, and unorganized affiliation groups that provided belongingness, as a basic sociological paradigm. So constructed, I began to understand that these groups were not usually affiliated in the community. When I finished interviewing the "god" "Heavy," he referred me to "A.J.," a musclebound focal leader among the "regulars". Heavy's referral suggested that his conflicts had

been negotiated, at least for a time. "A.J. is somebody you should talk to, but I'm going to have to beat his ass someday."

I could see that the associations among these different groups maintained and sustained their boundaries. In many ways, they resembled neighborhood gangs, except members were not as young. The savviest players of the shelter scenario were the focal leaders, usually peers and "more hip" or smarter than others. As an issue of political control, it would be a cliché to point out that the prisonized-shelterized focal leaders were co-opted into the hierarchy of the shelter. Therefore, the practice of inmates joining primary groups where they rapped, and made music to accompany their rhythmic rhyming was curious. What was missing from this image of lower-class men was dancing. I can recall seeing no dancing in the shelter. These are social facts which, although once considered racially stereotyping, are no longer denigrating. Black and Hispanic street corner men have been observed dancing by themselves, engaging in a traditional pastime. Perhaps it was because the resources to make music were scarce in the shelter. This was no hotel with music piped in by Muzac, nor even the local "rhythm and blues" station from the ghetto. What the shelter was, was a place where there is no dancing. The few sources of music are private and personal. Whatever music there was, came out of the portable radios tucked into the backpockets of security guards and inmates, earplugs stuck in their ears.

Dancing in the Streets

Dancing is often associated with cultural remnants from an earlier period in the history of a captive people. Most commonly found in religious ceremonies in fundamentalist churches, dancing had become an unreflective expression among men who "let it all hang out." Acculturation had not destroyed the inspiration to dance on street corners, but it was not seen in the shelter. In the community outside, inmates might demonstrate their skills "break dancing." Inmates travel to different parts of the business districts to "get paid" for displays of skillful acrobatic and rhythmic contorted flips of their bodies. Some dance acts were pantomimes where one dancer held the other upside down, with legs and arms intertwined. Links to popular dancing among street youth had been associated with controlling inner city youth during periods of community tension.

Dancing has also been shown to be an activity leading to the organization of street gangs. In Hagedorn's (1988) *People and Folks: Gangs, Crime, and the Underclass in a Rustbelt City*, dancing was shown to be one source of gang formation:

> There were a variety of motivations for forming each gang. . . . For example, a dancing group might also have been formed from a corner group of friends. Breakdancing and drilling were the main social activities of thousands of black and Hispanic youth in the 1980s. These groups formed spontaneously. These groups practice on street corners and in local gyms, developing fierce rivalries. The transition from dancing groups came as fights broke out after dancing competitions. . . . By 1983, large numbers of youth were involved with the dancing groups and corner groups as they became popular and competed with one another for followers. As they group, they attracted the attention of the authorities, and the resulting conflict, far from dispersing the groups, appears to have strengthened their [group] identities.

Hagedorn's review of the literature on gangs led to the inference that the placement of gang members in prisons influenced the life course development of sheltered inmates. Thus for example, ex-convicts released to the shelter after doing "hard time" of ten or more years, often had "a boss" or "a bad" wardrobe. These descriptive phrases, as well as the style of their clothing, dated them. These men acted younger than men who had not been in prison and they also looked "younger than [their] age." Therefore, shelters function to prolong prison socialization and inmate self—presentations crafted out of dislocations in the labor market. Hagedorn asked:

> How do we explain the increasing adult participation in gangs? Most studies typically have found the gang member "maturing out of the gang" as he ages. . . . The gang as "a caricature of adolescence" gang involvement by adults is largely due to the drastically changed economic conditions in poor urban neighborhoods. These changed economic conditions have altered the maturing out process and have contributed to the institutionalization of gangs as a means for young adults to cope with economic distress and social isolation.

Concern about how the sheltered homeless look is relevant because Jencks's definition of the homeless is based on how they appear to the general public:

> The visible homeless [are] people whose presence on the streets upsets the more prosperous classes. If we look in jails, detox centers, mental hospitals, and foster homes, we can find hundreds of thousands of other Americans surviving without the physical or emotional support we normally associate with having a home. We do not count these people as homeless because they are out of sight. When people contemplate human misery, the cliche that equates "out of sight" with "out of mind" is all too accurate.

As a representative of the people of power, Jencks's assertions carry considerable weight. Consequently, increase in the shelter population represents a

dynamic in the complex changes in the new economy which it is in the interest of the public at large to decipher. Hagedorn anticipated my findings when he wrote:

> [Our findings are] that jail serves to strengthen gang involvement. . . . Incarceration as a method of breaking up gangs is perhaps the worst single policy at the disposal of public officials. Yet it remains the chosen policy, even though our data and other research strongly suggests that use of incarceration to deter gang participation can easily backfire. Elliot Currie has pointed out that nearly 40% of state prison inmates and 55% of inmates in local jails had not been working full—time in the months before they went to prison. An even greater percentage of gang members in our study were unemployed. The pressure to stay with the gang after prison and find illegal ways to survive appears a rational alternative for gang cons. The strategy of making gangs invisible is unlikely to work. . . . Not only will gangs continue in the communities, but the impact of prison on existing gangs is likely to create even more difficulties.

The actual number of men in the shelter who have been gang members is unknown and, for my argument, irrelevant. Hagedorn's findings are pertinent because they show that inner city men who have often been thought to have their prospects minimized by political and self-oppression have been shown to be able to organize around their common non-economic interests.

Some sheltered inmates recalled their gang activies before they went to prison. BeeBee, a 43 year-old looked at least ten years younger. He was in the shelter to recover from being a "garbage head," i.e., an addict who used any available drug. He referred to his father as "My mother's husband," and had been a "war lord" in his adolescent gang in the 1960s.

> You can't say I was poor or a "street kid". We were the typical hard working West Indians. I came to New York when the Twist (a popular dance) was out. Everything had to be in place. There was no affection. No touching. No nothing that was real, no emotions—very British, y'know. We lived in a big house in Bed-Sty. Both parents worked

and my grandmother, and her sister, looked after us. My aunt drank, she was an alcoholic, and I would slip and drink her wine. Nobody found out. I thought my father was going to beat my butt, but he was too busy. When I was a teenager I slipped out the house. The other guys did not have all those strict rules. I tried to be like them. When we had a fight, I met the war lord from the other gang and we just fought it out between ourselves. I really liked to fight. I left home because I took the belt from my father and beat him. I am still good. When I sold heroin, sometimes I got bored and injected myself. I learned how to box in the penitentiary; that's another story. It's strange you asked about dancing. I used to be the best on the floor. My next step? There's no telling what may go off up in here.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

"So what's up with it," a typical shelter inmate in this study might ask. The questions I have raised in this ethnography explore behavioral and demographic characteristics and interactions of ex-prison inmates and ex-workers in a homeless shelter. My exploration was aimed at understanding how these men adapt to the economic dislocations that resulted in shelterization. In this final chapter, I summarize what I learned and present some implications I believe are germane for the general society and challenges posed by a segment of the homeless population. This summary presents a portrait of the inmates' personal characteristics and the groups with which the inmates identify, and issues of administrative oversight. Related research, and current debates and discourses are cited for the implications they may hold for the community as a whole.

Personal Characteristics

The homeless men in a public shelter craft personal identities in response to their social situations, which include separation from their families and the affiliations formed in the public shelter. For more than ninety percent of the residents, shelterization was preceded by socialization in prisons. Most of the men with whom I

spoke in the temporary emergency shelter where I did my research were on probation, parole, or somehow otherwise known to the criminal justice system. I interviewed at length twenty respondents, each of whom had been more than ninety days in the shelter, and recorded their answers to questions about how they got into the shelter, previous living arrangements, and means of earning an income. These twenty informants were selected because they had been referred by staff or other inmates, or because I saw how they interacted with other inmates. I refer to these informants as "focal leaders," because they appeared to be more influential than others on the drill floor—the congregate, dormitory style sleeping area that held 800 homeless men. One of the first focal leaders whom I interviewed, "Heavy," referred to a crew of inmates as his "congregation." At least half of the inmates had resided in other public or private shelters before they settled into the Atlantic/Bedford Men's Shelter (ABMS). This shelter is considered to be a general, temporary emergency shelter for single adult men. Unlike most of the other nineteen shelters in the New York City shelter system, any single man over 21 years of age may be admitted. None of my subjects report having been a part of the visible street homeless, although some had lived inside public accommodations for brief periods. Respondents lacking the option of living with friends or relatives reported spending more years in the shelter system or in "correctional institutions" than subjects having the option.

The number of months on drugs was lower for inmates who had worked and lived with others than for drug abusers who had worked and lived alone. Fewer were married than single. Only one subject said he was currently married; at the same

time he acknowledged a sexual relationship with another male. Gay relationships were commonplace, although neither condoned nor admitted to by most inmates. Also commonplace were theft, assault, and crack cocaine abuse and sales. According to an AIDS referral unit in the shelter, the rate of HIV/AIDs cases was higher in the shelter than in the community at large.

All my respondents had completed high school or had passed examinations to receive the General Education Equivalent diploma (the GED). At least three respondents had had some college education, and four were armed forces veterans. All defined themselves as "employable." The work histories reported mentioned employment as security guards, janitors, construction helpers, various kinds of semi-skilled occupations, including entertainers of various sorts. No one reported having been a skilled worker. Of the twenty focal leaders, three said they received Social Security benefits, five received unemployment compensation benefits, and seven received General Assistance payments from New York City's Department of Public Assistance.

Every focal leader had used or sold drugs during the preceding thirty days. Drug and food sales represented major economic activities in and around the shelter. Food was taken from the kitchen by institutional aids (IAs), who were paid minimal wages, or by inmates cajoled by the IAs to work as their assistants. Residents who could afford to buy food when the kitchen was closed often did so.

The focal leaders were articulate, and aware of many public issues that concerned them. However, no one I interviewed seemed informed, or interested

enough, to discuss the legalization of drugs as a solution to their drug problems. This was especially interesting in light of the increase in the number of inner-city males arrested and incarcerated because of tougher drug laws. It was as if the effect of such violations of criminal codes would be compromised if they became mainstream. After all, the sheltered homeless are men who are retreating from community norms because they often feel defeated in their attempt to conform. In these retreats, anti-social activities and posturing are often thought to intimidate figures of authority—"the man"—even though the inmates are at least superficially aware of what Moore's (1995) empirical evidence supports:

> The impact falls most heavily on minorities—particularly African-Americans. In 1989, 8 percent of black males ages 20-29 were locked up in prisons and jails, and an additional 15 percent were under correctional or court supervision (Maurer, 1990). Latinos show a lower rate, with 3 percent locked up, and 7 percent under supervision, but the youthful age structure and high poverty rates of Latino communities foreshadow higher incarceration rates in the future.

I found that the political decisions ostensibly intended to control the growth of surplus, abandoned workers succeeded only in concentrating them in an inner-city space, exacerbating their personal distress, and bonding them to others with similar life experiences and prospects (or lack of prospects) for the future. This socially induced adaptation to abandoned public property compromises efforts to accept or assign personal responsibilities for shelter activities.

Group Identification

An important (albeit latent and unintended) function of the shelter is the sense of belongingness it offers the men institutionalized within a public temporary, emergency facility. Generally, as group members, these men think of themselves, and of each other, as "street people", defined as "being out there," "down", or "with the real deal." Often these street people do refer to themselves as having "messed up" with their chronic abuse of drugs, but this remorse equally often leads to wanting more drugs. At the same time, my focal subjects articulated ambivalent commitments to prevailing community values and standards. For example, I asked Heavy what the most serious problem in the shelter was. He responded:

> People use this place as a free hotel. Yes, I do too, but I don't mind paying a few dollars for staying here because I am going to raise hell about some of the stuff that goes on here. I pay taxes too.

I then asked him, "Do you think homeless men should be put out if they can't pay or if they use crack, steal or caught violating other regulations?" He replied:

> Well, I'm hesitating to answer because I think everybody should have a place to live. I don't really have to be here, but there are some who have nowhere to go.

Heavy is but one example of the many ex-prisoners in the shelter who have adapted to their dependency by assuming they have options which they do not and did not have, and by denying the extent of their distress. Other more typical shelter inmates' expressions of personal failure become confused with the political perception that community resources are declining.

For many, drugs are used to self-medicate, but crack also stimulates the urge for recreational sex, although the chemical reaction inhibits the ability to obtain and maintain an erection. In these drug-derived sexual relationships, issues of personal dominance and submission are played out. Furthermore, to be able to use drugs means an inmate has achieved the resources to make a drug purchase. He may also be able to command the respect of the drug dealers and other users, especially when he can demonstrate a consistent ability to get the "good stuff." These are among the scarce resources whose possession and/or control gets one defined as "cool." Therefore, a drug high is a symbol of an achieved status. As a status generator in the shelter, crack use often means that the user inmate has acquired sufficient social skills to command friends and acquaintances to "watch [his] back."

Safety as a resource, of course, is not available to everybody, and one of the functions of a status group is to provide mutual aid for "the people I be with." One resident I interviewed, Mike, explained that he had been in and out of the shelter system for ten years. During the past decade, he once entered the shelter after being discharged from a hospital for gunshot wounds. He was shot trying to foil a mugging from "a dude I knew." Mike explained how important a shelter status group was to take care of basic human needs.

> You may think you're going to keep to yourself and just cool it. That's a mistake. You could be in line to eat, and somebody'll come to you, and try to get in front of you. You try to protect your honor, but then you get in a fight with three or four guys, and you learn it's not worth it.
>
> The white guy who bunks next to me told me that just last night he was taking a shit in the bathroom. They pulled his pants off under

> the door with money in his pocket. He said they took his sneakers but they were so crappy that they threw them back at him. He asked me what he should do. I told him he could go to operations and report it but then the house gang will get him back tonight. They'll get even with you for telling on them. And it's in the bathroom where they get you. That's where they smoke the crack.

Increases in the number of inmates demonstrates the bottomed out trends of downward mobility that sociologists have described since 1985 (vide supra). My fieldwork and analysis add to the research that document the appearance of an "underclass". By "underclass," I mean a group of extremely poor men who have given up on the prospects of joining or rejoining the economic structure of the community.

Recently the plight of the inner city has become much worse (Wilson, 1987). This has caused some liberal and left-leaning social scientists and black advocacy organizations to talk about an 'underclass problem' affecting a sizable stratum "who are unable to participate in the mainstream economy" (National Research Council 1982) .

On the bottom, socialized by prison and joblessness to increased idleness, inmates have few ways to maintain themselves, and fewer still that are normatively praised or even condoned. A common theme inmates use in describing their lot in the shelter is that, "One thing about already being on the ground is you don't have to worry about falling." Mike's experience in the New York City Shelter system is an illustrative example of the growth of the underclass. Mike said that after drifting from shelter to shelter since 1980, he first entered ABMS in 1985.

> The drill floor was used only for the vehicles of the National Guard, jeeps, and trucks and whatnot. There were only about seventy-five men here then. We slept on the third floor where the national guard use to live, two in a room. Now, there are lines for everything you have to do in here.

Drug abuse and hustling to get some "git high" divert residents from the fact that that most of them are former workers, and that their idleness is culturally defined not as "leisure" but as irresponsibility. In other ways, confusion arises about how to be a "nonworker" (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1994). In moments of sobriety, routine community expectations that people are responsible for their own situations become painful realities for men who cannot do what they themselves believe they are supposed to do. Whether inmates want to work or not is not the issue I found in the shelter. Efforts to test hypotheses contending that such men would not work even if work were available has been a major research interest in the social sciences (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1994). Consistent with the massive accumulation of social research findings on group interactions among pariah populations, this field study confirms that even among the most destitute groups in a skid row shelter community, the down and out often devise innovative strategies to allow them to find meaning in their lives. A major difference between this study and other field studies of inner city despondency, for example, Kornblum and Williams (1993), is that the struggle and hope they described have been "cracked up" leaving extremely poor men on the bottom, and at the bottom of shelters and prisons to be precise.

I place this dissertation in the context of current policy issues staked out by Nathan Glazer in *The Limits of Social Policy* (1988). Glazer's summary of the

development of social policies since the 1960s is consonant with my thoughts on what has happened.

> Let me characterize the dominant view of the day (still the dominant view, I would say, among liberals). We believed the advanced industrial world in which we lived had undergone progressive, if jerky, improvement since the days of early industrialism. In the unimproved world of early and high capitalism, market forces prevailed unobstructed, or nearly so. The enormous inequalities they created in wealth, power, and status were added to the still largely unreduced inequalities of the industrial world. In this situation most people lived in squalor, while a few, profiting from the labor of many, could live in great luxury and acquire huge fortunes. Our developing conscience saw this as evil and dangerous: evil because of the huge inequalities and the failure to ensure a decent minimum for all, dangerous because it encouraged the destitute to rebel against industry and order.

As Glazer looked more closely at various liberal assumptions, and at the increasing deterioration in inner cities, he developed a different point of view, one which I found compatible with some of the findings of this ethnography:

> 1. In our social policies we are trying to deal with the breakdown of traditional ways of handling distress. These traditional ways are located in the family primarily, but also in the ethnic group, the neighborhood, the church.
>
> 2. In our efforts to deal with the breakdown of these traditional structures, our social policies are weakening them further and making matters in some important respects worse. Our efforts to deal with distress are themselves increasing distress.

Glazer interpreted the main problem confronting people responsible for formulating policies to address the emergence of the "underclass" as the breakdown of traditional structures. To his litany of social ills, I would add prisonization-shelterization, which compounds distress with some personal decisions that are themselves distressful. It also supplements the usual top-down approach to policy and

program development with descriptions from people at the very bottom. Glazer's interpretations were driven by his disappointment at the seemingly intractability of social problems in America compared with the more manageable ones in Europe. I share Glazer's disappointment when I consider that Europe has more progressive social policies than the leader of the "Free World," the most wealthy nation on earth, yet one with a burdensome tradition of racism—the United States of America. The history of racial exploitation in this country makes adaptations to demands of a changed economy onerous since white skin privilege is associated with economic self-sufficiency and black skin means dependency. Comparing the United States with other westernized nations, Glazer comments that:

> In America, by contrast, it is the very diversity of traditions—ethnic, religious, and social-that makes it hard to establish new forms of behavior that are universally accepted and approved, and that also makes it impossible to give the social worker, the teacher, the policeman the judge, the nurse, the doctor, the same authority they possess in more homogeneous counties.

I described processes by which helping professionals have generated administrative reports that made prisonization-shelterization an emerging political issue. The point is also made in this dissertation that diversity in America has been restricted by a tradition of racism, keeping powerless groups of workers impotent. The continuing legacy of slavery in America appears to pose a threat to the public order because the civil rights movement raised expectations for fairness, especially among blacks. These hopes have been doused by transformations in the economy. The "new homeless" are differ substantially from the image of the "old homeless" that the Great Depression left in the nation's psyche. A new social policy arena has

been created with a different rationale and historical tradition from those whom Rossi called the "extremely poor." The problems of the "new homeless" involved unaddressed political grievances, as well as the increased probability of becoming destitute brought about by deindustrialization. Many distracters continue to sidestep these unaddressed political concerns with claims that the issue of poverty is essentially separate from the issue of race in America. Nonetheless, when efforts to improve benefits are proposed, opponents display statistics showing that the percentage of benefits received are higher among blacks. Again, discourses bracketed to ignore race are formulated around the concept of "The Undeserving Poor" (1987) pitted against "The Truly Disadvantaged" (1989).

Administrative Control

My observation that prisonization-shelterization is an emergent phenomenon different from "client drift" in the shelter is based on the assumption that prisons serve a latent function that is different for blacks than for people of power. That general prevention may not include groups that are not part of the general community, such as the prisonized-shelterized, is a basic premise of this dissertation. Mathiesen (1990, pp. 137-138) makes this point strongly in his discussion of the ideology of prisons. He asserts that general prevention is a theory of defense of the general society.

> [T]he general preventive effect of punishment is so paradigmatic, the burden of proof is placed on those (minorities) who question the theory, and not on those who take it as a point of departure and for granted.

The shelter holds freed ex-prison inmates on the brink of urban disruptions until they are returned to prison, or their whereabouts become unknown. Shelter staff members by and large are themselves representatives of distressed minority communities, and their attitudes represent traditional commitments to what is now an obsolete work ethic. Inmates become scapegoats because the general belief is that the prisonized-shelterized have only themselves to blame for their condition. Ethnic and class distinctions among the largely black, middle-class oriented staff of African-Americans and West Indians operate to maintain the separation between staff and inmates, mostly African-Americans. Cultural distinctions among staff encourage the interpretation that inmates' distress is attributable to cultural transmission through differential associations (Sutherland, 1934), or to a culture of poverty where children learn attitudes and behaviors that keep them poor. I have no data on the number West Indians who are inmates in the shelter or on the staff. However, in the general community, among both groups of blacks, there is a belief that West Indians are more committed to the work ethic than other groups. As a result of this belief, the long-term sheltered groups expect no assistance from the staff, primarily because of these differences in perception about who is dependent on whom.

I argue that the prison and the shelter are social institutions that function to depoliticize the "new homeless". Matheisen writes, in support:

> Since the prison is a fiasco in terms of its own purposes, why do we have prisons at all? . . . The prison serves four important ideological functions..."

1. Expurgatory functions:

> to house, control, and conveniently forget segments of the population. The shelter for the homeless extends this function of the prison by providing a bridge between ex-prisoners and ex-workers. This bridge by-passes much of the world of work and productivity, increasing the invisibility of nonworkers.

2. Power-draining functions:

> Those who purged away . . . are placed in a structural situation where they remain unproductive non-contributors to the system containing them. Unlike the factory's dependence on the workers' contribution, which gives the workers power because they can withdraw the contribution, the prison is not dependent on the prisoners' contribution.

I found at least one "god" who understood this function and was willing to talk about ways of negotiating what appears to be the total lack of power among prisonized-shelterized inmates.

3. Diverting function:

> Socially dangerous acts are increasingly being committed by individuals and classes with power in society. Those caught by the punishment machine, and especially those placed behind bars, are, on the other hand, very largely traditional criminals from the lower working class. The heavy-handed use of prison against them . . . diverts our attention from the dangers flowing from those in power.

4. Symbolic function:

> [W]hen those caught by the punishment machine are imprisoned, they are stigmatized as black. Against this background the rest of us are certainly grey or black."

The perception that black staff are indifferent to shelter residents fuels the chances for the tumultuous disorders that Pivens and Cloward (1971) described as the basis for the so called War on Poverty a generation ago. Therefore, responsibility for administrative oversight, as part of the broader political control function,

frustrates staff who are city employees with few other job options. Based on their experience in labor unions and in their personal attempts to gain more status, staff members are aware that the unskilled labor for which ex-prison inmates have been prepared has no market. They know that the unemployed will attempt to earn money illicitly. They also understand, perhaps only as abstractions, that the chances of ex-workers who are ex-prisoners of rejoining, or joining, the labor market are further reduced by ideas in the society about arrest records. Hence, the hostility of inmates to many in the community and to the staff is based on their assumed complicity in the post-prison "punishment machine." In a very real sense then, the game-like quality of inmate-staff interactions requires social skills with which only some inmates were competent. I spoke to the director of the Pre-Employment Program about what my observations meant. He looked at me supportively and responded with the kind of poetic creativity by which many inmates protect themselves against the consequences of empowering analyses.

> You are serious, aren't you? You better take care of yourself. You look like you are *under*fed, and I know you are *under*paid yourself, and now you are trying to be *under*stood?

The lack of social distance between "Mack," an African-American "from down south" and shelter inmates, contrasted with their relationship with other staff members, many of whom have been assaulted by residents. This shelter program head lived near the shelter and often cooked large batches of inexpensive chicken or pork dishes for shelter residents participating in his "pre-employment" program.

In a previous chapter, I made reference to the consensus of many social scientists that "post-industrial" economy has peaked (Kornblum, 1993), and quoted Aronowitz and DiFazio (1994) to the effect that the earlier version of the "industrial plant . . . [resembled a] closed institution. . . . The old factory was a prison, and the job dulled the mind and wore out the body. But it was not lonely."

Neither is the shelter "lonely." It is tempting to try and compare the culture of resistance that developed in the old industrial plants with what I observed in the homeless shelter. This is not the place in which to try to delineate the ways in which shelterization, itself a form of institutionalization, has functioned throughout the era of industrialization to accommodate the placement, replacement, and displacement of workers. I will reiterate the linkage of the notion of work as a good as well as a necessity for the good life with the Protestant ethic and the equation of technological development with progress. It is not necessary to be a modern day Luddite to recognize that technology increases productivity by replacing many by few workers, hence by *dis*placing workers. Who are the replaced and displaced? They are the least skilled, those whose skills have become redundant, and, as always, the last hired are the first fired. Thus the shelter inmates are representative of a major segment of displaced American workers. The fact that they are in the shelter is a confirmation of their expendability. That they share a common status with the larger community—the status of being human—is not recognized, except in a frightening juxtaposition to and contrast to those still employed, that may elicit a condescending pity, but little sympathy. Thus for example, an administrative assistant at the shelter who was

strongly influenced by traditional religious ideologies observed that "Except for the grace of God, somebody I know could be in here."

Nonetheless, despite the experience of "dejobbing," many of the shelter inmates still share the public's strong confidence in work as a panacea and a solution. The work ethic is expressed by the shelter inmates as, "That's the way it is. You got to have something to get something." As the working class suffers increasing downward mobility the ultimate losers are those already at the bottom, who are displaced entirely out of the labor force (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1994). With no one still lower in the class hierarchy to displace, these underclass men find themselves in the prisons and in the shelters. But in order to retain internalized definitions of the world of work and effort, both what Willie (1973) has called the "prevailing people of power" and the subconsciously compliant inmates themselves define the nonworking shelter inmates as less than garbage, in an implicit admission that the shelters and prisons have become the trash heaps for those thrown out of the productive system.

The post-industrial forces that have ushered so many into the world of the homeless are not based simply on the unequal allocation of economic assets. This is not the traditional replacement and displacement of low level workers in the industrial labor market. The inmates are the descendants of black slaves, brought to the Americas to provide the labor needed to maximize the wealth of the "New World." Racism's effects are far from residual, and are amply illustrated in the way that the economic dependencies of minorities have become concerns for welfare agencies and the criminal justice system. Today's poverty and homelessness is not the same as

what was experienced during the Great Depression. Then the prevalence of white ethnics and the "old homeless" generated political support for welfare programs that addressed the needs of a vast number of displaced workers. These programs still exist, but are threatened with elimination. The fact that in actuality they benefit numerically more whites than others suggests that poor Americans and working-class Americans now think about themselves more in terms of political constructions of race than in terms of lost share of the labor market.

General Discussion

My review of the literature supports my sense that no matter how much prisonized-shelterized inmates may huff and puff, their situation continues to deteriorate because they have not yet acted in their own self interest. Nor is support for these men prevalent among the black middle class and traditional black leaders. The legalistic approach of advocates for the homeless is not particularly relevant to the thrust of this dissertation. One result of their approach is an increase in prisoners filing lawsuits (*New York Times*, 1-3-96) when in jail and when released in the ranks of the sheltered. My concern is with understanding how structural transformations are reflected in the bottommost rungs of society as represented by prisonization-shelterization. A loss of the hope which America has always claimed to offer, even to racial minorities, is one effect. This loss of hope forms a bond among ex-offenders in the shelter. Groups formed there are not based upon individual characteristics, nor are they features of some culture of poverty. The shelter inmates

still share the same values as exist throughout society, and it is from these values their self-concepts are forged. This conclusion is the classic finding of Liebow in *Tally's Corner* (1967), as discussed by Michael Harrington in *The New American Poverty* (1994).

> In *Tally's Corner*, Elliot Liebow argues that the patterns are not transmitted as a culture but are discovered anew as the younger generation confronts the same problems as its elders.

The problems confronted by the unskilled laborers in the shelter are essentially the same as their grandparents faced as sharecroppers in the 1930s and their parents confronted as service providers in the 1960s. They are on the bottom of the economic hierarchy, but nonetheless expect to be rewarded for their labor. Put simply, the distress caused by the frustration of their expectations of being able to work and get paid in order to participate in the life of the community is part of the social distress for which acculturation prepared inmates, staff, and the general community.

These findings are the exact opposite of MacLeod's (1986). His ethnography compared the educational and occupational aspirations of white ethnic boys and black boys. MacLeod argues that:

> If class is the over riding determinant in social reproduction, what accounts for the variance in the process between the [two different] groups. . . . Differential socialization . . . prepares working-class students for working-class jobs and middle-class students for middle-class jobs.
>
> Race is the principal variable affecting the way these youth view their situations. Ethnicity introduces new structurally determined constraints on social mobility, but it also serves as a mediation through which the limitations of class are refracted and thus apprehended and

> understood differently by different racial groups. Having grown up in an environment where success is not common, the [white boys] see that the connection between effort and reward is not as clearcut as the achievement ideology would have us to believe. Because it runs counter to the evidence in their lives and because it represents a forceful ideology on their self-esteem, the [white gang] repudiates the achievement ideology. Given that their parents are inclined to see the ideology in the same light, they do not counter their son's rejection of the American Dream.
>
> The [black boys'] social class origins are only marginally different from those of the [white boys]. Being black, [they] also must cope with racially rooted barriers to success that, affirmative action measures notwithstanding, structurally inhibit the probabilities for social advancement, although to a lesser degree than do shared class limitations.

The black youth in MacLeod's study adapted to their perception of what life required of them with compliance and abstinence from substance abuse. They believed that education was to their advantage. In contrast, MacLeod found that his white ethnic respondents (Italian and Irish) retreated from the expectations of their community. He described his white respondents:

> They are tough, streetwise individuals who form a distinctive subculture. . . . They all smoke cigarettes, drink regularly, and use drugs. [Most] are high school dropouts. All but two have been arrested.

MacLeod was interested in understanding how working class values were reproduced intergenerationally. My objective is to understand the characteristics of the prisoned sheltered homeless. Our common finding is that:

> This ethnography has uncovered a group of boys at the bottom of the class structure who feel so trapped in their subordinate position that they do not even aspire to move upward.

MacLeod's study showed that the leveling of working class aspirations affected white youth as well as black youth. Youth who believe they have opportunities will work to achieve them. Those who see no reason to strive, will not. With change in the economy replacing humans with machines, our most urgent social responsibility is to recognize that the work ethic, without work, leads to victimizing workers who need respect while looking to explain their social immobility.

Once I began to understand some of the complexity of the problems of prisonization-shelterization, it became clear that much more is at stake then the provision of housing. More than race and class alone, or even the two in interaction, decreased demand for workers on the bottom rungs of the economy reflects changes in the meaning of work itself. Ogburn's concept of cultural lag (1950) is helpful in extending our understanding of shelterization beyond economic determinism.

> Ogburn noted that changes in culture were not always or necessarily congruent with economic changes. For example, he argued that economic changes influencing the division of labour in the family had not been accompanied by a change in the ideology that "a woman's place in the home." A cultural lag exists when two or more social variables, which were once in some form of agreement or mutual adjustment, become dissociated and maladjusted by their differential rates of change. . . . His hypothesis of cultural lag anticipated debates in sociology about the relationship between the economic base and cultural superstructure of society (Abercombie et al., 1984).

The problem of prisonization-shelterization is the consequence of an interaction between individual characteristics and economic change; therefore the uninformed chant of "housing, housing!" is not a strong enough mantra to address the problems of prisonization-shelterization. Incantations of "jobs, jobs" are also based on assumptions that need to be investigated in the light of the Aronowitz and DiFazio

(1994) and Bridges (1994) books discussing increased change in the labor market. According to Aronowitz and DiFazio (1994), what are known as "survival skills" in the shelter may be more important than the technical skills to be a worker or a "nonworker" in the world of cyberspace. These technological determinists outline the main terms of the structuralist argument presented in this dissertation. Causal links between homelessness and dejobbing are mentioned on the first page of their *The Jobless Future* (1994). They conclude their cogent and well laidout argument in a vein consonant with the portrait I set out to paint at the level on of one homeless shelter.

The question, "Why can't America provide guaranteed incomes?" becomes inevitable. Such an alternative to prisonization-shelterization, however, is not likely in the current political climate. The effect of both Democratic and Republican proposals that address changes in the economy is to pit the employed against the jobless. Although many commentators have proposed measures to increase the quality of life generally (Aronowitz & DiFazio, 1994; Jencks, 1993; Harrington, 1984; Yeich, 1996; Mead, 1981), my recommendations for guaranteed minimum incomes probably make me appear uninformed and hopelessly sentimental. However, missing from inmates' threats (to which shelter-staff interactions are negotiated agreements) is the "tumultuous behavior" that Cloward and Pivens (1971) said was responsible for the perceptions of economic gains that aging "baby boomers" like me recall from the 1960s and 1970s.

A fury exists in the black community among the groups that gave rise to the civil rights movement. It is from these groups that one might look for a renewal of organized protests and social action on behalf of the dejobbed. What Cose (1975) called "the rage of the black middle class" is vented by scapegoating prisonized-shelterized individuals, as well as the other economically deficient people predominantly found in inner-city communities. Aronowitz and DiFazio referred to the "the war against the poor" (1994, p. 308), and their commentary refers to the sheltered homeless:

> At the level of socioeconomic theory, the key innovation was the "discovery" of an underclass that could no longer be considered an industrial reserve army because it was not available for work or was otherwise excluded from the labor markets even in periods of economic expansion. The question is how to interpret such exclusion. . . . Among the psychological factors is the perception, widely shared among poor black men and single mothers, that work is not a redeeming social value.

I contend that in the communities from which the inmates came, before imprisonment and eventual entry into the shelter, the work ethic is more than ever perceived as a moral responsibility of individuals. Aronowitz and DeFazio (1994) assert:

> Thus, there is no longer a necessary connection between the perception that millions are routinely excluded from the labor market and a determinate explanation for this phenomenon.

There is, however, a necessary connection between the work ethic and the indoctrination of the homeless by churches in their neighborhood. Black churches are indisputably the most influential organization in their communities. It is not clear how local perceptions differentiate Islam from Christianity, vis-à-vis the moral

obligation to work. It is generally believed in the black community that the message of Islam is more entrepreneurial and self enhancing than what is traditionally taught in Christian churches. "You're gonna always have poor people and it says so in the Bible," was a constant theme in my focal groups. Another rationalization for retreat that brought passionate bickering or confirmations was the New Testament narrative of the rich man burning in Hell while the poor ascended into Heaven. A 70-year-old pensioner, "Pops," asked rhetorically, "How you gone say you're a Christian and turn up your nose at the homeless when Jesus was homeless? His disciples were homeless, and they were single too." Consequently, observations of inmates in homeless shelters reflect the moral values of the community, even when some of these attitudes are undergoing devaluation.

Some personal issues that inmates brought to the shelter were phrased as, "I messed up," suggesting that they had had economic choices but did not exercise the appropriate moral judgment. The homeless may not be innocent victims, but their increased presence in shelters is not evidence of improvements in services, as Jencks argues (1993). On the contrary, long time residents have witnessed declining services as the number of inmates has increased. The decline in services coupled with the indifference of staff add to the inmates' perception of undeserved exploitation. The decline of services also augments the grievances that inmates bring with them into the shelter. I did not observe improvement in services to inmates, but I did observe reduced conflicts among focal group leaders, who were creating an environment where:

> You can get three hots and a cot. After a while you learn to get some rests. . . . The lights are always on. You have to be "in" with somebody to stay here long. You need somebody to always be watching your back.

Reduced conflicts among focal leaders may lead to improvements in the ways inmates' communicate with each other about their grievances, "since we got to be up in here." The vacuum created by reduced conflicts among members of the house gang, however, leaves unexplained the disposition of the fury and anger stored up for years, in and out of prison. How these inevitable frustrations are channeled is a question I investigated as part of my inquiry into inmate characteristics.

This search led to seeing a function that Islam may serve among men who are angry and poised to retaliate for real and imagined oppression. Some of the "teachings" which members of the gods, or five percenters, absorb by rote memory (with little reflection of analysis) in their private talks, were shared with me by "El Akee," a strapping shelter resident who had converted to Islam while in an upstate New York prison where he had spent seven years. He said he prayed five times a day, did not eat pork, and was always prepared to defend himself. He spoke about how Islamic militancy justified his anger. It was El Akee who pointed out that a pervasive cultural trait of the black community was rhythmic movements, which were also part of the ritual of prayer. He said the prison environment had prepared him for "dealing with the shelter," by which he did not mean what he called "just letting them mess you up all they want." El Akee reflected that:

> Prison is a very noisy place, like this shelter. All that metal against metal. Guards yelling; inmates yelling. Sirens. Whistles blowing. You hear people screaming all the time. The guards expect riots. But

> in here, there is never a riot, though, that I've seen, not yet. In here, they don't even do the silence treatment demonstrations. Everybody keeps quiet. The noises of the inmates stops. The guards stop to find out what's up. You can tell they are scared. They know how to deal with the noise, but not the silence. In here, the guards especially are always waiting for something to happen. You have to get them off guard, like doing the unexpected, say dancing by them to mess with their heads, making them think we're the crazy ones.
>
> Hell, after a funeral, the slaves danced to celebrate their final escapes. Dancing makes you one with the rhythm. Rhythm is universal. It exists beyond the material world where you're a puppet. You have to keep on moving to somebody else's tune. But when you dance, you feel free. You can shake up some of those strings.
>
> *Are you saying the inmates will "shake it up, baby?"*
>
> Turn off the tape recorder, if you want to really get down and rap.

I turned the recorder off. El Akee wanted to know who I was ("Really? How do you get paid?") Apparently I answered the questions to his satisfaction, because he explained that dancing was an allusion to the fact that:

> When you got to go, you got to go. You might as well take a muthafucka with you. Then, turn and take yourself out with them. One guard I want so bad I can I itch to. . . .

In subsequent fieldwork three inmates whispered similar expression of what amounts to willingness and readiness for ultimate self-sacrifices. Three different inmates in different settings said the "teachings" allowed a god to:

> Take the lives of others, but not Muslims, including your own. You are supposed to take a shank and stab it in your heart. That's prison stuff, when you can't [take] the bullshit no more.

The prospects for such extreme demonstrations of hopelessness among extremely poor people have appeared over the last fifteen years. During this period

youth has paid greater attention to Islam, while at the same time, relationships between Black Muslims and traditional community leaders remain conflicted, seemingly reflecting a shift in power relationships among blacks. El Akee discussed his opinions about why men in prison were attracted to Islam: "Muhammed was a liberator. His crews attacked caravans carrying diamonds and gold stolen from Africa."

Haskins (1973), an African American writer, refers to Muhammad as a "bandit." For men who have been apprehended, charged, sentenced and imprisoned, often more than once, threat of a return to prison is taken seriously. What is not taken seriously is that a dejobbed society eliminates the structures whereby ordinary people get to define themselves. One function of the process of prisonization-shelterization is that men who have "never had nothing nohow, and don't look like they gon' git nothing nohow" find that the shelter redirects them to jail and prison.

The largest and most threatening gang in the shelter is the hoodlums, many of who aspire to become gods, an elite group of Muslims. In almost every interview in which the topic came up, hoodlums used persons they thought were Muslims as references. Such references did not include staff, or leaders in the free community, some which was not uncommon among the less numerous shelter residents I have called "regulars." The Muslim creed was not articulated, except for the prohibition against eating pork, but as Mike said about Muslims, "They are not going to turn the other cheek. They will fight back."

Proposed Shelter Reform

To complete my search for questions that prompted this study, I visited the offices of the New York City Department of Homeless. This agency was recently reorganized from the Human Resources Administration. I was greeted by an wide-smiling employee of the Public Affairs Office, very pleasant and highly skilled in the social amenities. I wanted to interview someone familiar with how policies were developed. Instead I was told gleefully that, "A new report is available." Entitled *Reforming New York City's System of Homeless Services* (1994) the report _opens with a policy statement, lists reform goals and key reform objectives, and then details an Implementation Plan. A succinct statement of the proposed policy statement follows:

> New Yorkers expect their government to help people who are homeless. They expect government's efforts to be both compassionate and effective. . . They recognize that government has a responsibility to care for the needy, but they also expect homeless people to take responsibility for their lives.

One of the six key objective is "Mutual responsibility". The kernel of this objective is:

> Mutual responsibility will be established through an agreement known as an independent living plan, signed by both the provider and recipient, which indicates the homeless person's acceptance of the responsibility to participate in programs provided to assist them in resolving their crises and in moving toward independent living.

It is noteworthy that an administrative agency seeking to fulfill its responsibility to its constituency starts out with the very moral indictment of the prisonized-homeless that is prevalent among the public at large. Even within the shelter, the "god" Heavy was ambivalent when I asked him how much responsibility

inmates should have to take for their lives. It is clear that the city agency responsible for shelter care views joblessness as deviant behavior for which prisons and shelters have been set aside. The sheltered inmates I observed for two years adapted their behavior to fit the definitions of them that existed in the community of which they were no longer a part. This administrative report, therefore, confirms the observations of Kostas N. Gounis in his dissertation, *The Domestication of Homelessness: The Politics of Space and Time in New York City Shelters* (1994):

> This dissertation examines the development of the shelter system for homeless men in New York City. The gradual transformation of city shelters from temporary makeshift arrangements into enduring institutions is linked to an emergent social agenda that seeks to regulate the disruptive effects of urban displacement and marginalization on normative spatial practices. The administrative profession, and ideological mechanisms of control that are deployed for the domestication of homelessness exemplify the intentionally of a politics of marginality aimed at the survival of economics of the new urban poor (Gounis, 1994, p. 12).

In my field study, I made observations that, like those of Gountas, elucidate the institutional origins of shelter dependency, or shelterization, as opposed to clinicalizing models that attribute the phenomenon to individual pathology. Shelterization is exposed as "a state of captivity, not as a symptom of disease" (Gounis, 1994, p. 12).

As a state of captivity, the process of prisonization-shelterization which I have described continues the labor market divisions that American society has institutionalized among blacks. This division dates to 1619 in the United States, and even earlier in the Caribbean, when African indentured servants were enslaved (Takaki, 1993). These division hardened one hundred years ago in the aftermath of

the legal emancipation of African slaves in American communities. Two major black leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, debated the course that would be most appropriate for the freedmen's economic interest. In slavery, the division among blacks represented their placement either in the owner's house or in the fields. Options for the social adaptations of black Americans, either separation or integration, are played out among black people in the shelters as it is in the larger community. The Washington-DuBois controversy established the terms of a debate that continues today. "The Atlanta compromise," Washington's accommodationist speech, delivered at the Atlanta World's Fair in 1895, had admonished the freed slaves to "Let your buckets down where you are." In the Atlantic Avenue men's shelter, I found more than one thousand men who had given up on the possibility of achieving DuBois's assimilationist option and joining the mainstream, and with no "buckets" or other means of production, the prisonized-shelterized inmates I observed were looking down in a community where they were the bottom.

In this field study, I found homeless men retreating to a shelter from prison and from communities and families where they had not been able to adapt to the economic realities of post-industrialization. Stripped of gainful employment, prisonized-sheltered groups used their idle time to form face-to-face groups that at least offered belongingness and ways to fill idle time. The historical background of these nonworkers forms a basis for anti-social behavior, normally controlled by the church and by work. As drastic changes unfold in the labor market, more subtle changes are evident in the loss of respect for traditional sources of meaning such as

the family, education, and the church. In the place of gainful work or even aspirations to work, there is crime and prisonization-shelterization has emerged as a structure to fasten the underclass to the bottommost rungs of post-industrial society.

I found that one impact of declining labor market forces was an increase in the number of inner-city males arrested and incarcerated due to tougher drug laws:

> The impact [of tougher drug laws] falls most heavily on minorities —particularly African-Americans. In 1989, 8 percent of black males aged 20-29 were locked up in prisons and jails, and an additional 15 percent were under correctional or court supervision (Maurer, 1990). Latinos show a lower rate, with 3 percent locked up, and 7 percent under supervision, but the youthful age structure and high poverty rates of Latino communities foreshadow higher incarceration rates in the future (Moore, 1995).

I also found that the political decisions intended to control the growth of surplus, abandoned workers had concentrated them in an inner-city space. This adaptation debilitated efforts to accept or assign personal responsibility for shelter activities. Shelter status stigmatizes ex-prison offenders, distancing them from community expectations and adding more stress to individuals and family households. Unemployment and crime are burdens on social and economically troubled kinship networks, rendering them less capable as well as less willing to give support to the stigmatized, placing them still deeper in the process of prisonization-shelterization.

Support for a theory of an urban underclass was found. Increases in the number of inmates routed along the prison-shelter circuit demonstrated the bottomed out trends of downward mobility that sociologists had described since 1985. My fieldwork and analysis added to the research that documented the appearance of an "underclass."

Primordial attachments (Kornblum, 1972), constructed symbolically, or claimed as objective facts of history, have re-focused the attention of distressed people from "the way things are" to the ways they might have been. The predominant number of African-American inmates who abused crack and had only tenuous relationships with the wider community, added more recent charges of "spoiled identities" (Goffman, 1967). Political discourses have bracketed race as a traditional basis of controlling workers in the labor market, replacing exploitative "politics" with the rubric of "social problems."

Consistent with the massive accumulation of social research findings on group interactions among pariah populations, this field study confirmed that even among the most destitute groups in skid row communities, strategies were invented that allowed the socially outcast to find meaning in their lives.

It was shown that there has been some evolution in the forms of shelter adaptations. "Client drift" has been replaced by "shelterization," and since 1989 at least, increased release rates of lower level ex-offenders placed into the homeless shelter have resulted in a preponderance of prisonized shelterized inmates.

I found that the emergency homeless shelter accommodated differential associations among long-term sheltered groups, giving rise to prospects for exacerbating social dislocations and public disorders. The shelter held "free" ex-prison inmates on the edge of urban disruptions until they were returned to prison, or their whereabouts became unknown. Unskilled and skilled labor for which ex-prison inmates had been prepared were obsolete, and the likelihood that unemployed men

would attempt to earn money illicitly was increased. On the other hand, workers' chances of rejoining, or joining, the market economies were diminished by their arrest records.

> What did Christopher Jencks say "Some Partial Solutions" were?
>
> Although I doubt that changes in the housing market played a major role in the spread of homelessness, better housing is still the first step in dealing with the problem. . . . Without stable housing, nothing else is likely to work. If people have housing, the rest of their life may improve.

Political discussions that called attention to the homelessness of extremely poor men also diverted attention from economic categories during a period of scarce resources. The approach represented in both AJ's and Heavy's negotiations with the shelter, "You're supposed to give us that," is a reaction but not a solution. Despite the efforts of at least some ex-convicts to respond rationally to their displacement in the labor market, economic transformations have driven personal and institutional options. The evidence suggests that whoever said "Hope was created for the hopeless" was speaking to those adrift in America's rising tide of prisonization-shelterization.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, E. (1976). *A Place on the Corner.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, L., Snow, D., & Cress, D. (1994). Negotiating the public realm: Stigma management and collective action among the homeless. *Research in Community Sociology, 4,* 121-143.

Anonymous. *Citizens against recidivism.* Unpublished, New York City.

Aronowitz, S., & DiFazio, W. (1994). *The jobless future: Sci-tech and the dogma of work.* London: University of Minnesota Press.

Balkin, S. (1992). Entrepreneurial activities of homeless men. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 19*(4).

Basi, G. L. (1990). Social policy and social science research on homelessness. *Journal of Social Issues.*

Baumohl, J., Hawks, D., & Hopper, K. (1992). Addiction and the American debate about homelessness. *British Journal of Addiction, 87,* 7-10.

Benedict, A., Shawn, J. S., & Rivlin, L. G. (1992). Attitudes toward homeless persons of those attending New York City Community Board meetings. *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 21*(1), 69-80.

Berlin, G., & McAllister, W. (1993). Homelessness and shelters in New York City. New York: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The Criminal Justice Institute.

Berman, M. (1984). *The re-enchantment of the world.* Toronto: Bantam for Cornell University Press.

Blassingame, J. W. (1973). *The slave community: Plantation life in the antebellum South.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Bowker, L. (1994). Crime, punishment, and jail construction in Dane County: An analysis of the problem and recommendation for community-based alternatives. *Sociological Imagination, 3*, 4-28.

Bridges, W. (1994). *Job shifts in America.* New York: Beacon Press.

Burt, M. (1991). Is homelessness here to stay? A discussion of Martha Burt's *Over the edge: The growth of homelessness in the 1980s. Reporting from the Russell Sage Foundation*, no. 13, 1-3, 12.

Burt, M. (1991a). *Over the edge: The growth of homelessness in the 1980s.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishers.

Burt, M., & Cohen, B. (1989a). Who is helping the homeless? Local, state and federal responses. *Publius, 19*(1), 11-128.

Burt, M., & Cohen, B. (1989b). Homelessness: Dimensions of a crisis. *Social Problems, 36*(5), 508-524.

Burway, M. (1994). *Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis.* **city: publisher.**

Butterfield, F. (1992). Are American jails becoming shelters from the storm? *New York Times, 5*, 56.

Chancer, L. (n.d.). *Sadomasochism in everyday life: The dynamics of power and powerlessness.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Churchill, L. (1978). *Questioning strategies in sociolinguistics.* Boston, MA: Rowley Publishers.

Clemmer, D. (1940). *The prison community.* Boston, MA: The Christopher Publishing House.

Cohen, M. B., & Wagner, D. (n.d.) Acting on their behalf: Affiliation and political mobilization among homeless people.

Cornelius, W. A. (1973. *Political learning among the migrant poor: The impact of residential context.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Cose, E. (1993). *The rage of a privileged class: Why are middle-class blacks angry? Why should America care?* New York: Harper Colins Publishers.

Culhane, D. (1992). The quandaries of shelter reform: An appraisal of efforts to manage homelessness." *Social Service Review, 66*(3).

Dunlap, E., & Johnson, B. D. (1994). The setting for the crack era: Macro forces, micro consequences (1960-1992). *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 24*(4), 34-52.

Ellickson, R. C. (1990). The homeless muddle. *Public Interest, 99*, 45-60.

Elliot, M., & Krivo, L. (1991). Structural determinants of homelessness in the United States. *Social Problems, 38*(4), 403-427.

Faine, J. R. (1973). A self-consistency approach to prisonization. *Sociological Quarterly, 14*(4), 578-588.

Freeman, R. B., & Hall, B. (1987). Permanent homelessness in America? *Population Research and Policy Review, 6*(1), 3-27.

Friedman, D., & Whitman, D. (1990). The streets are filled with coke. *U.S. News and World Report, 108*(9), 23-27.

Genevie, L. (1978). *Common law crime severity after release from prison.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The City University of New York.

Glazer, N. (1988). *The limits of social policy.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glazer, N. (1994). How social problems are born. *The Public Interest, 102*, 99-114.

Gounis, K. N. (1993). *The domestication of homelessness: The politics of space and time in a New York City shelter.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York City.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients.* Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Grunberg, J., & Eagle, P. (1990). How the homeless adapt to shelter living. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 41*(5), 521-530.

Hagedorn, J. (1988). *People and folks: Gangs, crime, and the underclass in a rustbelt city*. Chicago, IL: Lakeview Press.

Harrington, M. (1994). *The new American poverty*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Hirota, J. (1993). *Life anad work in city shelters*. New York: New York City Office of Policy and Program Development.

Hopper, K. (1989). The ordeal of shelter: Continuities and Discontinuities in the public response to homelessness. *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy, 4*(2), 301-323.

Hopper, K. (1990a). Shelterization [Letter to the editor]. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 41*(5).

Hopper, K. (1990b). Research findings as testimony: A note on the ethnographer as expert witness. *Human Organization, 49*(2), 110-113.

Hopper, K. (1991). A poor apart: The distancing of homeless men in New York City's history. *Social Research, 1*(5), 107-132.

Hopper, K. (1992a). Marginalia: Notes on homelessness in the United States. *NAD Publication, 22*, 123-156.

Hopper, K. (1992b). Counting the homeless: Night in New York. *Evaluation Review, 16*, 376-388.

Hughes, M., & Demo, D. H. (1989). Self-perceptions of black Americans: Self-esteem and personal efficacy. *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 132-159.

Jencks, C. (1994). *Homelessness*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Johnson, B. (1994). *Taking care of business: The economic of crime by heroin addicts*. Lexington, MA:

Johnson, B., Kim, M. A., & Schneider, J. (1990). Days with drug distribution: Which drugs? how many transactions? with what returns? In R. A. Weischiet (Ed.), *Durgs, crime and the criminal justice system*. Cincinatti, OH: Anderson.

Kasinitz, P. (1988). Facing up to the underclass. *Telos, 76*, 170-180.

Kasinitz, P. (1989a). Approaches to the homeless. *Dissent, 36*(4), 120-134.

Kasinetz, P. (1989b). Gentrification and homelessness: The single room occupant and the inner city revival. *Urban and Social Change Review, 17*(1), 9-14.

Katz, M. (1989). Homelessness amidst affuluence: Structure and interactions. *Social Problems, 14*(2).

King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Klapp, A. (1948). The fool as a social type. In H. E. Barnes (Ed.), *An introduction to the history of sociology*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Kornblum, W. (1974). *Blue Collar Community*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kornblum, W. (1984a). New alternatives for fighting crime, social policy. *Social Policy, 14*, 24-28.

Kornblum, W. (1984b). Lumping the poor: What is the "underclass"" *Dissent, 31*(3), 295-302.

Kornblum, W. (1991a). Drug legalization and the minority poor. *Milbank Quarterly, 69*(3), 415-435.

Kornblum, W. (1991b). Who is the underclass? Contrasting approaches: A grave problem. *Dissent, 38*(2), Spring, 202-211.

Kramer, J., & Steffensmeir, D. (1993). Race and imprisonment decisions. *Sociological Quarterly, 34*(2), 357-376.

Kyle, K. (1994). *A bum rap: The homeless as a social construct.* Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Los Angeles, CA.

Lang, M. H. (1989). *Homelessness amidst affluence—Structure and paradox in the American political economy.* New York: Praeger.

Leggert, F. (1991). Market and justice: A dialogue. *Dissent, 34*(8), 530-534.

Liebow, E. (1967). *Tally's corner: A study of Negro street corner men.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Light, D., Keller, S., & Calhoun, C. (1992). Emile Durkheim. *Sociology* (6th ed.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Little, B. (1982). Prison lingo: A style of American English slang. *Anthropological Linguistics, 242,* 296-244.

Losesche, D. R. (1989). Evaluation research and the practice of social services: A case for qualitative methodology. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 18*(2), 202-223.

MacLeod, J. (1987). *Ain't no making it.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Marotto, R. A. (1989). Are those streetpeople part of the new poor, too? *American Sociologist, 20*(2), 11-22.

Marshall, T., & Fairhead, S. (1979). How to keep homeless offenders out of prison. *New Society, 49*(885), 79-84.

Mathiesen, T. (1992). *Prisons on trial.* London: Sage Publications.

McCarthy, W., & Hagan, J. (1991). Homelessness: A criminogenic situation? *British Journal of Criminology, 31*(4), 75-79.

McCarthy, W., & Hagan, J. (1992). Mean streets: The theoretical significance of situational delinquency among homeless youth. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(3), 597-627.

Mead, L. (1992). *The nonworking poor in America: The new politics of poverty.* New York: Basic Books.

Meier, A., & Rudwick, E. (1970). *From plantation to ghetto* (Rev. ed.). Hill and Wang.

Milburn, N., & Booth, J. (1992). Illicit drug and alcohol use among homeless black adults in shelters. *Drugs and Society, 6*(1-2).

Moore, J. (1995). How has increased incarceration affected inner-city communities? Unpublished manuscript, Vera Institute of Justice, New York City.

Murray, C. A. (1976). *The link between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency: Current theory and knowledge.* Washington, D.C.: National Institute for Juvenile Justice.

Murray, C. A. (1984). *Losing ground: American social policy 1950-1980.* New York: Basic Books.

Myers, S. L., Jr. (1991). *The marginalization of black men.* Testimony prepared for hearings before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Unpublished paper.

Newman, K. S. (1988). *Falling from grace: The experience of downward mobility in the American middle class.* New York: Vintage Books.

Ogburn, W. F. (1950). *On culture and social change.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Patterson, J. T. (1986). *America's struggle against poverty 1900-1985.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. (1977). *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail.* New York: Pantheon.

Rainwater, L. (1970). *Social problems and public policy—Inequality and justice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rainwater, Lee. (1986). *Behind ghetto walls—Black families in a federal slum.* Chcago: Aldine.

Reiman, J. H. (1979). *The rich getting richer and the poor get prison: Ideology, class, and criminal justice.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Rice-White, E. E. (1991). *Homeless men in the City of New York shelter system.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yeshiva University, New York City.

Rivlin, L. G. (1986). A new look at the homeless. *Social Policy, 16*(4), 3-10.

Robertson, M. (1986). Mental disorders among homeless persons in the United States: An overview of recent empirical literature. *Administration in Mental Health, 14*(Fall), 14-27.

Rossi, P. (1989). *Without shelter: Homelessness in the 1980s.* New York: Priority Press.

Rossi, P. (1991). *Down and out in America: The origins of homelessness.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rubin, H. J. (1994). There aren't going to be any bakeries here if there is no money to afford jellyrolls: The organic theory of community-based development. *Social Problems, 41*(3), 401.

Schwendinger, H., & Schwendinger, J. (1992). Review of Gregg Barak, *Gimme Shelter. Journal of Social Justice, 19*(4), 144-149.

Silberman, M. (1994). *Resource mobilization and the reduction of prison violence.* Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, Los Angeles, CA.

Sloss, M. (1984). The crisis of homelessness: Its dimensions and solutions. *Urban and Social Change Review, 17*(2), 18-20.

Smith, C., & Kornblum, W. (1989). *In the field.* New York: Praeger.

Snow, D., Baker, S. G., & Anderson, L. (1989). Criminality and homelessness: An empirical assessment. *Social Problems, 36*(5), 532-549.

Snow. D., Baker, S. G., & Anderson, L. (1993). *Down on their luck: A study of homeless street people.* Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Snow, D. A., & Cress, D. (1994). Negotiating the public realm: Stigma management and collective action among the homeless. *Research in Community Sociology, 4*(Supplement), 121-143.

Steinberg, S. (1989). *The myth of ethnicity.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Sterk, E., & Putkinson, N. (1992). Someone to count on: Homeless, male drug users and their friendship relations. *Urban Anthropology, 21*(3), 235-251.

Stratton, L. (1993). Racial difference in men's unemployment. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 46*(3).

Sutherland, E., & Cressey, D. (1960). *Principles of criminology* (6th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott.

Sutherland, E., & Locke, H. Jr. (1936). *Twenty thousand homeless men.* Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Reprinted New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1971.

Takai, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multiculturalism.* Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.

Thomas, C. W. (1975). Structure and social psychological correlates of prisonization. *Criminology, 16*(3).

Timmer, D. (1988). Homelessness as deviance: The ideology of the shelter. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 16*(2), 26-34.

Wagner, D. (1993). *Checkerboard square: Culture and resistance in a homeless community.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Wagner, D. (1994). Beyond the pathology of non-work: Alternating activities in a street community. *Social Work, 39*(4), 718-727.

Wagner, D. (1995). Beyond the conventional wisdom about the homeless: Cultural resistance on the street. *Research in Community Sociology, 5*, 127-142.

Wengard, A. (1984). *Life after prison.* Chicago, IL: Herald Press.

Williams, T. (1993). *The cocaine kids.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Williams, T. (1994). *Crackhouse: Notes from the end of the line.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Williams, T., & Kornblum, W. (1981). Youth's right to work. *Social Policy, 12*(1), 44-48.

Williams, T., & Kornblum, W. (1994). *The uptown kids.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Wilson, W. J. (1984). *The declining significance of race.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The declining significance of race: Blacks and changing American institutions.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1988). *The truly disadvantaged.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J., & Neckerman, K. (1986). Poverty and family structure. In S. H. Danzinger & D. H. Weinberg (Eds.), *Fighting poverty: What works and what doesn't.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Willie, C. V. (1981). *A new look at black families* (2nd ed.). Bayside, NY: General Hall.

Willie, C. V. (1981). *Race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status: A theoretical analysis of their relationships.* Bayside, NY: General Hall.

Winick, C. (1974). *Sociological aspects of drug dependency.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishers.

Winick, C. (1978). *Deviance and mass media.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishers.

Yeager, S. (1994). *The politics of homelessness.* New York: University Press of America.

Yeich, S. (1994). *The politics of ending homelessness.* New York: University Press of America.

Zingraff, M. T. (1975). Prisonization as an effective inhibitor of effective resocialization. *Criminology, 13*(3), 366-386.

Zingraff, M. T. (1976). Organizational structure as a determinant of prisonization: An analysis of the consequences of alienation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19*(Jan.), 98-117.