

Péter Győri and the "3rd of February Team"¹:

Homeless Routes

Since 1999, we have been repeatedly conducting a data-collection survey among homeless people, on the same day (3rd of February) of each year, and with identical methodology. In the course of the six surveys we carried out between 1999 and 2004, we asked certain constant questions in order to record the social-demographic status of our subjects surveyed (age, sex, education, employability, income, time spent as homeless, flat-less, etc.); and, besides those, each year we asked a few clusters of questions serving a more detailed, more comprehensive analysis and documentation of the situations and lives of homeless people. Such clusters of questions were:

- yearly „time-balance” concerning where our subjects had lived and slept during the 12 months of the year, and what distinctive features can be observed in the usage of the street – night shelters – hostels – flats
- what attractions and repulsions, considerations or constraints had played a role in someone’s sleeping in a public area, night shelter or hostel
- we asked in detail about friendship and family relations, about the causes of losing a flat or sleeping on the street, and about the places and people the interviewees characteristically got help from in different situations
- we inquired into maltreatment, atrocities and discrimination
- we asked about the state of health and complaints of the subjects, so as to be able to compare it to the state of health of the non-homeless population
- we asked about the familiarity and „reputation” of the services, and about satisfaction/unsatisfaction of the service-users.

We start our present study with a short summary of the main tendencies represented in the surveys conducted in the past five years concerning the changing and unchanging features of

¹ Members of the team: Zoltán Bényei (Menhely, 1999-2000), Péter Breitner (Menhely, 2003-2004), András Gróf (Twist, 2003-2004), Zoltán Gurály (Menhely, 1999-2004), Péter Győri (1999-2004), György Mezei (Twist, 1999-2004), József Pelle (BMSZKI, 2001-2004). Zoltán Gurály is the organiser of the survey, and Péter Győri is the finaliser of the studies.

the social-demographic composition of homeless people in Budapest; then we try to summarize how many people had taken part in all six surveys conducted so far, and how many people (and when) entered into or fell out of the survey. Following that, we try to grab some specific characteristics of the organisation of homeless living by analysing some of the above mentioned specific question-clusters: what can we find out about people living on the street or people sleeping in insecure accommodation, what does the „schedule” of one day look like among homeless people, how and where are the days of our subjects spent, to what extent are they using the world outside the services, do they still have desires and ideas of getting on in life. Finally, we introduce the main results of the comparative analysis concerning the state of health of homeless people living in Budapest².

I.

Constant and Changing Features

1. Comparison of Six Surveys (1999 – 2004)

We conducted the data collection – meant to be „all-inclusive” – at the same places and at the same hostels in all six years, still, there were very few cases when we met people we had surveyed before³. Despite the exchange of service-users (answering the surveys), we found that defining characteristics of the group of homeless people in Budapest as to paths of life, social situations and future chances were all too constant. (This is as if in an average semi-detached house in Budapest, we would have the names on the post-stands changed every year, while

² Our present paper is not so much centred around one line of thought, we rather try to introduce these different slices, in the hope of further consideration. We elaborated the conclusions of the 2004 question „*Have you ever been called a gypsy?*” in a separate study: Gabriella Lengyel: Homeless People Presumed to be of Gypsy Ethnicity”.

³ We have already mentioned this in detail: Zoltán Gurály – Péter Győri - György Mezei – József Pelle: On the Margin. Homeless People in Budapest on the Turn of the Century (1999 - 2000 - 2001). But later we will get back to this phenomenon.

the titles below the names – physician, lawyer, entrepreneur, plumber – would remain almost unchanged.)

The age distribution of homeless people staying in Budapest is essentially unchanged: one tenth of them is below thirty and one tenth is over sixty years of age, one fifth is between 20 and 30, and the rest, 51-61% of them is of active age, being 40-59 years old. One fifth of the subjects surveyed each year is female, and the rest male – this is obviously also related to the ratio of female and male places in homeless hostels. The educational composition is also essentially constant: 5% of them have not finished elementary school, another 4-5% even have a degree in higher education; 20% have a high-school diploma, 30% have a technical school and 40% an elementary school education. Each year, a little over one third of those surveyed do not have a permanent address, one fourth of them have a registered address outside of Budapest – mostly in another town, and about 40% of the subjects (a thousand people) had a permanent address in Budapest. A much higher number, about 1500-1900 subjects (66-74%) had at least a temporary address in Budapest (at a homeless hostel, if no other place).

A decisive majority of homeless people living in Budapest said to have been homeless for a number of years. The number and rate of those saying to have been homeless for more than ten years keep rising among the subjects (17 to 25 %, 430 to 680 people). The rate of those having become homeless within one year of the survey is astonishingly similar each year (it is again and again 14% of those surveyed, 350 people). Among the causes of becoming homeless, personal conflicts and relationship-problems keep dominating, and the significance of them even increases slightly (62-68 %); the second most important group of causes is the group of economical causes (unemployment, problems with paying the rent and bills); all fourth subject said to have become homeless for such a problem (600-900 people). The number of those denoting getting out of an service (hospital, prison, state-care) as the direct cause of becoming homeless has been decreasing among the subjects of the survey (230-160 people). Three fourth to four fifth of homeless people live alone, and only a small ratio of them (250-360 people) has a group-like relationship network.

The ratio of those claiming to be incapable of work keeps rising among the homeless people of Budapest (34–50 %), while the number of those having no income at all keeps getting smaller (20–15 %). Almost every second homeless person of Budapest tries to make a living

from an income related to some kind of work, while the others get a pension, a disability pension (26–29 %), or are vegetating on social support only (7-11 %).

10-14% of the surveyed homeless people in Budapest – 240-360 people on any February the 3rd – had spent the previous night in a public place⁴; around a hundred subjects (3-4%) had slept in a flat that day (they became part of the sample at mobile tea-runs); the smaller part of the rest had slept in permanent services for homeless people (home for the aged homeless, rehabilitative hostel) (8-11 %, 120-300 people), and the larger part of the rest had slept at hostels for the homeless (35-55 %, 900-1400 people) or at night shelters (32-37 %, 850-1000 people). The number of places in permanent services (home for the aged homeless, rehabilitative hostel) maintained by the organisations participating in the data collection has grown to two and a half times the original amount in the past five years; the number of places in hostels has definitely decreased, and the number of places at night shelters has remained unsteadily constant. Considering the type of organisation, we can see that the number of places in services maintained by the local governments had decreased in this period (by around a hundred, according to the survey); non-governmental organisations had maintained invariably 1100 places, and other, religious organisations had been maintaining around 200 places for years now.

2. Who had and who had not been reached by us so far?

As we mentioned earlier, the survey in 2004 was the sixth such data-collection of ours. We were obviously interested in whom we had already “reached” and asked from those surveyed in the year 2004, and who were the ones we met – at least in the course of the data-collection – for the first time now. This is significant partly because it means some kind of a “self control” relating to the “all-inclusive” nature of the previous surveys, and partly because it may point out group-characteristics that can be found between the newly and the previously surveyed subjects. For this purpose we have differentiated three groups:

- *Subjects surveyed for the first time:* those subjects who had never been surveyed before 2004

⁴ This was largely influenced by the extent to which the street survey could be organised.

- *Subjects that were sometimes surveyed, sometimes not:* those people that had been at least once surveyed in any previous year, but then there were surveys they were not part of
- *Continuously surveyed after a certain date:* subjects that had previously been questioned, and, following that date, “continuously” had been part of our surveys (it may make the interpretation more difficult, but we also included those subjects here that first appeared in our survey in 2003, and then they were part of the 2004 survey, too).

The “self control” shows that indeed it was the first time now that we asked the decisive majority (85%) of those having become homeless within one year⁵, and the longer a person had been homeless, the more likely it is that he or she had been part of the surveys of the past five years. Among those asked in 2004, every second person saying to have been homeless for more than ten years had been surveyed before⁶. However, we must notice that 72% of those – presently – saying to have had slept in a public place a year ago had never been surveyed before, while two thirds of them now answered that they had been homeless for more than five years⁷. It is also of important consequences that the ratio of those people who keep entering and then falling out of the survey is the highest at homeless hostels – where the data collection takes place annually and can be basically considered all-inclusive. At these services, the number of those who had never been surveyed before also refer to a relatively significant fluctuation (hostels: 45 %, night shelter: 55 %).

We can also state that in the course of the data collections so far, we have been better at reaching those suffering from illnesses, living on social security support, who are lonely (this is partly related to the state of the regularly surveyed hostel-users), or – as we mentioned earlier –

⁵ People whom we had previously surveyed some time before, while, according to their answers they have only become homeless within one year, had almost exclusively been living in some kind of a flat at the time of the previous questioning – they had used the services of tea-distributions, but, in their opinion, had not been homeless yet.

⁶ Can this mean that it is likely that in the course of our data collection, we are “reaching” at least half, but rather two thirds of homeless people living in Budapest at the time, which would mean that their number at certain dates of the winter is about five or six thousand? We will see that the answer needs further analyses.

⁷ Naturally, we have been aware that each year we are questioning only a part of those homeless people living in public places who get support from outreach workers – this is primarily related to organisational and financial issues of the survey.

having been homeless for a longer period of time. Those homeless people with “better conditions” and who were more active had been less reached by the surveys.

	Those surveyed in 2004 and whether they had been surveyed in the past (1999 – 2003) surveys?			
	Never before	Sometimes yes - sometimes no	Always after a certain date	Total
Total	55,6	23,3	21,2	100,0
Sex				
male	55,9	23,6	20,5	100,0
female	59,7	18,1	22,2	100,0
Age				
--- 19 years of age	94,1		5,9	100,0
20 – 29 years of age	71,6	11,9	16,4	100,0
30 – 39 years of age	65,7	17,1	17,1	100,0
40 – 49 years of age	58,4	25,6	16,1	100,0
50 – 59 years of age	51,5	25,3	23,2	100,0
60 – 69 years of age	43,1	28,3	28,6	100,0
70 ---- years of age	50,0	18,5	31,5	100,0
Education				
below 8 elementaries	58,7	19,2	22,1	100,0
8 elementaries	59,9	20,8	19,2	100,0
technical school	51,3	24,8	23,9	100,0
high school diploma	55,5	25,7	18,8	100,0
college	59,8	17,4	22,8	100,0
university	54,8	19,0	26,2	100,0
Years spent in homelessness				
within one year	85,0	6,1	8,9	100,0
more, than one year	68,6	5,8	25,6	100,0
more, than five years	51,9	24,7	23,4	100,0
more, than ten years	46,1	32,2	21,6	100,0
Illness restricting employability				
yes	48,6	26,1	25,3	100,0
no	62,1	20,1	17,8	100,0
Whom are you living with?				
alone	52,5	24,4	23,2	100,0
is member of a group (gang)	60,5	21,9	17,5	100,0
living in a family (companion) relationship with someone	69,5	15,5	15,0	100,0
Types of income				
wages	61,4	20,2	18,3	100,0
social security support	42,4	28,6	29,0	100,0
social support	56,0	18,0	26,0	100,0
Have you ever been called a gypsy?				

yes	57,5	23,9	18,6	100,0
no	55,6	22,6	21,8	100,0
Where did you spend last night?				
In one's own flat	83,3		16,7	100,0
Other accommodation (favour, rent, workers' hostel)	77,4	14,5	8,1	100,0
Hostel	44,7	26,2	29,1	100,0
Night shelter	54,6	25,3	20,1	100,0
In a public place	74,6	14,8	10,6	100,0
Other	53,9	21,7	24,4	100,0
Where did you sleep a year ago?				
In one's own flat	82,3	6,9	10,8	100,0
Other accommodation (favour, rent, workers' hostel)	74,5	15,0	10,5	100,0
Hostel	37,1	29,2	33,7	100,0
Night shelter	45,9	30,3	23,8	100,0
In a public place	71,6	16,7	11,7	100,0
Other	50,8	21,9	27,3	100,0
Total	55,6	23,3	21,2	100,0
People	1381	579	526	2486

3. The Paths of those Questioned in 2004

When analysing our previous data-collections, we have come to the conclusion that within the world of “living on the margin”, deep poverty and uncertain accommodation, a rather intensive inward and outward mobility, fluctuation can be detected between having no self-supported accommodation (and needing an institutional one) and having some kind of self-supported, but insecure form of accommodation. This conclusion was – partly – based on the fact that among those surveyed in certain homeless services on the 3rd of February of each year, we primarily found new people, whom had not been surveyed before, while the social-demographic composition of the totality hardly alters. Our conclusion relating to inward and outward mobility was strengthened by the study of the turnover data (people moving in and out) of the individual services, as well as former studies of data concerning forms of accommodation preceding institutional ones.

However, we had not had effective empirical, statistical information concerning “*getting back*” to the homeless state or the homeless provision-system within this inward and outward mobility, we could at most rely on suppositions. To study this aspect, we now have chosen the following methodology: we have studied how many people from those surveyed on the 3rd of

February in 2004 had been questioned in 2003 as well; and how many people had not been asked then. We then looked at whom had, and whom had not been questioned in 2002 from those surveyed in both 2003 and 2004, and how many people from those who had been surveyed in 2004, but not in 2003, had already been questioned in 2002..., and so on, all the way to 1999, the first survey. (The results are summarised in the following table.)

- Among the 2724 people surveyed on the 3rd of February in 2004, there were altogether 59 people who participated in all six data-collections so far (**2 %**)!⁸ Since the 3rd of February in 2000, 104 (4%) people participated continuously in all following surveys (their rate is 7% since 2001, 12 % since 2002 and 26% since 2003).
- Among the 2724 people surveyed on the 3rd of February in 2004, there were altogether 431 persons (**16%**) who had not been surveyed for a period of time, but then from a certain year (including the preceding one in 2003) had continuously participated as homeless persons of Budapest.
- Among the 2724 people surveyed on the 3rd of February in 2004, there were altogether 1575 persons who had not been surveyed since 1999, and it was the first time we met them (**58 %**).
- The rest – **24%** of those surveyed on the 3rd of February in 2004 – had all been “moving in and out” during the past years: they had once appeared as clients in homeless services, and then left, and now we found them as users of services again. 20% of those moving in and out had only left the service for one year, while 33% spent at least three years outside the homeless service system.

This means that every fourth person presently using homeless services in Budapest had done so in the past five, had left for a shorter or longer period of time, and then returned. Almost every fifth person had been using the services continuously for a couple of years, while every second person had never been found among service users before.

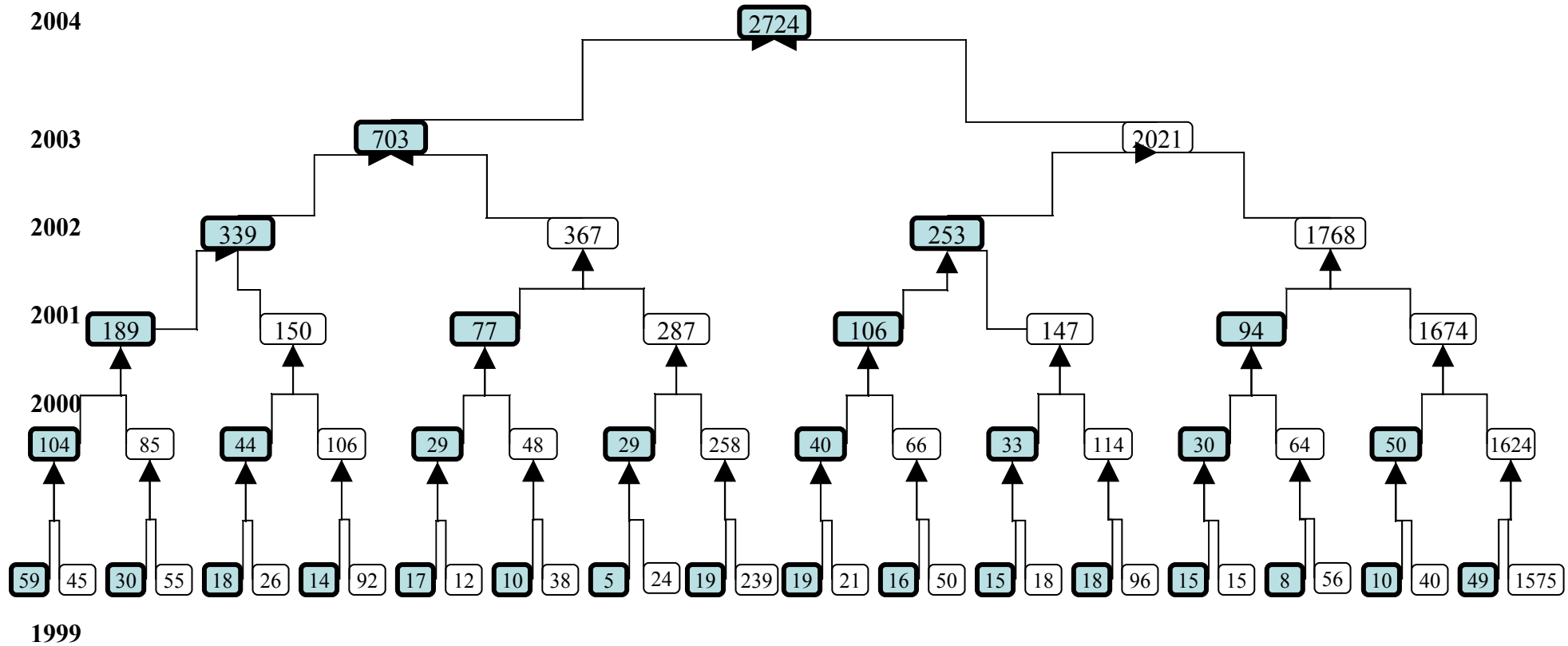
⁸ Only those cases are included in the numbers here, for which the relating information is reliably recorded. The available data is suitable for a reliable tracking of the main tendencies, while we must calculate with smaller numerical distortions as a result of changes in the participating services, in the number of places as well as in the number of those questioned on the street.

On the other hand, this also means that from the 2500 people surveyed in 1999, 2200 people (88%) cannot be found among the service-users on the 3rd of February 2004; this ratio among those surveyed in 2000 is 89 % (2001: 84 %, 2002: 76 %, 2003: 73 %). Some of them had used services for a period of time, and then having left the service for good continued their journey in the world of uncertain accommodation (or in a permanent type of service), while part of them would appear again in years to come as users of services.

The Routes of those Surveyed in 2004, Based on Surveys from 1999 to 2004

Part of the survey in the given year

Is not part of the survey in the given year



Those not participating
in the 2004 survey
(rounded)

from the 2500 people surveyed in 1999

2200

from the 2700 people surveyed in 2000

2400

2700

Included in the 2004 survey

from the 2500 people surveyed in 2001

2100

from the 2500 people surveyed in 2002

1900

from the 2600 people surveyed in 2003

1900

II.

Certain Characteristics of the Organisation of the Life of Homeless People

1. Special groups on the margin: people living on the street and people sleeping in insecure accommodation

In 2004, too, the data-collection mostly reached those living in homeless hostels (1739 people); however, we are trying more and more to reach and question those sleeping in public places, on the street (521 people), and each year there are people among those surveyed (e.g. among those using street food-distribution services) who have spent their previous night in some form of an insecure accommodation (122 people). It is inevitable to ask what the differences and similarities between these two groups and “the average”, or to homeless people living in hostels, are.

The ratio of men and women is close to that of the average homeless data among rough sleepers; there are more young and less older individuals among them; they have a much lower education (every other person sleeping in public places has 8 elementaries at the most). They do not differ from the other subjects in what they mention as causes of their homelessness; almost every second person, too, denotes familiar-personal reasons. More than two thirds of them have birth-places other than Budapest, and fewer among them have an address in Budapest. The rate of those from the gypsy ethnicity is highest among rough sleepers (26 %). A much larger rate than the average live in groups or gangs, and the ratio of those living in a companion-relationship is twice the average of other homeless people (28%!). Every third person living on the street says to have been homeless for more than ten years, and generally, rough sleepers have been homeless for a number of years, although one fifth of them have slept in a flat some time even within the past year. Despite the fact that they have been homeless for a long time, quite a few of them have not been reached in the past surveys (75 %). More rough sleepers have income mainly from work, than those living in hostels; compared to that group, there is a much smaller ratio, who suffer from some form of illness restricting the capability to work.

Two thirds of those spending the previous night in some kind of a flat (that they do not own) have done that at an occasional acquaintance, the rest are lodgers or slept in a flat as a relative. In this group of subjects sleeping in a flat, but using some form of homeless service, the ratio of men and women is average as compared to other subjects, and they are a little younger (or young-middle aged). The rate of those having a registered permanent address is much higher than average in this group (71 %), and so is the rate of those born in Budapest (57 %). They have the highest level of education, one third of them have at least a high-school diploma. Although fewer of them are sick, the number of those suffering from illnesses restrict-

ing their capability to work is very high (32 %). The ratio of those living on social security service alone is similarly very high (32 %); higher than among subjects sleeping on the street or at night shelters. The rate of those living alone is also very high (58 %), although it does not reach the average of all people questioned. The rate of subjects from the gypsy ethnicity is the lowest here. It is remarkable that more of them admit to have been called a work-shirker, a bum or a homeless than those living in homeless services. The rate of those whom we have never questioned in the course of the former surveys is highest in this group (77 %), although a great majority of them say to have been homeless for more than a year (altogether, they have been homeless for a slightly shorter than average period of time). The causes in this case are also of the personal, familiar kind, but they mention the flat-mob, and their previous flat became uninhabitable more frequently than the average.

From all this (and the information below), the following conclusions may be drawn relating to those living on the margin or in the vicinity of the margin

- on the one hand, there are groups that can be well differentiated – which are sometimes even separated –, like those people having lived on the street for a longer period of time, or those living among insecure conditions, or those having lived in hostels for years; and these groups have different lifestyles, background and perspectives,
- on the other hand, a part of the *people living on the margin* belong to the same group as the *people living in the vicinity of the margin*, having identical lifestyles, backgrounds and perspectives; and occasionally using accommodations and other institutionalised forms of support or homeless services is as much a part of this lifestyle as sleeping in rented, insecure accommodations or occasionally in a public place.

	Where did you sleep last night?				
	Surfed a couch, rent, workers' hostel	Hostel	Night shelter	Public place	Total
Place of residence on the day of questioning					
in a public place – unheated				61,7	11,7
not in a flat – heated				38,3	7,3
at an occasional acquaintance	63,7				2,8
in a night hostel			100,0		34,8
in a hostel		100,0			29,1
in a health/social service					10,7
at a relative	14,5				,6
in a sublease or bed-rent	16,9				,8
accommodation from the workplace	4,8				,2
Sex					
male	80,6	78,8	85,8	82,3	82,4
female	19,4	21,2	14,2	17,7	17,6
Age					
--- 19 years of age	4,1	,6	,4	,4	,6
20 - 29 years of age	8,1	6,5	9,3	8,0	7,3
30 - 39 years of age	22,0	16,7	22,1	23,2	19,5
40 - 49 years of age	25,2	26,9	30,8	36,7	29,0
50 - 59 years of age	31,7	36,2	29,1	24,6	31,9

60 - 69 years of age	7,3	10,3	7,3	5,7	9,8
70 ---- years of age	1,6	2,7	,9	1,4	1,9
Education					
below 8 elementaries	3,2	2,5	3,6	5,3	3,7
8 elementaries	35,5	38,7	35,4	52,1	40,4
technical school	25,0	28,7	35,1	22,4	29,9
high-school diploma	28,2	22,1	19,7	15,2	19,4
college	1,6	4,2	3,2	3,2	3,3
university	4,0	2,5	,8	,4	1,5
Place of birth					
Budapest	57,3	45,5	41,1	41,3	43,5
Registered permanent address					
no address	29,3	47,8	39,3	43,3	42,0
Budapest	40,7	30,6	28,5	25,4	30,7
town	18,7	12,1	19,9	20,9	16,9
village	11,4	9,6	12,2	10,4	10,5
Years spent as homeless					
within one year	16,4	12,3	11,1	10,7	11,4
more than one year	8,2	9,2	8,9	5,3	8,1
more than five years	14,8	8,9	8,4	7,8	8,5
more than ten years	18,9	19,4	21,3	30,1	23,8
Years spent after living in a flat					
within one year	42,7	16,2	21,8	21,7	20,5
more than one year	12,0	12,6	10,4	8,2	10,4
more than five years	7,7	9,0	7,6	6,4	7,3
more than ten years	6,8	15,5	15,0	17,9	16,9
Were you included in the past (1999 – 2003) surveys?					
Never before	77,4	44,7	54,6	74,6	56,6
Sometimes yes, sometimes no	14,5	26,2	25,3	14,8	22,6
Continuously after a certain date	8,1	29,1	20,1	10,6	20,9
Causes of having become homeless					
personal reason	49,6	42,7	52,1	48,8	47,2
economical reason	26,4	28,1	28,8	25,1	28,7
leaving a service	10,7	10,1	9,4	10,5	9,7
Cause of having become homeless (mentioned first)					
familiar conflicts	43,0	36,0	40,9	42,3	38,7
divorce	11,6	12,8	16,2	13,7	14,5
could not pay the rent	4,1	7,3	4,3	4,6	5,3
evicted		3,2	5,0	4,2	4,1
sold his/her flat	3,3	4,5	5,1	2,7	4,3
his/her flat, house became uninhabitable	2,5	1,1	1,2	,6	1,2
released from prison	1,7	,9	1,6	5,7	2,1
coming from the hospital, social home	9,1	7,7	5,2	7,0	7,0
released from the state's care	5,0	8,0	4,8	3,8	5,2
accommodation from the workplace ceased	3,3	7,2	3,7	3,2	4,9
flat-mob	10,7	7,0	7,3	6,5	7,6
other	5,8	4,2	4,8	5,7	5,0
Illness restricting employability					
yes	31,9	59,0	37,9	40,1	48,4
no	68,1	41,0	62,1	59,9	51,6
Whom do you live with?					
alone	57,8	84,6	75,3	50,5	72,8
member of group (gang)	13,8	7,9	15,0	22,0	13,6
lives in a familiar (companion) relationship with someone	27,6	7,2	9,1	27,5	13,2
Types of income					
wages	62,7	55,4	67,4	70,0	58,5
social security support	32,4	38,5	21,9	19,7	32,5
social support	4,9	6,1	10,7	10,3	9,0
Have you ever been called a gypsy?					

yes	14,6	14,8	20,0	26,1	18,9
Have you ever been called a bum?					
yes	44,3	33,3	42,9	65,2	45,7
Have you ever been called a homeless?					
yes	55,3	44,0	45,9	69,0	52,5
Have you ever been called a work-shirker?					
yes	27,0	14,0	20,8	34,0	22,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Persons	122	791	948	521	2727

2. Eight Hours of Work, Eight Hours of Recreation, Eight Hours of Entertainment

In 2004, we asked homeless people in Budapest about “*How much time (how many hours) did you spend yesterday with...*” sleeping, entertainment, work, standing in lines, etc. The “yesterday” of the 3rd of February in 2004 fell on a Monday, so the answers can be used to draw up the general schedule of an average winter working day. We are not giving the particulars of the specific methodological problems of time-balance studies,⁹ we would however like to mention that the subjects were able to report on their previous day much more accurately than we had preliminarily expected: with altogether one hour missing, they were able to account for their activities on the previous day¹⁰.

The subjects surveyed spent an average time of exactly 8 hours a day with sleeping. They spent 5.3 hours with entertainment, watching TV, cleaning, eating and drinking. They spent an average time of only 3.4 hours with work, which is exceeded by the time spent on transportation, office routine and standing in lines, which take up 3.9 hours of a day.

The time-scale of homeless women and men differ from each other in that women sleep a little more, spend more time cleaning, eating and drinking, but spend much less time with active work during the day.

Those subjects having illnesses restricting their working capability hardly spent 2 hours a day on an average with work; they spent more time than the others with sleep, and almost six hours of their day was spent with entertainment, watching TV, cleaning, eating and drinking. We find a similar structure of activities among those not having 8 years of elementary education, and we can also state that on average, the higher the education-level of the group, the more the time spent on work in a day, and the less on sleep, watching TV, while the more on entertainment forms besides watching TV.

From the daily schedule of those subjects having become homeless on one or two years, daily work took an average time of four – four and a half hours yet, while in the group of those hav-

⁹ For details see: Sándor Szalai: *Idő a mérlegen* (Time on the Scale), Gondolat, Budapest, 1983.

¹⁰ When interpreting the data, it must be considered that we are always talking about the “total time-scale of the totality of the subjects”, that is when calculating the average amounts, we are also calculating with those who had not participated in the given activity at all (their zero hours then decrease the average time).

ActivityDid not participate in such activity yesterday (%)office routine73work54entertainment55standing in lines53watching TV43other42,5transportation16cleaning, eating-drinking2,5

ing been homeless for nine or ten years, this time was only two and a half – three hours. It is a common characteristic of all groups that they spent more than two hours a day with transportation, almost one hour with office routine, and exactly one hour standing in lines.

We saw that certain activities did not appear at all in the schedule of the previous day of a great number of subjects (54 % did not work, 55 % did not have any entertainment, 53 % did not stand in lines, etc.). That is why it is worth studying briefly how much time those subjects spent on the activities, who actually did them.

Homeless men with work spent 7.5 hours a day with work, while women spent 7 hours. The older the subjects, the less time they spent with work, while homeless people over 60 having work still spent an average time of 6 hours a day working. The daily time spent with work increased parallel with education, while it decreased with the time spent as homeless. Working subjects, who were living in a familiar/companion relationship spent almost 8 hours a day working, lonely ones spent 7.5 hours, while those living in gangs spent only 7 hours a day working. It is remarkable that those working despite illnesses restricting their working capability also spent 7 hours a day on an average working, and even those spent 5-6 hours a day with work whose main income was some form of social security support (pension, disability pension), or even social support – but do some work beside those. Among those working, those who believed that they would be in a better situation in one year spent one hour more with work than those who believed that their situation would worsen. And this is what we find if we look at future ideas concerning their accommodation.

Those who had the opportunity of entertainment participated in that for 3 hours a day on an average, and those watching TV did that also for 3 hours on an average. (The time spent in front of the TV was less on an average among the younger, those having a higher education, who were healthier, living on wages, and having spent less time being homeless.)

Those having to do any office routine had to spend an average of almost two and a half hours of the day doing that, and altogether two hours was spent on standing in lines among those having to do that. 1300 people of those surveyed had to stand in line on the previous day somewhere, for something. 500 people among them cued at a soup-kitchen, day centre, or other homeless service; 600 people did office-routine, while others stood in line at other places.

„There is a new and expressive boundary of lifestyles between those in need and those having a secure livelihood: that of meaningless waiting, standing in a line. Can one avoid it or not? It is perhaps not even worth mentioning that these long times spent waiting in, these lines are not only wasting time, but also humiliating; they immediately set and enforce the relationship between those waiting and those waited on: the subordinate configuration killing dignity – almost regardless of how the one “waited on” is then behaving, and how he or she decides. But I am afraid that only a very few of the “waited on” people – clerks, physicians, social work-

ers serving homeless people – feel tortured because of the humiliating situation their clients are in “out there” in the aisle, in the hall, on the street. After all, these people waiting surely have plenty of time... ”¹¹

Considering the full circle of homeless people surveyed, instead of eight, they have three and a half hours of work, they have the eight hours of rest (sleeping), and instead of the 8 hours of entertainment, they are left with 1.4 hours of entertainment, 1.7 hours of TV-watching, 2.2 hours of cleaning-eating-drinking and 3.9 hours of standing in lines – office routine and transportation.

¹¹ Ottília Solt: Szociálpolitika alulnézetből. Nyitóelőadás a fővárosi szociálpolitika jövőjéről rendezett konferencián, (Social-Policy from Below. Opening lecture on the conference about the future of social-policy), Budapest, 17th December 1996

	How much time did you spend with the following activities yesterday? (total of those surveyed) (hours)									
	Work	Office- routine	Standing in lines	Transporta- tion	Cleaning, eat- ing, drinking	Watching TV	Entertain- ment	Other	Sleeping	Altogether
Sex										
male	3,60	,64	,90	2,28	2,17	1,76	1,46	2,27	8,01	22,99
female	2,47	,73	1,05	2,36	2,30	1,68	1,05	3,33	8,29	23,23
Education										
below 8 elementaries	1,40	,33	1,00	2,36	2,17	2,13	1,07	2,95	8,65	22,09
8 elementaries	3,22	,57	,93	2,34	2,19	1,79	1,20	2,48	8,26	22,90
8 el.+training	3,43	,82	1,00	1,98	1,85	1,46	1,36	2,71	7,90	22,51
technical school	3,76	,73	,87	2,27	2,22	1,72	1,54	2,26	7,98	23,26
high-school diploma	3,37	,80	,92	2,27	2,18	1,72	1,56	2,61	7,80	23,15
diploma+profession	2,71	,21	,29	1,57	1,50	1,71	1,14	4,86	9,00	23,29
college	4,57	,59	1,30	2,01	2,37	1,26	1,49	2,01	7,39	23,02
university	3,83	,50	,58	2,17	2,26	1,35	1,96	3,08	7,48	23,29
Years spent as homeless										
within one year	4,00	,85	,98	2,37	2,17	1,47	1,24	2,39	7,88	23,24
more than one year	4,37	,72	,91	2,39	2,01	1,91	1,30	2,10	7,26	22,98
more than five years	3,64	,67	,85	2,31	2,09	1,69	1,45	2,21	8,31	23,18
more than ten years	2,94	,62	,99	2,37	2,20	1,77	1,66	2,64	8,15	23,30
Illness restricting employability										
yes	2,20	,65	,90	2,12	2,25	2,03	1,60	2,83	8,44	22,96
no	4,46	,67	,91	2,44	2,14	1,45	1,21	2,13	7,73	23,06
Have you ever been called a gypsy?										
yes	3,48	,63	,93	2,41	2,15	1,59	1,24	2,51	7,89	22,72
no	3,35	,65	,90	2,24	2,20	1,79	1,44	2,41	8,13	23,06
Total	3,40	,65	,92	2,29	2,19	1,74	1,39	2,46	8,06	23,03

	How much time did you spend with the following activities yesterday? (those having done the activity) (hours)									
	Work	Office-routine	Standing in lines	Transportation	Cleaning, eating, drinking	Watching TV	Entertainment	Other	Sleeping	Altogether
Sex										
male	7,46	2,44	2,04	2,71	2,23	3,04	3,14	4,17	8,08	22,99
female	6,91	2,32	1,79	2,76	2,34	3,16	2,71	4,62	8,36	23,23
Age										
--- 19 years of age	7,68	1,79	2,44	3,59	2,29	2,59	3,22	2,14	8,21	25,09
20 - 29 years of age	7,51	2,74	1,79	2,78	2,39	2,60	3,40	4,27	7,69	23,65
30 - 39 years of age	7,54	2,57	1,97	2,80	2,26	2,76	2,99	3,76	7,68	22,91
40 - 49 years of age	7,28	2,41	2,07	2,89	2,20	2,82	2,91	4,14	7,89	22,97
50 - 59 years of age	7,44	2,41	1,92	2,57	2,22	3,26	3,13	4,38	8,45	23,10
60 - 69 years of age	6,53	1,85	1,85	2,45	2,40	3,64	3,25	4,92	8,98	22,73
70 ---- years of age	6,38	1,85	2,09	2,03	2,14	3,99	2,96	5,35	8,81	22,35
Education										
0			10,00	12,00	2,00		4,00	1,00		29,00
below 8 elementaries	5,76	1,86	1,91	2,96	2,23	3,78	2,82	4,54	8,65	22,09
8 elementaries	7,17	2,17	1,95	2,77	2,25	3,05	2,84	4,31	8,35	22,90
8 el.+training	7,20	2,30	2,00	2,31	1,89	2,46	3,17	4,75	7,90	22,51
technical school	7,54	2,71	1,96	2,72	2,26	3,06	3,21	4,14	8,03	23,26
high-school diploma	7,49	2,62	1,98	2,64	2,23	3,09	3,24	4,43	7,87	23,15
diploma+profession	9,50	,75	1,00	1,83	1,50	2,40	4,00	4,86	9,00	23,29
college	8,08	2,08	2,61	2,31	2,45	2,58	3,43	3,65	7,47	23,02
university	7,32	1,91	1,88	2,46	2,32	2,83	3,59	4,05	7,48	23,29
Illness restricting employability										
yes	6,92	2,24	2,02	2,71	2,32	3,42	3,22	4,45	8,52	22,96
no	7,60	2,60	1,96	2,72	2,20	2,69	2,97	4,17	7,78	23,06
Types of income										
wages	7,75	2,33	1,91	2,42	2,17	2,49	2,82	3,76	7,54	23,36
social security support	5,87	2,34	1,97	2,62	2,40	3,68	3,35	4,77	9,08	22,86
social support	5,60	2,59	2,08	2,58	2,30	3,01	3,42	4,44	8,52	22,48
Years spent as homeless										

within one year	8,28	2,59	1,92	2,74	2,23	2,53	2,95	4,08	7,96	23,24
more than one year	7,73	2,53	1,81	2,69	2,06	3,00	2,86	3,95	7,46	22,98
more than five years	7,13	2,37	1,68	2,70	2,15	3,02	3,21	3,98	8,31	23,18
more than ten years	6,85	2,41	2,08	2,87	2,26	3,33	3,38	4,48	8,19	23,30
Where will you live in one year's time?										
doesn't know	6,82	2,20	1,98	2,70	2,22	3,09	2,95	3,30	7,89	21,05
in a public place - un-heated	6,35	2,52	2,35	3,94	2,35	3,83	3,24	5,51	7,96	22,88
not in a flat – heated	6,15	3,22	1,91	3,29	2,18	3,65	2,61	7,15	7,05	21,58
occasional acquaintance	5,25	1,80	2,35	3,15	2,65	3,03	3,28	4,32	7,88	22,96
at a relative	7,61	2,07	1,99	2,23	2,20	2,73	3,10	4,40	8,13	23,01
sublease/bed-rent	7,85	2,97	1,90	2,81	2,20	2,97	2,82	3,95	7,64	23,46
own lodging	8,09	2,64	1,85	2,51	2,32	2,89	2,99	4,21	7,77	23,20
own property	8,75	2,60	1,92	2,66	2,04	2,83	3,09	4,06	7,66	23,47
night hostel	6,73	2,07	2,13	2,76	2,24	2,67	2,94	3,99	8,17	23,06
hostel	7,68	2,22	1,78	2,36	2,36	2,99	3,08	4,34	8,01	23,27
health/social service	6,17	1,99	1,61	2,04	2,36	3,62	3,32	4,10	10,09	23,39
other	7,63	2,72	2,33	2,88	2,09	3,03	3,46	4,64	7,93	23,37
What will your situation be in one year's time?										
worse	6,81	2,39	2,18	3,02	2,28	3,22	3,36	4,46	8,04	22,55
better	7,71	2,54	1,94	2,66	2,20	2,94	3,02	4,21	8,02	23,21
doesn't know	6,99	2,17	1,84	2,61	2,29	3,15	3,06	4,19	8,32	22,88
Whom are you living with?										
alone	7,47	2,39	2,02	2,68	2,19	3,09	3,06	4,20	8,25	23,10
member of a group (gang)	6,72	2,40	1,89	2,70	2,44	3,06	3,36	4,48	7,82	22,58
familiar (companion) relationship	7,87	2,66	1,92	3,11	2,33	2,98	2,95	5,01	7,85	23,32
Total	7,42	2,42	1,99	2,74	2,25	3,07	3,09	4,34	8,14	23,05

3. Reflection of One Day

Those having homes may have a mental picture that “the homeless” are always on the street, sleep in tunnels or on benches, and do nothing. Meanwhile, perhaps even those working in support organisations have a picture that “the homeless” always behave as couch-potatoes on their beds in the hostels, where they are allowed to do that; or when they must leave the night shelters, they go to day centres and sit around for the whole day. This all is closely connected to how “visible” or “invisible” homeless people in a city actually are, how much their time, lives and everyday existence is

centred around services; how much individuals are “pulled at” by certain supportive services during their everyday activities; as a matter of fact, how much (how far and where) these people dare to move away, move around in the city. Well, these are the reasons why – besides who spent how much time with this or that activity – we were also interested in how this time was really spent. That is why we also asked “*Where were you and what were you doing at 10 a.m. and at 2 p.m. yesterday?*”

At 10 o’clock in the morning, a significant part of the subjects (43%) were in a service (this could be a homeless service, their own hostel, but also other public services, surgery, etc.). The others – almost at an equal rate – were either on the street, getting around, doing things (22 %), or working at their workplaces (19.4 %). At 2 o’clock in the afternoon, basically the same ratio of them was in the same places (2/5th in a service, 1/5th on the street, 1/5th at the workplace and 1/5th at other places). There were some inward and outward movements in the meantime: 1/5th of those on the street in the morning went to some service in the afternoon, while 1/5th of the people who were in services in the morning left that place and went out to the street or to other places. It is highly thought-provoking that 1/3rd of all those surveyed (around 900 people) could be found in some service both in the morning and in the afternoon; 17% of those surveyed (440 people) were continuously at their workplaces during the day; 400 people (15% of those surveyed) were on the street in the morning and in the afternoon as well.

It can also be stated that it is slightly more frequent among women (38%) than among men (32%) to be in some kind of a service both in the morning and in the afternoon, while it is much rarer for them to be at their workplaces the whole day (women: 8%, men: 19%)¹².

20-29 year-old men were at the largest rate at their workplaces at both denoted times of the day (30%), 31-39 year-old men were at the largest rate on the street at both denoted times (19%), while the ratio of those being in services at both times is by far highest among men over 70 years of age (61%).

However, when evaluating all information analysed here, we must consider that they refer to the full circle of those surveyed, characteristics of the different sub-groups may significantly differ from each other. “Our dwellers”, “our clients” are different – the staff of some of the services may say, and they may often be right. The users of certain services may even differ in where they had spent the night preceding the survey. There were hostels

¹² We only mention here that 19% of homeless women of gypsy ethnicity surveyed by us were in the street both in the morning and in the afternoon, while for non-gypsy women this ratio was only 14%, and we find 23% of men from the gypsy ethnicity also on the street, and only 14% of non-gypsy men. Only 26% of women (and 30% of men) of gypsy ethnicity can be found at both times in some service, while 42% of non-gypsy women (and 33% of men) can be found there. This observation needs further investigation, interpretation.

in which 71% of the dwellers had spent the day in the service, while in others only 13% of the dwellers stayed at “home”. (The ratio of dwellers spending the day in the service at specialised, rehabilitative hostels is around 68 – 98%.) 12% of the dwellers of one, while 58% of the dwellers of the other hostel were at their workplaces at the denoted times.

Considering another example, we found night shelters where 52% of the dwellers were on the street during the day, but in others this rate was only 6%, because most people were working, or spent their time at a service. There were great differences even among outreach services as to how much they were in touch with those spending the day on the streets, those working during the day, or those using homeless services.

These many kinds of significant differences may result primarily from the *selective mechanisms* of how the services pick their clients; they might be specialising in certain target-groups. It may result from the daily *regime*, when one can or cannot stay in the service; it may also result from whether there is a co-operation between services providing night and daily activities, etc. The real question is whether these organisational factors of service-provision organise everyday lives and movements of homeless people, or whether it is “the other way round”, the different solutions of organising service-provision are trying appropriately to serve the homeless sub-groups having differentiated ways of lives. We suppose that in case of a more detailed study, we would find examples of both this and that.

Service	Where were you yesterday afternoon?						
	street	workplace	service	other	flats	Total (%)	Total (people)
BMSZKI Dózsa hostel men	5,6	32,2	52,2	10,0		100	90
BMSZKI Dózsa hostel women	9,7	12,3	70,8	5,8	1,3	100	154
BMSZKI Alföldi hostel	12,0	16,7	63,3	4,7	3,3	100	150
BMSZKI Külső Mester hostel	6,9	57,8	29,3	5,2	,9	100	116
BMSZKI Bánya hostel for aged	14,3	1,6	74,6	9,5		100	63
BMSZKI Váltóház hostel	4,9	24,6	52,5	16,4	1,6	100	61
BMSZKI Táblás hostel	15,4	29,2	41,5	10,8	3,1	100	65
BMSZKI Dózsa night shelter women	20,0	15,0	55,0	5,0	5,0	100	20
BMSZKI Könyves night shelter	33,3	16,7	37,9	12,1		100	66
BMSZKI Előd night shelter	20,1	30,2	30,2	17,2	2,4	100	169
BMSZKI Előd protected night shelter	14,3	17,1	42,9	20,0	5,7	100	35
BMSZKI street	59,5	5,4	8,1	24,3	2,7	100	37
MV Ady hostel	2,5	55,0	37,5	5,0		100	40
Rés Pesti hostel			98,1		1,9	100	54
MMSZ Miklós hostel	17,0	57,4	12,8	10,6	2,1	100	47
Üdvhadsereg Dobozi hostel	13,6	22,7	57,6	1,5	4,5	100	66
MMSZ Borszéki rehab hostel	4,5	18,2	68,2	9,1		100	22
Menhely Vajda 3. night shelter	11,4	5,7	74,3	5,7	2,9	100	70
Isola night shelter	51,9	24,1	12,7	7,6	3,8	100	79
MMSZ Train	35,9	20,7	27,2	8,7	7,6	100	92
Tiszta Forrás night shelter		56,3	34,4	9,4		100	32
Rés Podmaniczky night shelter	14,3	12,2	24,5	42,9	6,1	100	49
MV Ady night shelter	5,7	21,8	48,3	19,5	4,6	100	87
Heated street	39,1	4,7	39,1	14,1	3,1	100	64
MMSZ street	43,3	7,4	20,2	27,6	1,5	100	203
MV Ady street	30,5	9,9	35,1	15,9	8,6	100	151
Tiszta Forrás street	20,0	36,0	22,0	12,0	10,0	100	50
Menhely Práter street	71,4	2,4	7,1	11,9	7,1	100	42
Menhely Práter street	100,0					100	15

Total	23,0	18,8	41,5	13,6	3,1	100	2673
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The question “where were you” at a given time, however, did not only concern the kind of place (street, service, etc.) the subject was staying at, but also the area within Budapest. Within that, content-wise, we were especially interested in two issues: on the one hand, which districts or popular places of Budapest were visited by a particularly great number of homeless people, and on the other hand, how big was the daily “movement-radius” of those spending the nights either on the street or in services, how far away they moved from their places of residence.

From those staying at some kind of a service in the early afternoon, at 2 o’clock, 29% were in the 8th district, 24% in the 13th, and 13% in the 10th district. This means that in these three districts, more people (almost seven hundred) were staying in some service at this given time, than in all the other twenty districts of the capital together. This basically figures the location of the larger homeless-service providing services in the capital. From the 500 people staying on the street at the given time, 20% were in the 8th, 11% in the 13th and more than 5-5% in the 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 14th districts. So this depends much less on the location of large services, and much more on the location of popular city junctions. It is not marginal from the point of view of service-provision either, which were the districts with more than thirty homeless people staying during the day or in the night.

From the almost four hundred people spending the previous night in a public place, 51% (191 people) were also on the street, in a public place at 2 o’clock of the preceding afternoon; more exactly on Blaha L. Square (29 people), Nyugati Square (28), Kelenföld Railway Station (11), Kálvin Square (6), Keleti Railway Station (5), Moszkva Square (5), Déli Railway Station (4), Városmajor (4), Andrassy Street (3), Király Street (3), Ferenciek Square (3), Fővám Square (3), Lehel Square (3), Örs vezér Square (3), and one or two people at the other locations. Concurrently with this, every fifth person of those spending the night in public places were using services of a homeless-service providing service – Baross office, Dankó, Kürt, Miklós Street, Tömő, etc.

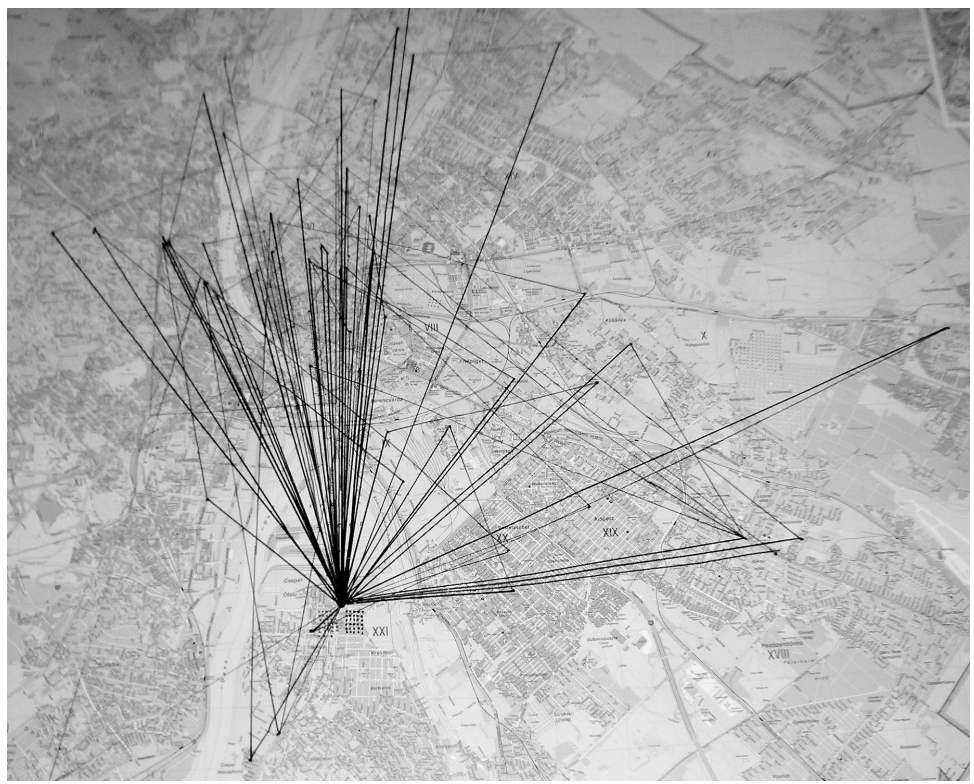
From the almost eight hundred people spending the previous night at a night shelter, every fourth person was staying on the street in the preceding afternoon, more exactly: on Blaha L. Square (21 people), Dózsa (3), Ferenciek Square (5), Keleti Railway Station (7), Kálvin Square (4), Lehel Square (4), Moszkva Square (11), Nagyvárad Square (5), Nyugati Railway Station (31), Városliget (5). From those going into a night shelter in the evening, every fourth person was at their workplace in the afternoon, and every third was in a homeless service – Ady Street, Baross, Bihari, Damjanich, Dankó, Fehér köz, Gyáli, Könyves, Práter, Táblás, Tömő – , that is, they were characteristically staying at a day centre.

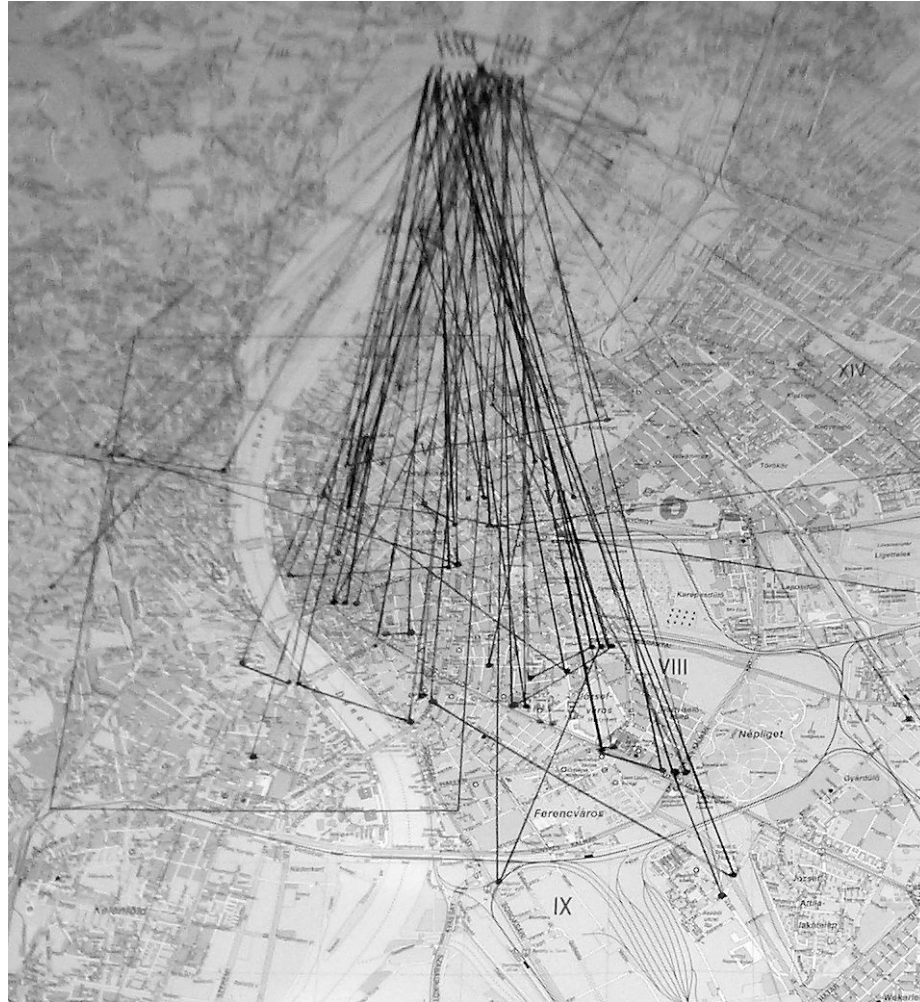
Less than 1/10th of those sleeping in a hostel were staying on the street in the afternoon; every fourth person was at their workplace, while nearly 2/3rd of them was already staying at a homeless service in the afternoon, obviously mostly at their own hostels.

It is also worth noting – even if it seems natural – that those spending the nights at night shelters and those spending the nights in public places essentially use the same characteristic public areas, city junctions the most; they start off from the same locations in the early evening to find a place to sleep, a shelter for themselves either inside or outside a service. It is less typical of day centres: there were services to which people in large numbers came from both situations (night shelter or the street), and there were ones, which were used mostly by people spending their nights at night shelters only.

A By-Pass about an Unsuccessful Experiment

Since we had the data of the locations of the questioning in the 2004 survey, as well as the morning and afternoon locations of the subjects on the preceding day, some members of the “3rd of February team” made an attempt to find out – with the means of modern technology: a digital map and GPS codes – what distances homeless people covered in a day between their night residences and the visited points of the “outside world”. How much their movement was centred around the services, or how much they “dared” to go further away, out in the city. In the end, this “technical” experiment was unsuccessful; only a few work-maps were prepared manually: one shows the (minimal) daytime movement-radius of users of a night shelter in Újpest and the other shows that of the users of a night shelter in Csepel, in a bee-line. Based on both work-maps, we can conclude that the users of both quite isolated night shelters in the northern and in the southern part of the city “came to the city” during the day; they were not staying in the close vicinity of these services. It can also be stated that they mostly visited downtown (Pest) parts of the city – with purposes of work, office routine or just “hanging around” –, while it can also be concluded that it was completely independent of their “place of residence” where they turned up during the day (they might as well have slept at the other night shelter in the opposite part of the city...).





4. Snapshots on the Street – at the Hostel – in the Workplace

One of the purposes of our yearly data-collections is to control our everyday experience and impressions; to compare and contrast them to the information, exact numbers and data collected regarding almost the totality of the homeless population in Budapest. The conclusions that can be drawn from the sums of numerical data are very important, yet the limitations of these “calculations” are also apparent. Therefore let us see what exactly the 2279 homeless people in Budapest – said they – were doing in the morning preceding the survey from those who answered this question.

What were those 600 homeless people in Budapest doing, who were staying on the street at 10 o'clock in the morning? In their own account: slept (9 people), lied on the street (1), lived in a car (1), had just woken up (1), was looking around (5), walking around (2), was roaming (1), hanging around (1), taking fresh air (1), perishing (1), prowling (9), slacking about (1), standing (2), standing around (1), sitting around (1), sitting (4), sitting on a bench (7), taking a rest (14), looking after his/her stuff (2), walking around in the city (2), going on foot (2), walking (78), sightseeing (1), waiting (7), talking to pals and friends (31), consuming alcohol, was at a buffet, at a pub, drinking around, drinking, hanging out in a pub (altogether: 15), working (41), selling (7), selling flowers (2), handing out flyers (5), selling papers (32), collected bottles (11), doing business (1), cleaning (3), sweeping the street (1), collecting things (5), collecting iron, or non-ferrous metals (3), collecting paper (3), collecting cardboard (1), handing down stuff at the wasteyard (2), searching dustbins (23), scavenging (24), looking for things (3), looking for stubs (2), helping cars at the car park (1), begging (22), panhandling (11), bumming (7), packing a car (1), cutting bushes (1), collecting wood (1), playing the slot-machine (1), looking for money (2), waiting for lunch (1), going to have lunch (1), coming out of the day-centre (1), were at a soup-kitchen (2), were at food distribution (3), standing in a line (2), standing in a line in a soup kitchen (1), standing in line for lunch (1), getting warm (5), reading (15), eating (9), cooking, washing (1), watching for the police (1), looking for a flat (1), going to work (1), going home from work (1), going to church (1), going to his/her sister (1), going to the doctor (1), looking for a job (10), travelling (24), doing office routine (6), shopping (13), nothing (9).

What were those 518 homeless people in Budapest doing, who were staying at their workplaces at 10 o'clock in the morning? In their own account: worked without special denotation (436 people), was looking for a job (13), was at the employment office (3), quitting his/her workplace (1), selling something at the market (1), had occasional chores (1), driving a car (1), driving a bus (2), selling something (1), waiting (1), painting (1), working with foil (1), scavenging (1), cleaning (3), cleaning a hallway (1), sweeping the pavement (7), sweeping the yard (1), preparing wreaths (1), packing at the market (3), washing up (1), guarding (2), worked at friends' place (1), teaching (1), other (19).

What were those 1161 homeless people in Budapest doing, who were staying at a service at 10 o'clock in the morning? In their own account: sleeping (69), was at a day shelter (4), lying (4), having a rest (151), waking up (8), reading (76), was at the doctor's (2), participating in a health-improving rehabilitation (2), artificial leg-gymnastics (1), doing therapeutic work (1), was at the dentist (2), having glasses made (1), participated in addictological treatment (1), was at a doctor's visit (27), waiting for a shot (1), taking in medication (1), was at the sick room (1), recovering (1), participating in a lungs-check-up (9), was under treatment (33), getting bandages (4), giving blood (1), was at blood-transmission (1), was at the doctor's (53), waiting for final report in hospital (2), sitting in front of the toilet (1), collecting money for toilet-use (1), waiting on friend (3), talking (25), visited wife (1), waiting on child (2), waiting for food-ticket (1), standing in line for lunch (1), was at a food distribution (1), eating (111), cooking (9), washing clothes (40), washing his- or herself (10), ironing (1), cutting nails (1), cleaning (34), dressing up (6), watching TV (45), using

the computer (2), listening to music (1), playing cards (8), drinking coffee (12), drinking soda (1), doing handcrafts (1), reading at the library (4), playing chess (4), getting warm (74), standing in a line (4), looking for a job (20), having papers made (5), having an ID card made (6), seeing about accommodation (1), seeing about social support (1), checking in at a hostel (1), seeing about pension (2), talking to a social worker (1), was at the post-office (2), doing office-routine (81), working (32), learning (10), teaching (3), packing (1), laying parquet (1), putting up shelves (1), sitting around (5), waiting (11), nothing (5), thinking (1).

Everyone can interpret this activity-reflection as he/she wishes. As for us, we are happy that those surveyed answered our question in their own words, in an honest way. The only thing we would like to add to this series of activities is that those connected to the home or home-replacement, the so called “house activities” have an important place among everyday activities of homeless people as well – whether they were staying on the street, in a day centre, at a night shelter or at a hostel. It is thought-provoking how many activities were about spending time in a passive, purposeless way; about idleness. It is not less illuminating, how many of them were busy with seeing about their health-problems or all kinds of office-routines in a day. Finally, we may also record that besides the unnamed types of work, the subjects surveyed primarily mentioned collecting and other very low prestige working activities.

5. Future Perspectives that have not been Lost

Where from and where to are Routes of Accommodations Leading?

Where, under what circumstances did those subjects live one year earlier, who were staying in public places or at homeless hostels at the time of the questioning? Where had they come and entered the service-providing system from? We had tried to find that out in our previous surveys, too. On the 3rd of February in 2004, however, we also questioned people about their future plans concerning accommodation; more exactly about “*Where do you think you will be living in one year’s time?*”. We ourselves do not know when and where our roads are leading in the future; our subjects also tried (a great majority of them did try!) to answer this uneasy question relying on their desires, ambitions, realistic ideas, past experience and the realities of their present situations.

Considering any present forms of accommodation, it is true that at least half of the subjects had been living in the same form of accommodation one year earlier, too. (65% of people living in public places had been doing so one year earlier, 63% of people living in hostels had been a hostel-dweller in 2003, too, etc.). This represents a certain constancy as concerning accommodation – within one year –, yet it remains a question where every second or third person had got into the situation we were finding them in 2004? Most of the three hundred people (146) in hostels as new dwellers had come from flats, mostly from the insecure forms of accommodation (flat out of favour, sublease, bed-rent, workers' hostel). Every tenth person had come from a night shelter, and only every twentieth from the street. Those sleeping at night shelters had come from rather similar directions (out of the 435 new arrivals, 222 people had yet been living in some kind of a flat one year earlier; and the rate of those coming from the street or hostels did not reflect any significant difference, either). Contrarily to this, we find even among those living in

Where did you sleep one year ago?								
Present place of residence	Own flat	Other accommodation	Hostel	Night shelter	Public place	Other	Total (%)	Total (people)
Own flat	58,3	8,3	8,3		25,0		100	12
Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease or bed-rent, workers' hostel)	4,1	50,0	4,9	10,7	20,5	9,8	100	122
Hostel	4,2	13,9	62,7	10,0	4,5	4,7	100	806
Night shelter	4,8	18,3	8,1	54,9	9,3	4,7	100	964
Public place	3,8	16,2	1,9	7,0	65,4	5,7	100	526
Other	5,4	17,4	6,9	12,3	18,9	39,2	100	334
Total	4,7	17,8	22,5	25,4	20,3	9,3	100	2764
Where do you think you will be living in one year's time?								
Present place of residence	Own flat	Other accommodation	Hostel	Night shelter	Public place	Other	Total (%)	Total (people)
Own flat	90,9					9,1	100	11
Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease or bed-rent, workers' hostel)	9,6	62,8	8,5	4,3	2,1	12,8	100	94
Hostel	15,9	16,3	40,1	2,1	,5	25,1	100	754
Night shelter	15,1	23,2	12,5	36,4	1,1	11,6	100	885
Public place	11,6	21,2	4,6	2,3	46,5	13,9	100	439
Other	6,8	18,2	6,1	5,7	7,1	56,1	100	296
Total	13,9	21,5	18,5	14,9	9,7	21,5	100	2479

public places that the main channel of getting there had been through insecure forms of dwelling: the majority of those newly finding themselves homeless had still been living in a flat some way a year earlier. These numbers show – to use the terminology of our previous study – that considering getting on the margins, there are more intensive movements within one year between situations near and on the margins of the accommodation sector, than between the different forms (public place, night shelter, hostel) of accommodations on the margin itself.

As regarding the ways of getting out, at present we can only rely on the predictions of those involved. However – surprisingly to us also – this essentially shows the same picture, perhaps even more characteristically. In the case of all forms of accommodation, most subjects thought that they would be in the same situation in one year as the day of the survey. Most people, but not necessarily the majority (2/3rd of those sleeping at night shelters trusted that their dwelling-situation would get better; 60% of subjects living in hostels, and 53% of people sleeping in public places also thought that their situation would improve). However, predictions are not saying that this change will take place *on the margin*. Hardly 2% of people living in hostels thought that they would be users of night shelters; only 4 people out of the 754 counts on getting out on the street. More than half of those trusting in a change (243 people!) thought that in one year they would live in their own flat, in a flat out of favour, in a sublease or a bed-rent; a smaller part of them thought that they would be at a different place (home for the aged, hospital, etc.). Only 13% of even those sleeping at night shelters thought that they would move to a hostel; altogether ten people (out of the 885 questioned) supposed that in one year they would have to sleep in a public place; the majority of those believing in a change (339 people out of 563) in this group, also, predicted moving to some flat in one year. And finally, out of those sleeping in public places, the number of those predicting to be living in some flat in one year was five times as much as the number of subjects expecting to sleep at night shelters or hostels (there were 30 people in the latter group out of the 439 subjects questioned on the street). Surprisingly enough, people living in insecure forms of accommodation at the time of the survey supposed two times as frequently to be using some kind of a hostel in one year than people living on the street.¹³

¹³ The inward and outward movements together also outlined a – not so easily describable – pattern: regardless of the present situation, as a future dwelling-form, subjects most frequently predicted the form of accommodation they had one year earlier (for example 53% of those staying at a hospital a year earlier thought that they would be in a hospital the following year, as well). An exception from this was the group of those who had lived in a flat as a relative one year earlier and who could hardly imagine to be living that way again (15%); they rather imagined living in their own flat or a lodging. Those who had lived at an occasional acquaintance one year earlier also represented a special group, they characteristically did not expect this to be the case in one year (7 %), they rather supposed to be in a lodging (18 %), or at a homeless hostel (29 %). And finally, many (20%) of those who had already lived at a hostel one year ago thought that in one year they would be in a hospital, or at a home for the aged.

Based on these data, we can now more bravely formulate our hypothesis that there are more intensive inward and outward movements between situations near and on the margins of the accommodation sector, than between the different situations (stages) on the margin itself.

Considering the future prospect of the surveyed subjects – in other words – we could also say that on the one hand they have ideas concerning their future accommodation (less than 10% of them said that they did not know what was going to happen to them), and on the other hand, these predictions were mostly

		What will your situation be in one year from now? (%)				
		doesn't know	worse	better	no answer	Total
Where will you be living in one year from now?	Own flat	9,2	9,2	79,5	2,1	100,0
	Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease, bed-rent, workers' hostel)	18,3	11,7	67,5	2,5	100,0
	Hostel	26,5	16,0	53,7	3,8	100,0
	Night shelter	25,5	33,0	39,3	2,2	100,0
	In a public place	31,4	39,3	25,8	3,5	100,0
	Other	30,2	19,1	47,5	3,2	100,0
	Total	23,4	19,6	54,1	2,9	100,0
	People	563	471	1302	69	2405

positive; they described a better, or much better situation than the present one, or else they did not count on any significant change within a year. It was also worth looking at what answers we had received for the more general question of “What situation do you think you will be in one year from now?”. The answers to this question were mostly in line with the predictions concerning accommodation, which for one thing strengthens the reliability of the answers given for the two questions, and it also shows that accommodation – naturally – plays a very significant role in the judgement of the situations of the subjects surveyed.

	What will your situation be in one year from now? (%)					
	doesn't know	worse	better	no answer	Total	People
Sex						
male	25,1	19,9	52,1	2,9	100,0	2213
female	24,1	21,7	51,6	2,6	100,0	469
Age						
20 - 29 years of age	18,2	13,0	67,2	1,6	100,0	192
30 - 39 years of age	21,8	18,9	57,8	1,5	100,0	524
40 - 49 years of age	23,9	19,8	52,6	3,7	100,0	783
50 - 59 years of age	27,5	22,5	46,5	3,5	100,0	846
60 - 69 years of age	30,9	23,8	43,0	2,3	100,0	256
70 ---- years of age	29,4	17,6	49,0	3,9	100,0	51
Education						
below 8 elementaries	19,0	30,0	48,0	3,0	100,0	100
8 elementaries	28,2	21,8	46,4	3,5	100,0	1081
technical school	22,8	19,0	55,9	2,2	100,0	801
high-school diploma	23,9	19,1	54,2	2,9	100,0	524
college	19,8	9,9	68,1	2,2	100,0	91
university	15,4	17,9	66,7		100,0	39
Years spent homeless						
within one year	16,1	9,4	72,3	2,3	100,0	310
more than one year	18,0	12,4	67,3	2,3	100,0	217
more than two years	20,7	19,2	56,7	3,4	100,0	203
more than six years	27,6	20,9	48,5	3,1	100,0	163
more than ten years	27,8	29,0	41,1	2,0	100,0	637
Illness restricting employability						
yes	27,9	23,6	45,9	2,5	100,0	1221
no	21,0	17,2	59,0	2,8	100,0	1341
Whom are you living with?						
alone	24,3	20,6	51,9	3,2	100,0	1886
member of a group (gang)	24,4	22,1	52,4	1,1	100,0	349
lives in a familiar (companion) relationship	20,3	19,4	57,1	3,2	100,0	345
Types of income						
wages	23,2	16,2	57,1	3,5	100,0	1267

social security support	29,7	23,3	45,0	2,0	100,0	696
social support	27,5	20,7	49,2	2,6	100,0	193
Have you ever been called a gypsy?						
yes	24,4	28,9	44,1	2,6	100,0	508
no	24,6	17,9	54,8	2,7	100,0	2045
Where did you sleep one year ago?						
Own flat	20,2	7,8	69,8	2,3	100,0	129
Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease, bed-rent, workers' hostel)	20,3	18,3	58,9	2,5	100,0	482
Hostel	27,0	13,8	56,3	2,9	100,0	588
Night shelter	22,9	24,5	49,8	2,7	100,0	693
In a public place	29,7	25,1	41,8	3,3	100,0	538
Other	24,4	24,0	48,4	3,2	100,0	250
Where did you sleep last night?						
Own flat	41,7	16,7	41,7		100,0	12
Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease, bed-rent, workers' hostel)	31,5	24,2	40,3	4,0	100,0	124
Hostel	26,4	13,8	56,0	3,9	100,0	770
Night shelter	21,6	20,9	55,8	1,7	100,0	955
In a public place	24,9	26,1	45,3	3,7	100,0	510
Other	27,7	23,2	47,1	1,9	100,0	314

Contrary to public belief – namely that losing one's livelihood automatically comes with a sense of giving up, and losing one's future prospects – our data show that the majority of homeless people surveyed were rather optimistic concerning their future situations (or at least were still hopeful), but many of them (23%) did not know how their future would turn out, and a few of them (20%) also expected a worsening of their situation.¹⁴

There were no differences between the answers of men and women, or those living alone or in a group or gang. Younger subjects were much more optimistic (67% of people 20-29 years of age, 58% of people 30-39 years of age and 43% of people 60-69 years of age thought that things would get better, while many (1/3rd) of the subjects above 60 years of age did not know whether they would be in a better or worse situation). The relationship

¹⁴ Naturally, we “do not see behind the answers”, we do not know how much they had been influenced by the fact here that the questions were mostly asked by the personal social worker, who may have had “hidden” or explicit „expectations”; or whether there is a “pessimism” behind this optimism saying that “it cannot be any worse than this”.

with education is also very close: the less educated someone is, the more likely it is that he or she does not know what will happen to him/her, or think that his/her situation will rather get worse. There is a remarkably close relationship between the time spent homeless and future prospects: those having become homeless one or two years earlier yet believed that their situation would turn better, while among those having become homeless more than six years ago, the majority was rather pessimistic or said they did not know whether their situations would be better or worse in one year's time. ("Public belief" in this sense seems right after all: although losing future prospects does not automatically result from losing one's livelihood, but with time, perspectives evidently narrow down, and hopes get lost.)

Subjects having no illness were more optimistic than the average, while those having an illness restricting their ability to work saw the future more pessimistically than the average (59% of the former, and 46 % of the latter group thought that they would be in a better situation in one year). It is thought-provoking that homeless subjects surveyed belonging to the gypsy ethnicity were much more pessimistic than their non-gypsy peers: 29% of subjects belonging to the gypsy ethnicity answered that they expected to be in a worse situation in one year, while 18% of non-gypsies thought so. Considering the dwelling-situations of the subjects surveyed, a characteristic picture was outlining in front of us, in which those living in public places believed that their situation would not change for the better, but rather for the worse at the greatest rate; dwellers of hostels trusted in the future the most; while people sleeping at night shelters were already a little less confident; and it cannot be ignored that people in uncertain dwelling-situations using the so called tea-runs were the most insecure about their futures. Moreover, every fourth of them thought that he/she would be in a worse situation in one year's time (this, by the way, is completely in line with the tendencies of reactions to perspectives in accommodation).

		What will your situation be in one year from now?				
		doesn't know	worse	better	no answer	Total
Where did you sleep last night?	Own flat	41,7	16,7	41,7	0	100,0
	Other accommodation (out of favour, sublease, bed-rent, workers' hostel)	31,5	24,2	40,3	4,0	100,0
	Hostel	26,4	13,8	56,0	3,9	100,0
	Night shelter	21,6	20,9	55,8	1,7	100,0
	In a public place	24,9	26,1	45,3	3,7	100,0
	Other	27,7	23,2	47,1	1,9	100,0
	Total	24,8	20,3	52,1	2,8	100,0
	People	667	544	1398	76	2685

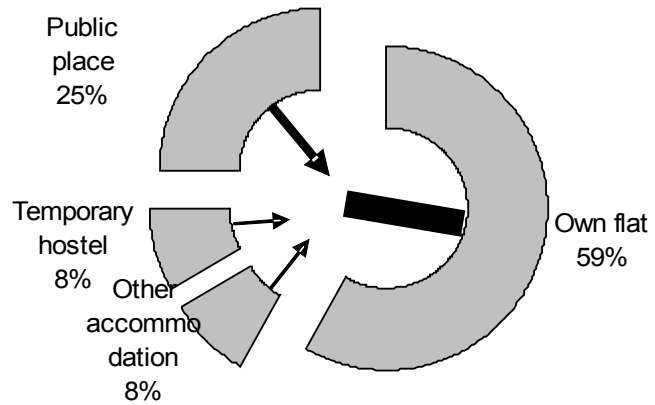
Looking at the data in more detail, we see that those living in rents had the most insecure perspectives (48% of them did not know whether they would be in a better or worse situation); the rate of people expecting specifically their situations to get worse were highest among those subjects who were living at an occasional acquaintance's

(28%) at the time of the survey, the rate of those expecting their situations to improve were highest (56%) among dwellers of homeless hostels. However, we must note here again that the former, past dwelling-condition is not less significant than the present one; that is “where someone is coming from”, how much (and since when) his/her situation is “only” a station, or whether it is the end-station. An outstandingly high ratio, 70% of those living in their own flat one year earlier thought that they would be in a better situation a year from the survey; as much as 59% of those living in a flat in some other form still hoped for a better situation, while only 42% of those sleeping in a public place one year earlier trusted that their situation would change for the better (although considering their situations, this ratio in itself is not at all low), and the rate of “pessimists” (25%) and uncertain ones (30%) were also highest among them.

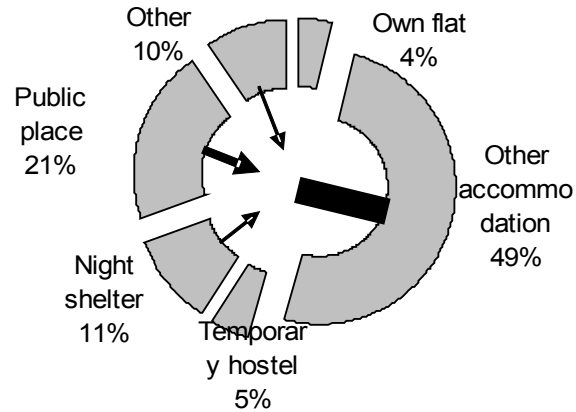
		Where will you live a year from now?														
		own prop- erty	own rent	occasional acquaint- ance	at a relat- ive	sublease, bed-rent	accom. provided by workplace	hostel	night shelter	health/so- cial ser- vice	public place - unheated	not a flat – heated	doesn't know	other	Total	Total (people)
Where did you sleep one year ago?	own property	30,2	9,4		3,8	17,0		15,1	3,8	5,7	1,9	3,8	3,8	5,7	100,0	53
	own rent	9,2	46,1		1,3	5,3		13,2	1,3	3,9	2,6	1,3	9,2	6,6	100,0	76
	occasional ac- quaintance	5,6	7,1	7,1		18,3	,8	16,7	11,9	8,7	,8	1,6	8,7	12,7	100,0	126
	at a relative	7,2	8,6	1,3	14,5	21,7	2,6	8,6	5,9	5,9	1,3	,7	9,9	11,8	100,0	152
	sublease, bed- rent	8,4	6,3		1,4	43,4	1,4	11,9	6,3	2,8	1,4		8,4	7,7	100,0	143
	accom. provided by workplace	3,3	5,0	1,7	5,0	20,0	11,7	15,0	6,7	8,3	1,7	3,3	8,3	10,0	100,0	60
	hostel	5,2	8,8	,3	1,3	11,3	1,0	37,8	1,9	19,8	,5		7,0	4,9	100,0	617
	night shelter	2,3	7,5	1,0	1,8	12,2	1,5	12,9	39,6	5,1	1,6	,3	6,0	7,3	100,0	681
	health/social service	3,1	3,1		1,9	6,9	,6	8,2	3,1	53,5	1,9		9,4	8,2	100,0	159
	public place - unheated	2,0	4,8	1,5	2,6	14,5	2,0	7,7	7,4	3,1	33,7	1,5	10,7	8,2	100,0	392
	not a flat – heated	3,2	2,6		,6	13,0	,6	5,2	6,5	1,9	3,2	40,9	13,6	8,4	100,0	154
	Total	4,7	8,0	1,0	2,5	14,7	1,6	17,0	13,7	10,9	6,1	2,9	8,3	8,3	100,0	2707

Where did you sleep one year ago?

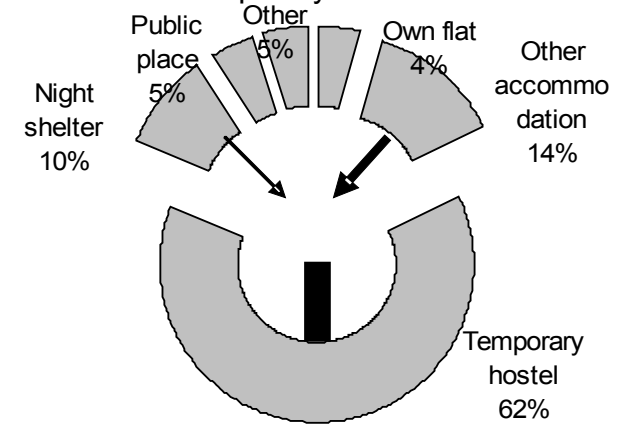
In own flat now



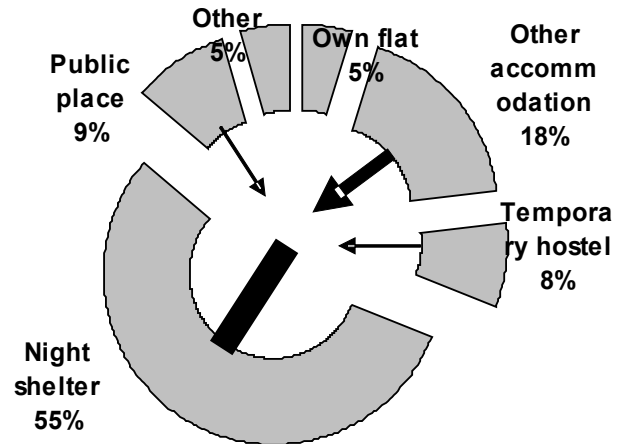
Other accommodation now



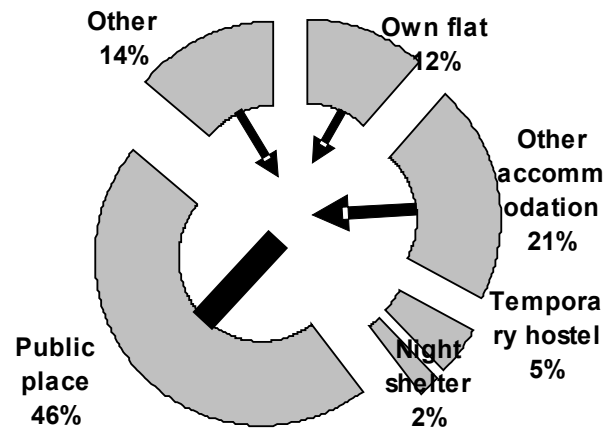
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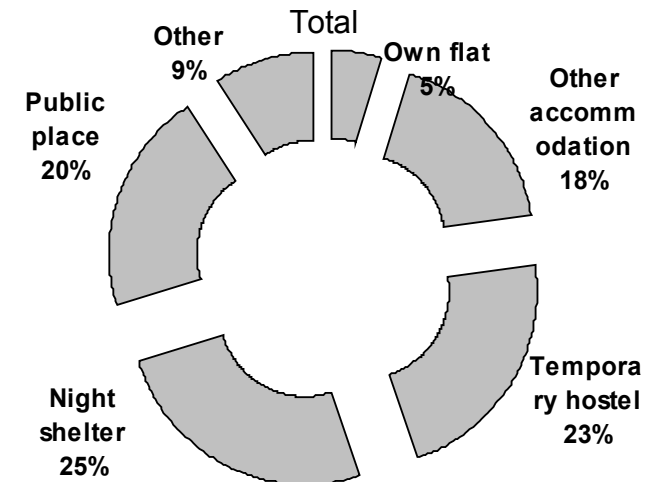
At night shelter now



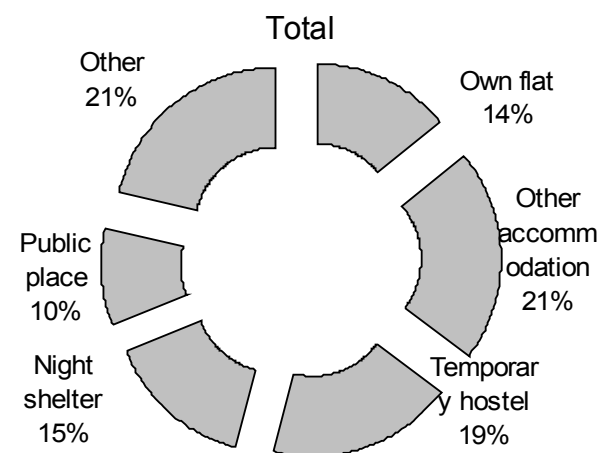
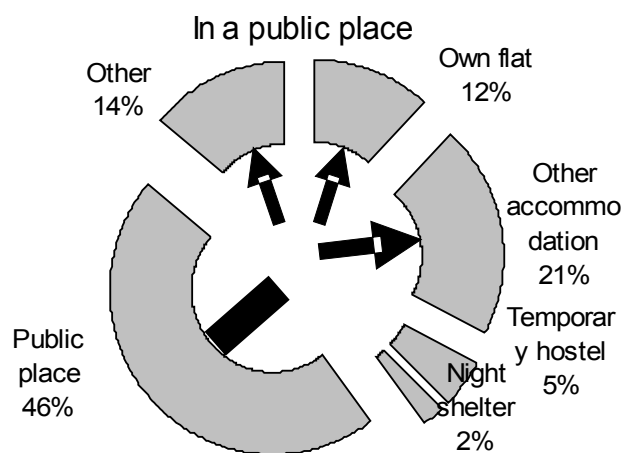
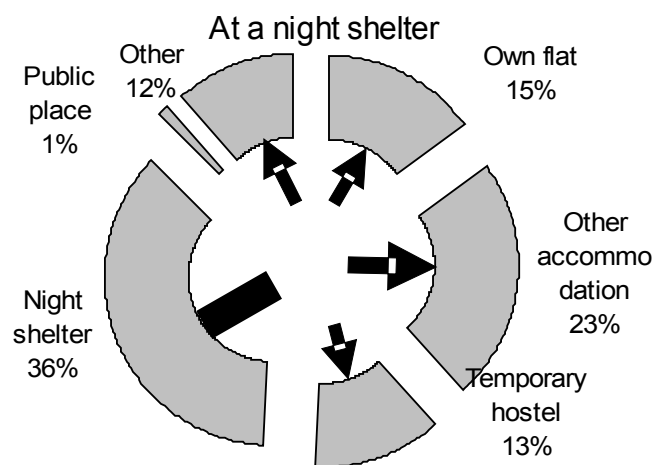
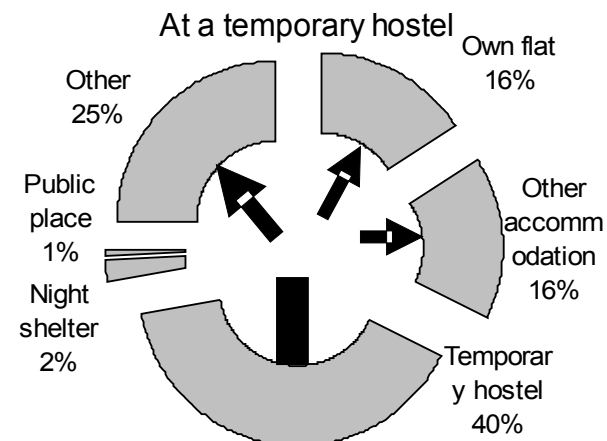
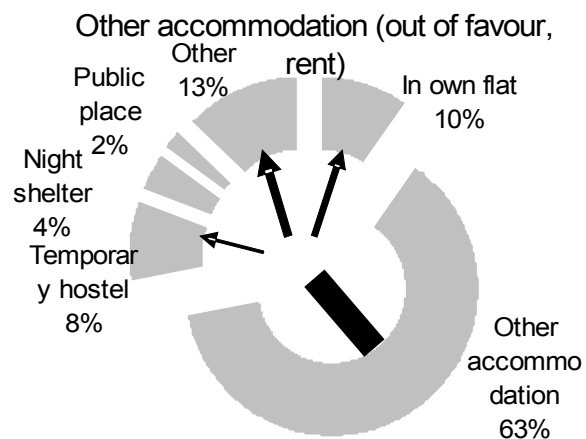
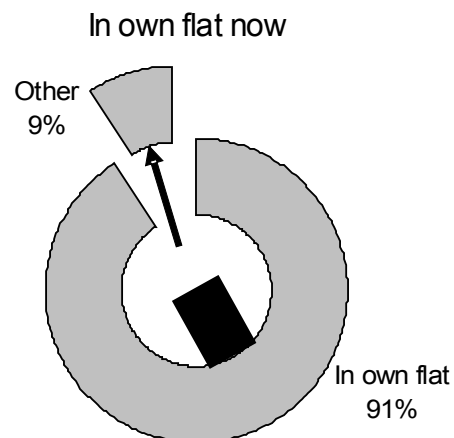
At a public place now



Total



Where will you be living in one year's time?



5. Health - Illness

The State of Health of Homeless and Non-Homeless People Living in Budapest

Some of the questions asked in the 2002 February 3rd survey were identical with the questions of the National Survey of the State of Health of the Population (OLEF) in 2000. This latter survey was carried out by the Research Institute of Health-Improvement, in the course of which a sample of 5500 people were surveyed representing the country's adult, non-institutionalised population.¹⁵

We used the same questions so as to be able to compare them and find out whether homelessness goes hand in hand with a bad state of health. The selected parts of OLEF 2000 measured the state of health on the bases of reactions to questions concerning how one felt. The questions were very simple; they were inquiring into whether the physical state of the subject hindered him/her in carrying out everyday activities. Answers of homeless and non-homeless subjects (the latter ones surveyed in the OLEF 2000) were compared in sex- and age-groups.

From the point of view of homelessness, we were primarily interested in such health-related problems which may cause difficulty in obtaining or retaining the accommodation.

The evaluation of being hindered in everyday activities (getting up, lying down, standing, walking, etc.) did not differ for homeless and non-homeless subjects, since these activities were carried out the same way, at the same speed and accuracy by everyone. In case someone becoming incapable of doing any of them at any extent, he or she will definitely take it as being hindered, regardless of him/her living on the street or in a flat. Besides hindering problems, we also used the questions of OLEF 2000 measuring the level of alcohol-consumption and smoking. We asked about days spent in a hospital, and we have data concerning the frequency of TB, skin-diseases and frostbites. (These latter ones were not part of the nationwide inquiry.) We also have answers concerning diagnosed illnesses; however, we cannot handle these simply enough to talk about them here.

We are accustomed to the fact that all things that are considered bad occur more frequently than usual amongst the homeless population. Therefore we had expected to find more sick people among the homeless, that more of them would complain, and that they spent more time in hospitals. We had thought more of them smoked, and more people consumed alcohol in greater amounts.

¹⁵ We would like to express our gratitude this way also to the EFKI, and later OEK institute for making the data available for us. We would especially like to thank Dr. József Vida research-leader and Renáta Németh statistician for their kind help.

The data roughly were consistent with the expectations; that is the answers of subjects belonging to the group of homeless people differed from the average of the population in directions pointing to the hindrances. The small differences and sometimes surprising identities, however, show much more delicate (and perhaps more important) relationships than we had expected. In the case of certain questions and certain groups of subjects, there were no differences between the reactions of homeless and non-homeless subjects. Furthermore, in a very weird way, in some cases the answers of homeless subjects show a more favourable picture.

<i>Please, pick the statement that is true for you THESE DAYS!</i>		
Self-sufficiency...	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
is no problem	96	93
is a problem	3	6
does not know	1	1
Total	100	100

Self-Sufficiency

Concerning self-sufficiency, homeless and non-homeless people reacted in a surprisingly similar way. In the course of the homeless data-collection, we also asked subjects who were patients of departments operating in a semi-medical way (sick-room, recovery room). These institutes had been and were operating because traditional medical services are not able, or not willing to receive homeless people. However, hardly more than the third of homeless people having problems relating to self-sufficiency were staying at hostels providing health-care also; 107 people of them were spending the night in public places and at mass-hostels on the 3rd of February in 2002. The question is then raised: is it possible at all, and how, to be living in public places and at mass hostels without the capability of self-sufficiency? (At the same time, more than two thirds of those staying in the sick-room said that they were self-sufficient.)

<i>Please, pick the statement that is true for you THESE DAYS!</i>						
Walking ...	Age-group (%)					
	18 – 34		35 - 64		65 +	
	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
is no problem	97	92	81	70	55	55
is a problem	3	7	18	30	44	45
does not know	0	1	1	0	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Walking

Problems and complaints relating to walking were more frequent among homeless people. We perhaps can blame the homeless lifestyle for walking problems. However, we can see that at an older age, above 65, there is no difference between homeless and non-homeless subjects in the frequency of these complaints, which means that locomotor disorders must be at the same rate among the older subjects.

<i>Please, pick the statement that is true for you THESE DAYS!</i>						
Eyesight	Age-group (%)					
	18 – 34		18 - 34		18 – 34	
	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
can see well	83	79	70	47	58	29
can see well with glasses	16	20	26	50	35	59
can not see well	1	1	4	3	7	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Eyesight

Every fourth person and every second homeless person has problems with their eyesight. The difference is not measurable in the group of people below 35, but in the age group of older people, the disadvantage of homeless subjects is very apparent. At present we do not know exactly how the homeless or non-homeless lifestyle is related to this difference: perhaps the nutrition or other lifestyle factor may have an influence, or else simply the lack of the “medical aid”, the glasses, or the lack of treatment.

<i>Please, pick the statement that is true for you THESE DAYS!</i>						
Pain	Age-group (%)					
	18 – 34		18 - 34		18 - 34	
	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
has no pain	90	80	68	41	36	51
has some pain	11	18	29	35	51	46
has strong pain	0	2	4	6	9	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Pain

When we ask about pain in general, we find that there were significantly more people among homeless subjects who complained of some pain. However, in the case of people over 65, the difference changes in the favourable direction from the point of view of homeless people: more people complained of some physical pain among subjects living in a flat.

<i>Please, pick the statement that is true for you THESE DAYS!</i>		
Anxiety	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
not anxious	68	54
anxious	28	38
very anxious	3	7
Total	100	100

Mental Condition

Homeless people reported anxiety at a larger rate, than those living in flat – and that, by the way, is not surprising. Concerning the mental or psychological state, every third person of non-homeless subjects complained of how they felt; and this was true for every second homeless person. May homelessness be the cause of mental problems rather, or does it come with mental, and less with physical miseries? Complaints concerning the mental state of people living in a flat in Budapest again “catch up” with the value measured among homeless people above the age of 65.

We must ask the question at this point: what may be the cause of the tendency that the frequency of answers of homeless people above 65 is diverging in a different direction than the answers of the younger age-groups?

Only 6% of homeless people were over 65, while in the OLEF 2000 survey, 18% of the subjects belonged to this age-group. Among homeless people over 65, the rate of people over eighty was only about 5%, while this rate in the OLEF 2000 is more than 12%. People living in flats were generally more aged; that may account for the fact that illnesses and complaints were more fre-

quent among them. However, our more detailed statistical analyses show that this difference in the age-distribution explains only to a very small extent.

Based on the data collected so far, as a summary, we must say that *the comparison of the state of health of homeless and non-homeless people shows smaller differences than expected.*

How many days did you spend as an IN-PATIENT in hospital in the past 12 months?								
Days	Age-group (%)						Total (%)	
	18 - 34 years old		35 - 64 years old		65 +			
	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
0 day	88,2	75,4	87,9	61,7	70,5	62,7	84,4	63,8
1 - 5 days	8,0	2,2	3,7	3,2	5,8	1,5	5,4	3,0
6 - 10 days	1,3	5,6	2,7	4,7	4,8	8,2	2,7	5,0
11 - 15 days	1,3	4,5	1,2	3,9	5,1	3,7	2,0	4,0
16 - 20 days	0	,8	0,7	1,5	2,4	3,0	0,9	1,5
21 - 25 days	0,5	1,7	1,7	2,2	4,7	3,7	1,9	2,2
26 + days	0,8	9,8	2,1	22,7	6,6	17,2	2,7	20,4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Days Spent in the Hospital

84% of the people living in a flat in Budapest, and 64% of homeless people answered with zero to the question of „*How many days did you spend as an in-patient in hospital in the past 12 months?*”. Data show the same situation in groups according to age and sex, too: less homeless, than non-homeless people could avoid hospitalisation. The difference between the compared groups is significant.

Smoking and Alcohol Consumption

In the OLEF survey, subjects were asked about smoking and drinking in a fill-in questionnaire. We could not do the same, and therefore we must treat our data with some reservation (especially the answers from subjects asked at their dwelling places).

<i>On how many days did you consume an alcoholic drink in the past seven days?</i>					
		non-homeless (%)		homeless (%)	
		men	women	questioned at the hostel	questioned on the street
days	0	26,2	59,9	46,5	29,4
	1	19,3	29,6	9,8	12,0
	2	2,4	6,8	9,6	11,4
	3	6,8	0	6,5	5,5
	4	8,8	0	3,4	4,1
	5	2,5	1,7	2,6	4,1
	6	0	0	1,3	1,5
	7	33,9	1,9	20,2	32,1
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

A number of questions were asked in the OLEF survey concerning alcohol-consumption, and, based on that, each person was classified as abstinent, occasional drinker or heavy-drinker. We could not achieve such an accurate classification, and therefore, besides frequency of alcohol-consumption, we could only take one group of questions concerning the amount of the consumed alcohol from the study.

People who had not consumed alcohol at all can definitely be called abstinent; and people, who had consumed alcohol each day of the week can be called heavy-drinkers. We can see that there were much more abstinents among homeless people, than what we would expect based on the average of the population. By looking only at the data collected from people living and asked on the street, although the difference decreases somewhat, the ratio of abstinent people is still higher among homeless people.

Contradictory as this may be to the general concept of homeless people, we must accept that there are more abstinents among homeless people surveyed in the hostels and on the streets of Budapest, than among people living in flats. According to our data, it is also a fact that heavy-drinkers are just as frequent among homeless people than at any other place. We may have become one stereotype poorer ("the homeless is not the old drunkard we all know by sight"). The drunkenness of homeless people is undoubtedly more visible; and it is much more shocking, when it is joined by the sight of slovenliness and bad physical shape.

The average alcohol consumption among the subjects of the OLEF sample was 4 glasses/week, while among homeless people it was 7 glasses/week. The majority of homeless people drank wine; the "disadvantage" of homeless people in the consumption of beer and spirits was significant. The choice of the type of drink can only partially be explained by tradition; it has serious financial correlations, too. By looking at the amount of money spent on alcohol, and not at the

actual amount of it, the advantage is probably at non-homeless people. (This is supported by the fact that 41% of the subjects living in public places had no money at all at the time of the survey.)

However, based on answers given to questions concerning smoking, it can be stated that there were much more smokers among homeless people than among non-homeless people. (Are cigarettes cheaper than alcohol? Or were there problems with the questioning anyway? We don't know the answers yet.)

Smoking	Age-group (%)					
	18 - 34		35 - 64		65 +	
	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)	non-homeless (%)	homeless (%)
heavy smoker	18,1	54,0	20,9	62,0	3,3	35,5
regular smoker	23,2	27,8	16,1	21,6	4,7	25,4
does not smoke	58,7	18,3	63,0	16,4	92,0	39,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Further data concerning the state of health were asymmetrical: we only know of homeless people we had questioned that 13% of them had some kind of a wound or injury at the time of the survey; 9% of them had had TB, 26% had received psychiatric treatment, 61% had had an operation, and 8% reported former frost-bites. These questions were not asked from subjects living in flats...

People working with homeless people usually paint a dramatic picture of their state (of health). The visual media also helps this picture to get imprinted. (Defensive) prejudices about their own responsibility and the visual street-impressions also keep connecting homelessness to alcoholism. These connections cannot be denied; however, their significance and explanatory force seem to be much smaller, than what they "appear" to be. Especially if we consider that only a smaller part of homeless people have actually no shelter, and are living on the street; the majority of them – with institutional or personal help – obtain shelter and live a less visible-recordable life-style.

However, the most important lesson we have learnt is that we had been looking for answers concerning how much worse the state of health of homeless subjects was compared to non-homeless ones, and, by analysing the data we had received, we arrived at the conclusion that in 2002 in Hungary, the state of health of the non-homeless population was also frighteningly poor.