

DISSERTATION

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home- less

FOOD & BRAND DESIGN

L'ÉCOLE DE DESIGN NANTES ATLANTIQUE



Romaults ownings.

Image: Personal photograph, at Bouffay, 7 January 2021.

Abstract

The Abbe Pierre Foundation currently estimates France's number of homeless people at **300 000**, a number that has been rising steeply for several decades. It is an issue that has been put aside and **disregarded by researchers** and industries due to its complicated economic, social and political implications. There is an undeniable **need for support**, which is why the following thesis will focus on homeless people's food consumption. Observed pain points during the preparation, obtention and consumption of food were analysed, in order to fuel a user-centric design project. This was achieved by conducting **interviews with homeless people and associations in Nantes**, whilst also assimilating global occurrences and comparing the collected data with **published literature**. It has become evident that the consequences of **malnutrition**

have significant impact on a person's **physical and mental health**, oftentimes accumulating in severe exhaustion and depression. It is important to be mindful of their **social alienation**, which forces the homeless to adopt a different ethos. Furthermore, homeless people **hardly attend food associations** because of numerous demeaning conditions, such as the lack of space, aggressive atmospheres and unrecognisable food. It was also concluded that many decisions regarding nutrition are based on the inherent need for **autonomy and**

freedom. For the preceding reasons, it is a crucial imperative to explore more **dignifying** opportunities, in which the homeless want to consume their food. This can be achieved by increasing **healthy** nutrition, improving **social** eating experiences or introducing **autonomous** ways of consuming food.

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Intro - duction

Even though homelessness has been a commonly known issue throughout history¹ and is present in every country on the planet, disturbingly few have yet attempted to abolish it. The unnerving notion that poverty and homelessness is an inevitable factor of society, is addressed in Tamsen Courtenay's book *Four Feet Under*, quoting a homeless person: "It's a crime to rob the rich, it's capitalism to rob the poor"². Today, Nantes counts over 5000 registered homeless people³ and to a certain extent, that is due to insufficient research around the subject⁴. It leads to the lack of available solutions for the homeless today, because without in-depth knowledge of homeless people's

experiences, concepts cannot be pertinent or helpful. A duality within this research was therefore clear from the start, as it requires interviews or onsite research versus in-depth literary analysis of published works. That ambivalence was of the utmost importance, to be able to complete and compare the collected data. The variety of perspectives, opinions and reflections gathered, brought forth unprecedented and contradictory information. Essentially, the pain points all meet on common ground: a need for care and consideration. Particularly when it comes to homeless people's food consumption, that tends to be over-looked. Being without a kitchen, they

¹ David Levinson, "Encyclopedia of homelessness", Volume 2, Berkshire Publishing Group, 2004.

² Tamsen Courtenay, "Four Feet Under", Unbound, 2018.

³ Maxime Hurault, Director of Le Carillon, interviewed on 2 December 2019 14:00, at Le Carillon Nantes.

⁴ Édouard Gardella, dir., Les sciences sociales et le sans-abrisme. Recension bibliographique de langue française 1978-2012, French National Centre for Scientific Research, 2013.

are constrained to either eat thrown away food, eat redundant donations such as sandwiches, buy ready-made food to eat in public spaces, or eat in crowded associations. As a result, the majority of homeless people are awfully malnourished, which heavily influences their mental and physical health⁵. That is how I came to reason that qualitative nutrition can stabilise a homeless person's lifestyle, not only physically but also mentally. However not only healthy food, but also safe, friendly and inclusive eating environments can improve homeless people's experiences. The following question will therefore be investigated:

⁵ Solène Bail, nutritionist, interviewed at L'École de Design Nantes Atlantique on 25 September 2020. See Appendix 2 for raw data.

How can homeless people's food consumption be more qualitative?

This dissertation presents the research that will be the basis for a subsequently relevant and valid design proposition. It focusses solely on the French people living in the streets of Nantes, due to the complexity and variety of cultures amongst the homeless. In the following research, various data has been studied, analysed and comprehended throughout the fields of sociology, politics, economics and health. It involves the interrogation of the extent of homeless people's dignity and equality in our society. It will also put today's persisting classism into perspective by unveiling the ramifications for the homeless. On account of this, the first chapter sets the scene by explaining and considering the context behind the particular ethnography of homeless people. The second chapter exposes current eating conditions and habits,

which lead to the physical and mental consequences this nutrition has on health. Lastly, the final chapter inspects the unique mindsets of the homeless in order to understand and discern their ethos from typical society's. Ultimately, this dissertation intends to clarify the weakly known subject, invalidate the social bias and most importantly, to respond to vital user needs. It simultaneously aims for a step towards optimistic, solidary and user-centric design impact by describing the power of dignified eating in the setting of homelessness.

Immersive fieldwork method

When any person is telling a story, the listener has to be a critic of the truth because there are 3 different perspectives or 'masks' to consider. First, there is the thing you think you did in the story. Second, the thing others think you did. Last, the thing you actually did⁶.

**The thing you
say you do.**



**The thing you
think you do.**



**The thing you
really do.**



This means that a person's story should always be questioned. Especially since Yves-Pierre Le Roux, a former homeless person who wrote a book about his experience living on the street, mentioned the lack of a homeless person's credibility⁷. "You must always doubt the story of a homeless person. [...] Living on the street makes you beware

of people. The homeless are impenetrable and mysterious." This information led me to think of different possible interviewing strategies: Observing and following a homeless person from afar; putting myself into the shoes of a homeless person by spending a day on the street; inserting myself in a group of homeless people

for a day. These daring methods would get to know the rarely documented mask three better: the things homeless people really do. Unfortunately, shortly after these thoughts followed the lockdown due to the coronavirus.

APPROACH

During the time frame of 2 years, 20 homeless

people were interviewed in the city centre of Nantes, some longer and more thoroughly than others. These interviews were unplanned, I simply brought a notepad, my phone as a recorder, spare masks for the interviewees and some money for requested coffee or food. I spent hours walking through streets, scanning for people carrying heavy bags or walking dogs, generally the clothing style is very distinct. In order to be respectful, the first questions concerned their living conditions which then confirmed or refuted

my observation. Before proceeding, I very much trusted intuition on whether the person was worn-out or at ease, for the interview to be constructive. My approach was based on literature describing the homeless to be very open to conversation due to them being excluded and unable to socialise often⁸. Therefore, introductions were quite informal "Hi, how are you doing? Would you be willing to talk with me for a few minutes?" The answer was always affirmative and oftentimes slightly surprised, which was then followed by captivating and thought-provoking narratives. I would sit down (on the ground mostly) and join them to stimulate an intimate and open sharing space, where I mostly listened and interacted mimetically.

OBJECTIVE

The 7 interviews during

2019 were more of a discussion or stories of the interviewees' life. I aimed to collect as much information as possible on the context around homelessness in order to analyse the problem areas later on. In 2020, the interviews were constrained due to the dangers of the coronavirus pandemic. Discussions targeted the problem areas that were analysed based on literature and verbatim transcript. The aim was to find the one direction that was most needed by the users.

ASSOCIATIONS

Besides the homeless, I also visited associations on the field, in their office or interviewed via phone call, in order to complete and sometimes contradict my research. All associations are located in Nantes and their directors were interviewed in 2019 and 2020.

⁶ Courtney E. Ackerman, "19 Narrative Therapy Techniques", *PositivePsychology*, 1 September 2020, accessed 15 October 2020. <https://positivepsychology.com/narrative-therapy>.

⁷ Yves-Pierre Le Roux, "Le Cachalot. Mémoire d'un SDF", J'ai lu, 1998.

⁸ Courtenay (nr°2).

Setting the

⁹ Levinson (nr°1).

The Encyclopedia of homelessness defines ethnography as "a rich, holistic, description of a different way of life"⁹, which perfectly applies to this paper's intentions of understanding homelessness. In order to consider and analyse the conditions in which homeless people are living and eating, the following chapter explains the context of homelessness. It also serves to pin point the different problem areas of homeless people's daily lives, which will clarify their perception of a qualitative experience.

First and foremost, statistics published by INSEE and the Abbe Pierre Foundation show that homelessness in France has been rising since 2001¹⁰ (see figure 1), but there is generally very few official and government-initiated research on the number of homeless people, due to the complexity of measuring this quantity and political implications¹¹. According to the European Observatory of Homelessness, homelessness is predicted to rise further, due to the economic crisis the coronavirus has brought on and the consequent job-losses¹². Living conditions and health are also threatened by those outcomes.

¹⁰ Cécile Brousse, "L'enquête sans-domicile 2001", INSEE, 2006, accessed 13 September 2020. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/information/2579262>.

¹¹ Bénédicte Mordier, "The homelessness - the gender pay gap in the public sector", INSEE, 2016, accessed 13 September 2020. <https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/2123143?sommaire=2123165>.

¹² Ruth Owen, Webinar conference (via Zoom) "Covid-19 and Homelessness Webinar", FEANTSA and the European Observatory of Homelessness, 25 September 2020.

CHAPTER 01

scene

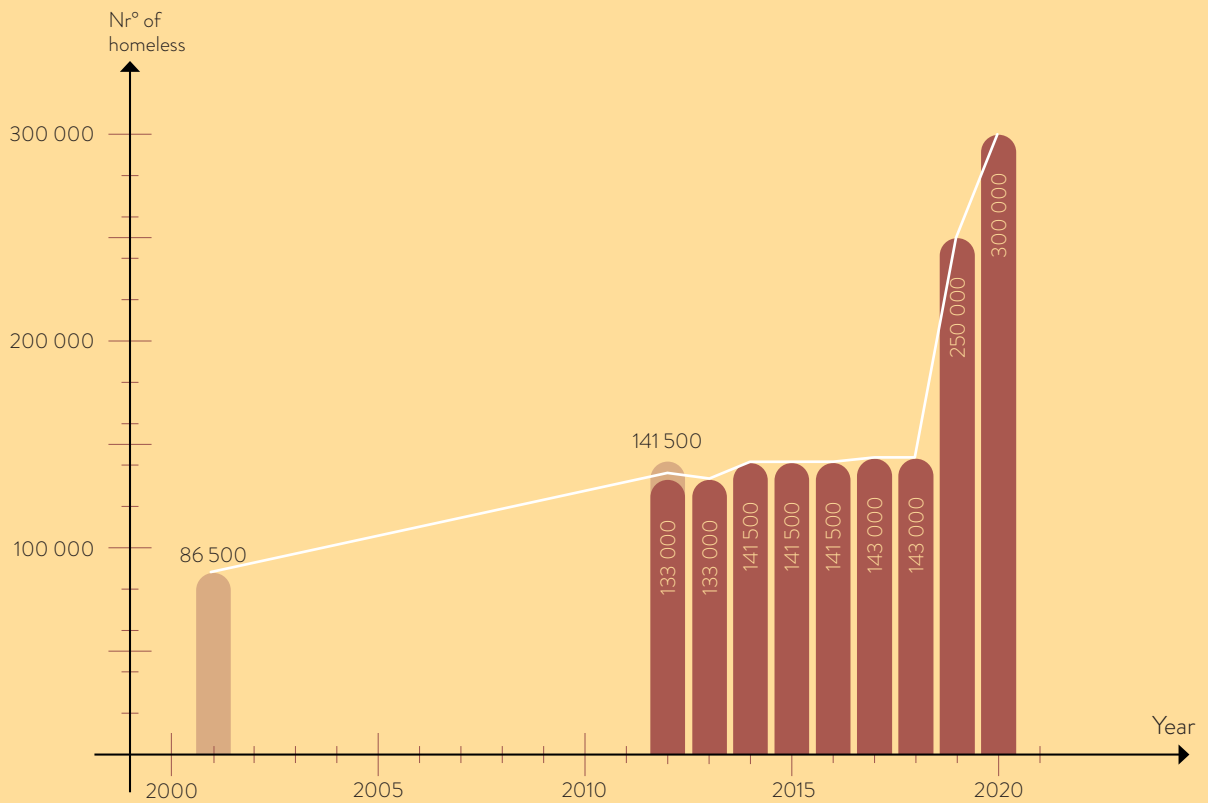


FIGURE 1 – Nr of homeless people in France (see Appendix 1)

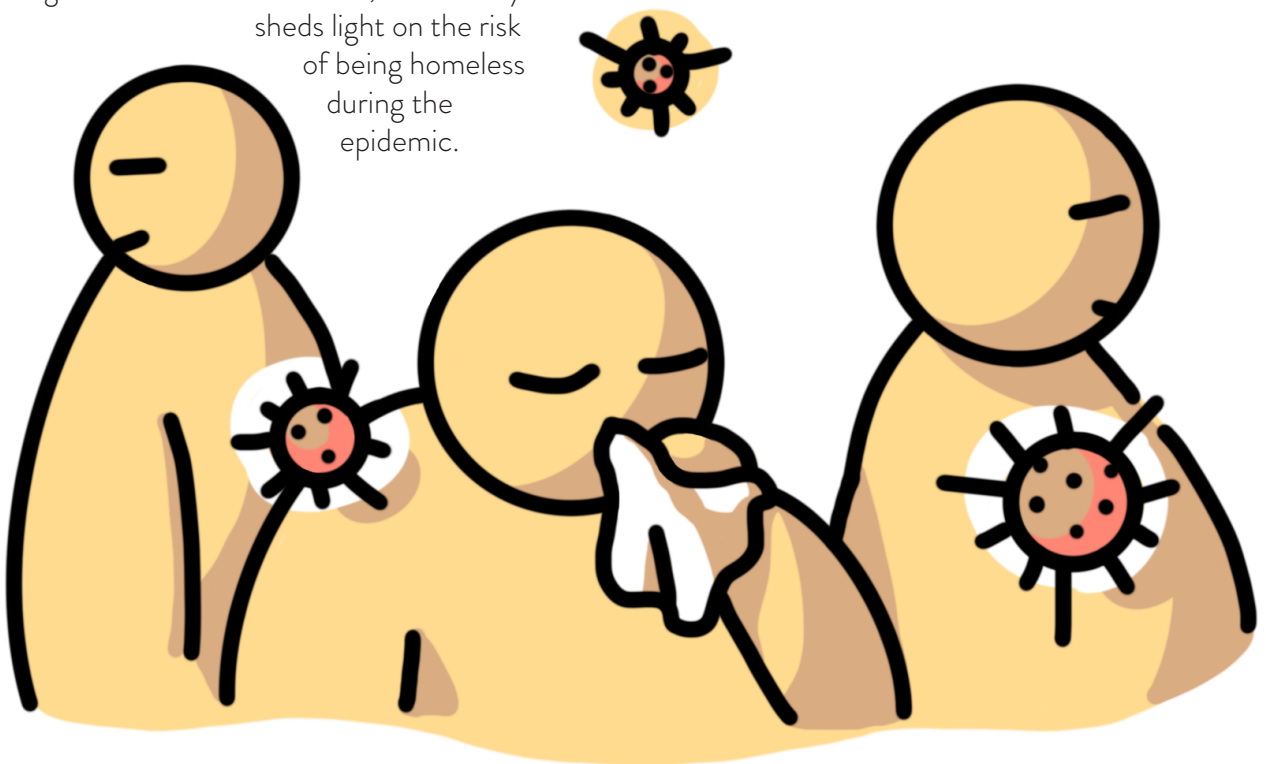
Effects of coronavirus on the homeless

Ruth Owen, a speaker in the "Covid-19 and Homelessness Webinar"¹³ explained that during the lock-down only few associations were open to nourish the homeless. Hot meals turned into take-aways or food parcels, reducing homeless people's comfort and time of eating. In France, there was an initiative to daily distribute 60 000 checks worth 7€ for food. Even though this number only nourished about 20% of (the estimated amount of) homeless people, it was a helpful step towards more qualitative nutrition for the homeless.

However the conditions, rules and essential information for the homeless was communicated in a rather old-fashioned manner, such as through leaflets, brochures, videos or outreach teams. This raises the question of whether important information as such, always reached each and every person in need. During and after the first lockdown in France, many security barriers and restrictions were put into action, like closing down a fraction of the associations to protect the volunteers. However this leads to longer waiting lines and the over-crowding of places, which in turn levitates the risk of infection for volunteers and homeless people¹⁴. Without having gone into detail on the lack of the government's intervention, this already sheds light on the risk of being homeless during the epidemic.

¹³ Owen (nr°12).

¹⁴ *ibid.*



Environment on homeless

Instability in the homeless environment is not a new notion to the homeless, since they are daily facing the possibility of assault, aggression or being stolen from.

"People have stolen everything I had, when I was sleeping. If people can steal from someone like me, who can you trust?"¹⁵

¹⁵ Courtenay (nr°2).

In fact, lack of trust towards society and even other homeless is quite common, which incites solitary and loneliness amongst them and adds a difficulty to mentally opening up during interviews. When considering the fact that sleeping outdoors provides with averagely

al effects lessness

3 hours of rest per day, irrational behaviour becomes logical. The excessive time spent outside also has a striking effect on the body and physical health, which will be explored more thoroughly in the following chapters.

It is clear from the previous information that the environment homeless people live in is harsh and entails a chaotic and troubled mind. Therefore, any recommended concept will need to be intuitive and user friendly, specifically easy to find and easy to use. The state of mind homeless people are in, is unimaginable for the general society. The homeless are excluded from traditional customs and social norms because they do not have the luxury to maintain them. Out of this exclusion, an entirely different ethnography — a "counter-society"¹⁶ or counterculture so to speak — is constructed. One where primitive norms and values dominate.

¹⁶ Le Roux (nr°7).

A counterculture arisen from

exclusion

"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty."¹⁷

Mother Theresa, known for her empathy, pin-pointed the social complexity that lies beneath people's pragmatic perception of homelessness. It exposes the need for inclusion and emotional affection in a society where work and status systematically defines and values a person. This is an implicit social standard also known as classicism. Every functioning society embodies ever-changing rules, norms or customs people abide by. As a homeless person for example, it is frowned upon when one renounces alcohol, as it implies arrogance¹⁷. It is one of the reasons why many people living on the street perpetually drink¹⁸. This type of reasoning, explaining homeless people's behaviour and habits, more specifically their ethnography, will be the core of the following paragraphs.

¹⁷ Mother Theresa, "No Greater Love", Joseph Durepos, 1977.

¹⁸ Le Roux (nr°7).

¹⁹ The reasons for alcohol addiction are most certainly deeper than group pressure and social exclusion, depending on individual experiences. However, due to the psychological complexity of addictions, I will not go deeper into detail.

Judging people by their cover

"What I would like, is if people – before categorising – would look at a book and not judge it by its cover, but judge it by its contents. That's how we could develop and better understand certain things."²⁰

Sleeping and living in the streets leave noticeable marks on the body, skin and mental. Strong odours of old clothes; sleep deprived minds and bodies; big, heavy bags; and oftentimes dogs. These are the cliché characteristics that distinguish a homeless person from any other. The "homeless" category presents a form of segregation, as their appearance prompt assumptions, accusations and hostile behaviour. At the same time, homeless people "are very alive to being noticed, observed and – usually – judged"²¹. Interestingly, in order to avoid this judgement and shame, the homeless never frequent high-standard places, preferring public and substandard settings. Regarding food consumption, this encourages the favouring of fast food stores, rather than healthy food stores. Fast food "can be bought in places where no one looks at them [the homeless] twice"²². The large fast food chain Mc Donald's, for example, released "come as you are"²³ as their advertising campaign, in order to increase comfort and eliminate judgement inside their restaurants. This directly links fast food to a homely, low cost appearance and simultaneously

²⁰ Association La Cloche, Sébastien (homeless), "Interviews de la rue @laCloche #RENNES", 22 December 2020, accessed 26 December 2020, <https://cutt.ly/ijxnV8T>.

²¹ Courtney (nr°2).

²² *ibid.*

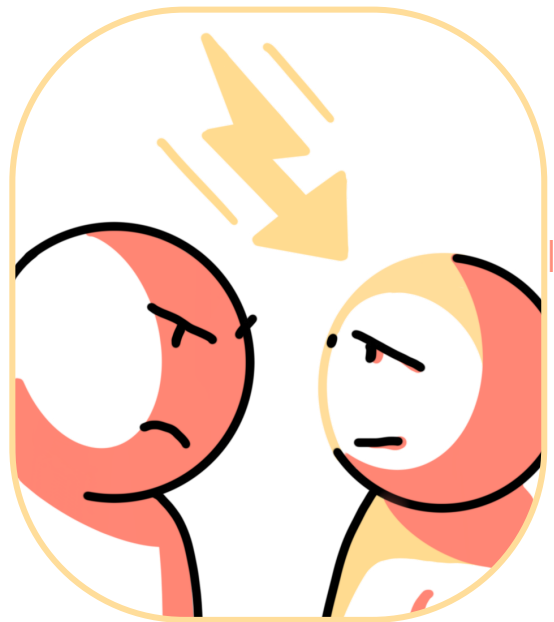
²³ Mc Donald's, "Come as you are", Euro RSCG agency network, May 2009, accessed 10 November 2020. https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/outdoor/mcdonalds_come_as_you_are.



Mc Donald's advertising campaign, 2009.

Image: Mc Donald's, «Come as you are», Euro RSCG agency network, May 2009, accessed 10 November 2020. https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/outdoor/mcdonalds_come_as_you_are.

hints at the connection between unhealthy food and impoverished people. This campaign validates the concept of creating an open atmosphere accessible to everyone, which can be relevant when researching qualitative food experiences for the homeless. "They don't generally buy healthy little quinoa salads from M&S²⁴ not just because they can't afford them, but also because they're embarrassed – people stare at them – they don't really belong in M&S"²⁵. Courtenay's words made me question the conditions, in which a homeless person truly "belongs" somewhere.



²⁴ Marks and Spencer, British retail company.

²⁵ Courtenay (nr²2).

Goethe's famous quote

**"tell me with whom you
associate, and I will tell
you who you are"²⁶,**

suggests that the people one socialises with, indicate who one is and in which social class one belongs. However, instead of letting societal ranks govern people's sense of belonging, a neutralisation of judgement should be considered for their food experiences. This might create more pleasant and dignified eating conditions for homeless people. A Japanese chain restaurant called "Ichiran" shows potential for a no-judgement atmosphere with its partitioned eating

²⁶ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Conversations of German Refugees ; Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years, Or, The Renunciants", p.296, Princeton University Press, 1989.

spaces, individually separated by wooden walls. It creates a private and peaceful environment, where customers exclusively see and experience their food. Hidden from gawking eyes, homeless people might feel a sense of home there, because currently their entire private life is utterly public.



Ichiran Restaurant in New York.

Image: «Ichiran Ramen», Guidable Japan, 5 September 2017, accessed 10 October. <https://guidable.co/fr/food/ichiran-ramen-taste-of-a-culture/>.



Ichiran Restaurant in New York.

Image: «Ichiran Ramen», Guidable Japan, 5 September 2017, accessed 10 October. <https://guidable.co/fr/food/ichiran-ramen-taste-of-a-culture/>.



Ichiran Restaurant in New York.

Image: «Ichiran Ramen», Guidable Japan, 5 September 2017, accessed 10 October. <https://guidable.co/fr/food/ichiran-ramen-taste-of-a-culture/>.



Student project «Eating disordered».

Image: Studentdesign, «An interactive playful experience», Instagram, 16 July 2020, accessed 2 October 2020.
<https://rb.gy/ksqdv1>.

Another insight Goethe reveals with his quote, is that the way one socialises, closely relates to one's identity. This confirms that when one is denied the possibility to communicate and associate, it will affect one's personality. In order to maintain one's sense of identity, it is therefore interesting to inspect creations that force strangers to interact with each other by creating a situation of co-dependence. The student project "Eating Disordered"²⁷

by Lara Chapman makes interaction mandatory when eating at the dining table. One of her concepts is to lock a teapot inside the wooden installation, which has to be manually lifted and interacted with from both sides for a stable and safe tea-pouring. This experience has a playful touch to it, as it makes users laugh and "earn" their tea together. Instead of concentrating on judging each other's clothes, status or personality, the interacting

users focus on one common goal, which eventually breaks the ice. Many homeless people talk of strong feelings of loneliness²⁸, which is why positive communication as such — oral, gestural or mimic — is terribly needed.

²⁷ Studentdesign, "An interactive playful experience", Instagram, 16 July 2020, accessed 2 October 2020. <https://rb.gy/ksqdv1>.

²⁸ Courtenay (nr°2).

²⁹ Douglas Kellner, "Nietzsche's Critique of Mass Culture", *International Studies in Philosophy*, Volume 31, Issue 3, p.77-89, 1999, accessed 25 October 2020. <https://bit.ly/38uSesh>.

Nietzsche believed that culture mainly exists to distract people from the truth²⁹. In this sense, general society distracts itself from the awful realities of homelessness, by excluding and ignoring their problems. There actually exists a military torture tactic, which explains how to exclude a person from their group — and create a feeling of futility —, until the person eventually breaks down mentally³⁰.

Scarcity of social inter- action

³⁰ Courtenay (nr°2)

Additionally, homeless people's absence of conversation culminates in a loss of free-flowing, reactive, organised speech and basic social skills, which would easily erode one's sense of self³¹. That is why, the importance of interactions, smiles and conversation is so great in the homeless' daily lives.

"It's the people who do that, that still make me feel that I am human, normal"³²,

admits homeless Charisse in Courtenay's book. Society being able to strip someone of their humanity and sense of self, really puts matters into perspective and makes

a counter-acting system necessary.

"Tux", a Canadian creative agency, committed to introduce the homeless from another perspective rather than letting the usual dirty, rough stereotypes persevere. They created a printed publication and an instagram platform called "Rauques"³³ in which homeless people's their experiences and their insightful quotes are highlighted. The luminous, qualitative photography and scrupulous layout design truly capture them in a distinguished light. The publication also enables the education about conditions in a homeless life. To talk to them, write about them and to try understanding them, grant homeless people with dignity. It was a rare chance to express themselves, whilst also being genuinely listened to.

³¹ Courtenay (nr°2).

³² *ibid.*

³³ TUX, "Rauques", Accueil Bonneau, 2020, accessed 28 August 2020. <https://tux.co/en/work/detail/rauques/>.

Sharing a conversation or precious time with caring people is very valuable. Reproducing this social experience around a shared meal could be a way to address homeless people's need for positive interaction. In many cultures, such as the French, sharing meals together is a sacred ritual and enables feelings of community, safety and comfort. Also for homeless people, eating as part of a group is very appreciated, which can be seen in the different events that are organised to bring together homeless people and volunteers at the dinner table. One example will be elaborated on later and talks about La Cloche association's initiative that gives homeless people the opportunity to cook and eat their meal amongst a diverse social group.

The grateful, enthusiastic and sensitive feedback of homeless people's experiences there, attest to the powerful impact of social inclusion through food consumption. That is why it is important to deeply understand the setting and context of homeless people, as it reveals areas, in which food can be used to better their circumstances.



Rauques publication on homeless people.

Image: TUX, «Rauques», Accueil Bonneau, 2020, accessed 28 August 2020. <https://tux.co/en/work/detail/rauques/>.



Rauques publication on homeless people.

Image: TUX, «Rauques», Accueil Bonneau, 2020, accessed 28 August 2020.
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Rauques publication on homeless people.

Image: TUX, «Rauques», Accueil Bonneau, 2020, accessed 28 August 2020. <https://tux.co/en/work/detail/rauques/>.

The previous chapter explained how the coronavirus magnifies the dangers of being homeless today, especially during the first lockdown. The rough environment they live in presents threats to physical and mental health, which strongly affect their identity, most likely forever changing their personality. Sleep deprivation leading to irritability, for example, becomes a very common characteristic³⁴. One stops trusting peers and starts being very attentive regarding other's prejudice towards

oneself. The homeless also tend to evade situations in which they feel judged or categorised. However sharing meals was proven effective in including, reassuring and encouraging the homeless because of the social value. Otherwise, the lack of communication, social and verbal skills decline, making reintegration into society all the more difficult. How are the homeless supposed to develop and evolve towards improved situations, when living on the street has such drastic effects on their mental and physical abilities?

However, not only the environmental and social context of homelessness negatively influences the afflicted, but nutrition also greatly contributes. Every man or woman's food consumption is biologically linked to mental and physical health. Given the conditions homeless people live in, it can be safely assumed that balanced nutrition is not an easy task. Therefore the following chapter will analyse food tendencies amongst the homeless and come to understand their consequences on the body.

³⁴ Le Roux (nr°7).

Eating patterns

CHAPTER 02

of the homeless

Due to the lack of published in-depth research on homeless people's eating habits, I furthered my research by collecting a number of qualitative interviews. The conversations quickly clarified that homeless people don't starve to death in Nantes. Even in Paris, Yves testifies that in order

"to die of hunger and cold in Paris, you have to be a village idiot or completely drunk."³⁵

The brutal problem of starvation being off the table, other health issues started to surface when the food they generally eat and the ways in which it is consumed, were studied. The research revealed more insights into the homeless environment, their mentality and mainly showed the extent to which homeless people's current nutrition disturb physical and psychological capacities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the homeless mostly eat in fast food restaurants in order to feel more comfortable. However, the following chapter indicates the biological and instinctive reasons for their calorie-rich choices. Understanding and explaining mannerisms as such, related to nutrition, will be the focus of this chapter.

³⁵ Le Roux (nr°7).

Options for obtaining food

as a homeless person

Since eating conditions are economically and socially constrained for the homeless, it is significant to specify and inquire about the few opportunities that are available to them. Conducted interviews revealed the following possibilities — each treated separately — for homeless people to obtain and eat food: visiting food associations, receiving food as donations from by-passers, buying food with the money they made begging, through campfires in the wood or lastly with a temporary fix such as eating from the trash.

³⁶ Two anonymous volunteers at L'autre Cantine, interviewed on 20 November 2019 at 15:00, in L'autre Cantine.

1 Associations and their offers in Nantes

L'AUTRE CANTINE

The first interview was conducted with two anonymous volunteers³⁶ at L'autre Cantine on 20th November in 2020 at their main-office, which in fact was everything but an office. The small apartment — located 450 meters away from the train station — was decorated in such a way, that allows the gathering and socialising on two time-worn couches around a coffee table. Coffee and tea were served at will from the bar. The room was followed by a narrow hall, which gave to a free, solidary grocery storage (dry foods from the food bank), where people were allowed to pick freely as much as needed. Most of these products were pasta, rice, flour and spices which need a kitchen and tools to be prepared and eaten. The end of the narrow hall lead to a big kitchen and small exterior garden, where volunteers cook food in huge portions together. Volunteers ranged from 20 to 60 year olds and from regulars to newbies, confirming the association's accessibility for volunteers. Before lunch and dinner, filled cooking pots will be transported to a common space of accommodation for refugees. The volunteers explained that L'autre Cantine is open to all and everyone in need,

but it is mainly visited by refugees. When I arrived, there were 2 refugees interacting in the common area, 2 volunteers at the bar and 5 people preparing food for dinner. The small number of refugees and homeless people leads to believe that L'autre Cantine is not widely known or attended, whereas number of visitors could depend on the time of day. The mentioned free groceries L'autre Cantine makes

available, are but one of the solidary systems they have in place for homeless people to obtain food in easier manners than begging. The interviewees talked about using a donated agricultural field during the summer to plant vegetables with the help of volunteers and refugees. However, due to the poor quality of the land, only robust vegetables, such as potatoes could be harvested.

All in all, the atmosphere appeared low-cost but allowed for warmth, sharing and conversation. L'autre Cantine's location being so close to the city centre means valid accessibility. However, the groceries need tools and kitchen preparation, the food is prepared for refugee-specific locations and there also is a social barrier between refugees and French homeless. The preceding reasons prove this association to have a refugee-exclusive customer base and are therefore not directly relevant to analysing French homeless people's experiences.

BAINS-DOUCHES

On 22nd November in 2019, I interviewed Corinne Hemonic, the director of Bains-Douches, a municipal space for showering, shaving and hygiene³⁷. Compared to L'autre Cantine, the number of homeless customers is high, according to Hemonic, 85% of visitors are French homeless people. They pay 1,45€ for a separate shower space plus a hygiene kit. An interesting quality Hemonic underlined about Bains-douches is the go-toward attitude. Workers will go towards the homeless as soon as they enter through the door, in order for them to feel safe and welcomed.

³⁷ Corinne Hemonic, Director of Bains-Douches, Interviewed on 22 November 2019 at 8:00, in Bains-Douches Municipaux.

Many workers were precarious themselves when hired, which proves their deeply solidary objective. Bains-douches in Nantes was built in 1857, which makes it the oldest municipal installation in France. That is the reason for planned renovation and restauration. The future building will include a day care centre where cooking workshops will take place. The idea of combining hygiene and food consumption is a logical strategy, as both needs are driven by the will to maintain and take care of oneself.

Unfortunately, at the time of the interview the place was quite busy, which did not allow me to see the shower spaces or intercept users on their way in or out. However the number of visitors and willingness to pay an entry, prove the devotion to maintaining hygiene and health.

LA CLOCHE

Furthermore, the director Maxime Hurault of La Cloche was interviewed on December 2nd in 2019³⁸. This association started off in Paris and now also has a traditional office, with several co-workers, in Nantes. Hurault described their objective as wanting to break the image of the poor. They thought of several methods to do so, for example with their "soupe impopulaire", a soup handout, where roles are switched: the homeless cook and distribute to organisers and other homeless.

³⁸ Maxime Hurault, Director of Le Carillon, interviewed on 2 December 2019 14:00, at Le Carillon Nantes.

"Their need for mental satisfaction isn't considered frequently enough"³⁹,

³⁹ *ibid.*

says Hurault, accurately summarising the social problem with current solutions for the homeless. That is why La Cloche created a network of coffee shops where customers are able to pay an additional Euro, so that in the following hours or weeks, a homeless person can obtain a free warm coffee. The number of available coffees are written on a board, which makes this system visible and accessible. La Cloche also distributes small transportable brochures, that indicate the shops that provide services for homeless people on a map and in form

of a list. These services may range from the possibility of going to the bathroom, to the willingness for conversation, all represented by a unique and specific icon on the map. It is clear that La Cloche understands homeless people's needs and issues, whilst their programs concentrate on the social well-being of homeless people. Recently, they initiated cooking workshops each Friday with a nutritionist apprentice, where the homeless learn and enjoy preparing various dishes from scratch.

By attending one of the organised cooking workshops on the 4th of December 2020, homeless people's relationships with food could be observed. A bar, which had closed since the lockdown, made their space available for the association's event. The student nutritionist brought portable stoves, kitchen towels and donated boxes full of vegetables and fruit. A kitchen is generally in one's home and therefore an intimate place. By making this kitchen their own, the homeless were able to establish a sense of home and belonging. It was interesting to see homeless people's differences in their ability or ease to cook. For elderly people, preparing more complex food, such as fish, was no difficulty and implied a

certain nostalgia and pride. However, some younger participants did not have previous cooking skills and had to be taught basic knowledge, like the use of a vegetable peeler or how to cut an ananas.



Cooking workshop organised by La Cloche for the homeless.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Jean-Marc delicately preparing the fish.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Jean-Marc delicately preparing the fish.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Moments of laughter during the meal.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Tutorial for cutting ananas.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Complicated and unknown tool to young homeless person.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Serving the meal.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.



Morad, who wanted a picture taken.

Image: Personal photographs, at Wattignies Social Club, 4 December 2020.

Everyone was given a task starting with peeling and cutting fruit or vegetables, which was a moment of relaxation and concentration. Relaxation was perceivable because of the almost ritualistic manual activity that needed no difficult brainwork, whilst concentration could be seen by the devotion

towards a qualitative execution of the mission. Sometimes everyone worked in silence but oftentimes stories or experiences were exchanged. The social connections that were built during the cooking experience and meal together were astonishing. The warm-hearted conversations were a powerful distraction from the cold, since this space was not heated. When the food was ready, several more people — regularly visiting the association — joined in for the feast, resulting in a meal for a total of 12 people. The portions were generous, presented neatly and the food was perceived as a triumph by all acting cooks. It was visible that sharing a meal and feeling rewarded for their cooking is of high value to the homeless.

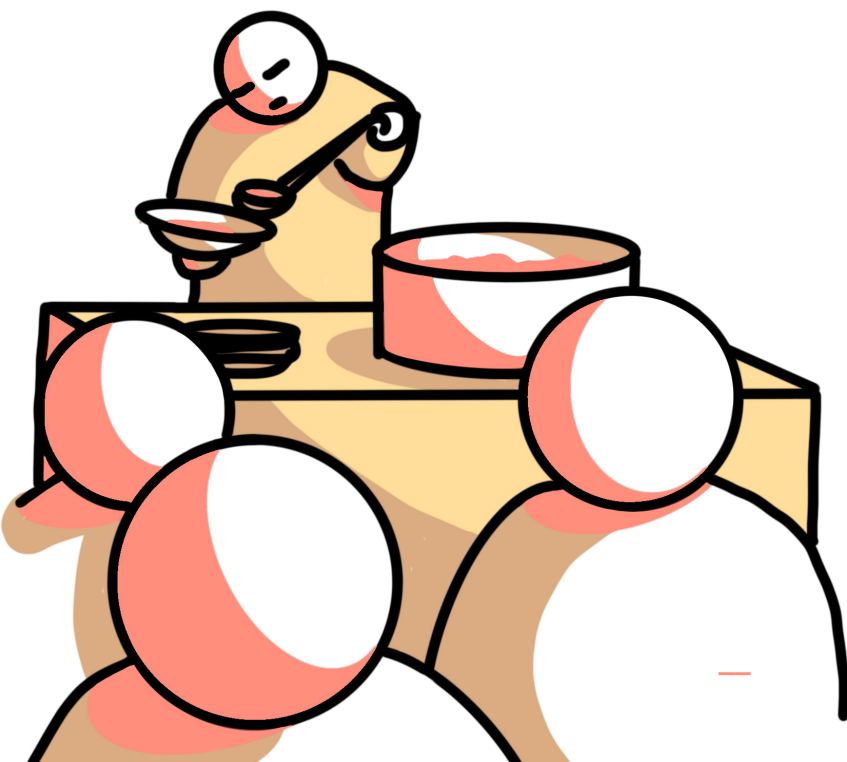
LES RESTAURANTS DU COEUR

Lastly, a significant association in France and Nantes is Les Restaurants du Coeur⁴⁰. As does La Cloche, Les Restaurants du Coeur manage several programs for the well-being of the homeless, whereas Les Restaurants du Coeur are concentrated on nutrition instead of the social factor. Another factor that differentiates Les Restaurants du Coeur from other mentioned associations, is that some places require registration and identification in order to be served. This increases safety, however strongly narrows down accessibility at the same time. One unique program they offer, is a bus where seats and furniture were rearranged, in order to create a restaurant on wheels. The bus stops at a specific place and time, where the homeless are served with a tray of food and may eat inside. Les Restaurants

du Coeur emphasise on the importance of a balanced diet by serving vegetables, starchy foods and fruits. They also educate about the strong nutritional value of fresh vegetables and fruits with posters in the association, through trainings and cooking workshops. Les Restaurants du Coeur's attentiveness to raise awareness about balanced nutrition, shows their focus on health, whilst events and workshops prove their consideration of social issues.

⁴⁰ Les Restaurants du Coeur, "Aides Alimentaires", 2016, accessed 1 October 2020. <https://www.restosducoeur.org/nos-actions/aide-alimentaire/>.

Surprisingly, according to conducted interviews, associations and other food services are being avoided by the homeless, which will be explained in detail in chapter 3. Being unwilling to go to associations, they commonly resort to begging for money, which enables them to make their own food choices.



2 Foods bought with begged money

"Paying my meal gives me the impression of being like everyone else, I regain my dignity a little."⁴¹

A homeless person tries to buy food in small portions because the food they buy will have to be carried along with the rest of their life belongings and they also don't usually have much money in one go. The question I aim to answer in this section is: what food do homeless people usually buy?

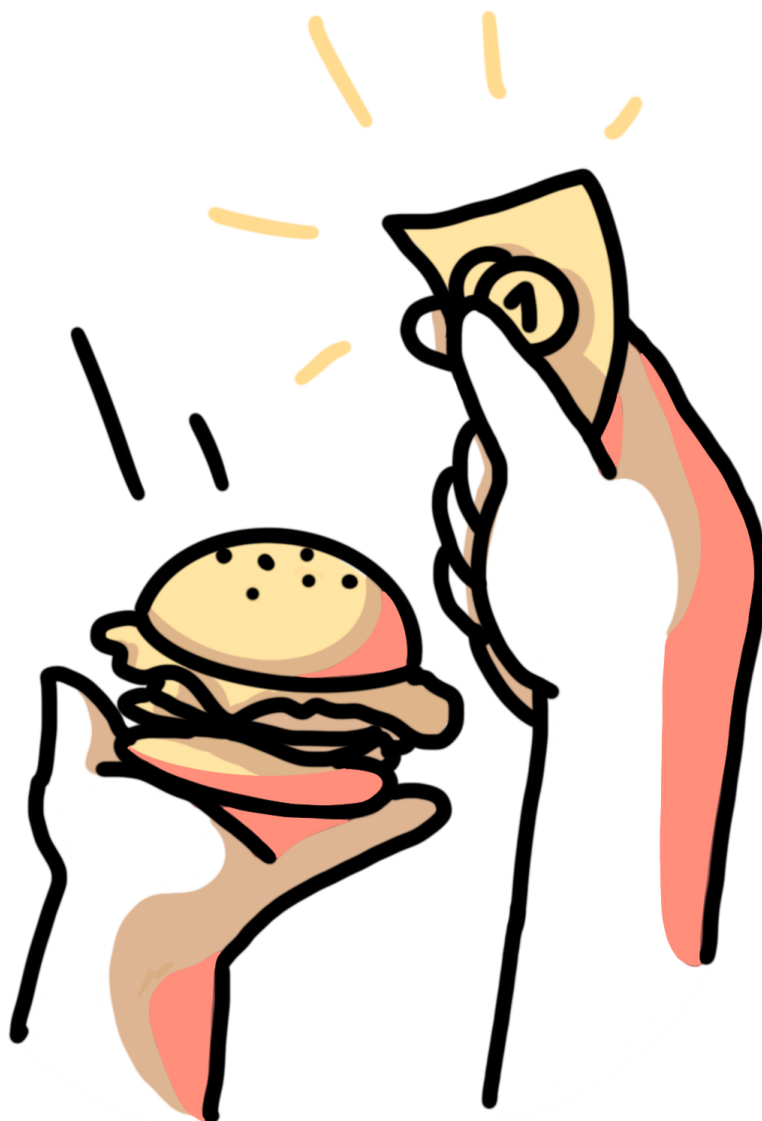
Tamsen Courtenay, the author of *Four Feet Under*, interviewed 30 homeless people in London during 2018. A shocking amount of people mainly consumed Mc Donald's meals because these are warm and relatively cheap there. The health consequences of principally eating fast food, which has near to nutritional value, is already damaging without the additional difficulty of a homeless person's living condition. In Nantes however, none of the interviewees mentioned Mc Donald's. There, the most common indicated food source is a kebab, for the reasons that they are warm, quite cheap and satiate the stomach. Nutritionist Solène Bail described this craving as "a perfect instinct of the body"⁴²

because of the richness in calories and carbohydrates that are needed by the body when undernourished⁴³. Additional detail about nutrients and their functions for the body will be developed in chapter 2.2. Consequences on health.

⁴¹ Le Roux (nr°7).

⁴² Bail (nr°5).

⁴³ *ibid.*



Unfortunately, there is another cheap product that fills up the stomach and keeps warm: alcohol. It is why several homeless people confessed to replacing their meals with alcohol. Landry explained that This habit is

a threat to health, as it does not only bring few nutrients to the body, but also fuels alcoholism.

However, this habit could be exploited by replacing the contents of the bottles with nutrients. Food in bottles and liquid form, proposed by "Feed" for

instance, enables balanced and regulated nutrition on the go. In many ways, this concept, which initially targeted an athletic customer-base, could be suitable for homeless people because the bottle is

needed. However, being already generally deprived of qualitative food, the willingness to drinking food-powder has to be questioned and tested.

"for 2,60€, I get 2 beers and 2 beers equal to one meal in my stomach. It's just cheaper and keeps warm."⁴⁴

easily portable, the gesture of drinking can be used for other ingredients than alcohol and lastly because healthy alimentation is greatly

⁴⁴ Landry, 45 years old, homeless since 8 months, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 11 November 2019. See Appendix 3 for raw data.



Feed bottles.

Image: Feed, «Original. Repas équilibrés», n.d., accessed 15 November 2020. <https://www.feed.co>.

Alcohol is also known to create a sensation of warmth, which is an effect called vasodilation — or "beer blanket" — and is caused by the widening of blood vessels⁴⁵. The body temperature is not actually changing, it's the heat that is redistributed throughout the body, creating an illusion of warmth. This can have dangerous consequences, because when under the influence, one does not realise the severeness of the cold. Interestingly, natural vasodilators — meaning that it gives

the impression of warmth — exist⁴⁶. For example cayenne pepper, pomegranate, onions, cinnamon and many more create vasodilation, but their effect is fewer than that of alcohol. If the problem of homeless people's meals was the cold, these ingredients would create an opportunity for comfort. However, the reason for replacing meals with alcohol oftentimes go much further. Oliver, for example needs

⁴⁵ Kate Goldbaum, "Does drinking alcohol warm your body?", Live Science, 18 July 2016, accessed on 4 June 2020. <https://www.livescience.com/55435-does-drinking-alcohol-warm-your-body.html>.

⁴⁶ Jillian Kubala, "The 14 Best Foods to Increase Blood Flow and Circulation", Healthline, 7 November 2018, accessed on 4 June 2020. <https://shop.anabolichealth.com/pages/vasodilators>.

⁴⁷ Oliver, 43 years old, homeless since 3 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Commerce on 17 November 2019.

"at least 2 beers in my system, or else I'm just too shy to ask people for money."⁴⁷



This means that alcohol is not only perceived as a solution for cravings but also for social or personal problems. Additionally, the consumption of alcohol by the homeless is driven by group pressure, because "if one finds oneself in the street, one must respect the rules of the game.

Otherwise he's a renegade. [...] Not only is he an outcast from society, but he will be an outcast from counterculture."⁴⁸

The ones who refuse to drink will be identified as arrogant and confronted with verbal or physical violence⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ Le Roux (nr°7).

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

Therefore, the consumption of alcohol presents various issues that can be categorised as a complete and separate subject, especially due to the added complexity of addiction. It is the reason why I will not further the opportunities arisen by alcohol consumption within my end of study project.

Instead, this chapter will investigate the impact everyday fast food consumption – such as kebabs – has on the homeless. At this point, their need for a healthier lifestyle has become unambiguous.

3 By-passers' food donations

When the homeless do not have enough money to choose their own food, instead of visiting associations, many prefer to rely on begging for food donations. According to the conducted interviews, the most common food donations given in Nantes are cold bakery products, such as pastries and sandwiches. Another recurring donation is the triangle sandwich.

"I have had so many triangle sandwiches, they make me sick now"⁵⁰,

disclosed Olivier. Even though he is grateful for any donation, his (and many other interviewees') taste buds started rejecting the redundant and tasteless triangle sandwich. Sometimes donations can range to sweet snacks or other products that are personally requested by the homeless. Warm donations are mostly beverages such as coffee or tea.

⁵⁰ Olivier (nr°47).

During the coronavirus epidemic, communities in various cities, including Berlin, thought of solidary methods to help the people in need, such as the homeless. One of those methods was to hang small transparent plastic bags filled with food on what is called a donation fence. There were different

categories, such as hygiene, clothes, food, and so on. It was an interesting opportunity to observe by-passers' donations and summarise the most common foods associated with the homeless. In the timeframe of seven

days, homemade sandwiches (5), cereal bars (4), chocolate (4), and fruit such as bananas (4), apples (3) and oranges (2) were the most donated foods. Even though, this experiment was conducted in Germany, it gives previous interviews in France credibility. Sandwiches and sweet snacks are

typical in Nantes and Berlin, however fruits were never mentioned by the homeless in Nantes, which can call for an improvement of awareness on recommended food donations for the homeless.



Donation Fence in Germany.

Image: Constructive Institute, «How To Show What Works Through a TV Documentary Series», AARHUS Universitat, n.d., accessed 15 November 2020. <https://constructiveinstitute.org/how/contributions/how-to-show-what-works-through-a-tv-documentary-series/>.

When observing the behaviour of people passing by a begging homeless person in Nantes, changes in body language, eye contact and allure can be noticed. When the by-passer is not inclined to donate something, that person will turn their head to avoid eye-contact and walk past in a fleeting manner. Other by-passers

seemed unsure of their actions with gazes going back and forth, in anticipation of eventually being addressed by the homeless person. Since homeless people's behaviour is so different from general society's, it is logical that there

are uncertainties of how to interact with each other. It is especially hard because the homeless put themselves into an inferior position and ask for help, whilst also having to face demoralising rejection. By asking if they wish for a specific food donation, gives them an opportunity to

choose a product adapted to their taste and nutrition. If homeless people yearn for the ability to personalise their diet more, some see the possibility of building campfires in the woods and cooking their bought or donated food.

4 Cooking on campfires

In fact, a fraction of homeless people live in the woods because it provides with more safety from disturbers during their sleep. This creates the opportunity for campfires, which involves primitive cooking. Preparing one's food in the woods shows a great deal of similarities with the way nomads ate and the way campers eat today. Military soldiers must also be able to eat anywhere, which is why they are provisioned with food rations that contain exothermic reacting packs, heating up their food when in contact with water.

This makes for an easy, quick solution and a qualitative meal, even if the packaging and chemical elements diminish the environmental friendliness of the product. Identical goods are being sold to campers, which offers them a unique and safe method of heating up ready-made food without electricity or fire. This could prove to be useful to homeless people, who are mostly obligated to eat their food cold, which has been described as less enjoyable⁵¹.

⁵¹ Jason, 16 years old, homeless since 3 years, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 11 November 2019. See Appendix 3 for raw data.



Omeals - exothermic, self-heating meal.

Image: Kyle Nossaman, «No Stove Needed: Omeals Self-Heating Backpacking Meal Review», Gear Junkie, 26 September 2018, accessed 2 October 2020. <https://rb.gy/ufwfg1>.

For the homeless, grilling on campfires also means low-cost cooking using few tools or reinvent usages for unsuitable materials, for instance using a shopping cart's metal pattern as a cooking grate. "To do more with less⁵²" is the slogan and idea behind frugal design, which perfectly applies here. Frugality is a very important design philosophy in India, where

many regions can only afford economical solutions. The same goes for homeless people in Nantes. In continuation of frugal thinking, it will be of interest to build on already existing systems or public spaces to save on production cost and have a lower environmental impact for example.

⁵² Jaideep Prabhu and Navi Radjou, "Frugal Innovation: How to Do More with Less", *The Economist*, 10 February 2015.



Making a fire in the woods is illegal, but the freedom it yields, presents an attractive concept to the homeless. "I will always remember us living in our car and cooking whatever and however we wanted with just some pans, vegetables and mother nature"⁵³, said Johnny, nostalgically looking at his girlfriend Charlène, who added,

"in our situation, grilling food on a campfire is pure luxury!"⁵⁴

It brings forth the ability to prepare and interact with the food, personalise meals and enjoy the intimacy of cooking one's own meal. Compared to other eating options, such as eating a kebab, privately making one's dinner is very compelling. The fact that homeless people do not have a kitchen or kitchen tools, usually makes cooking impossible. The food they therefore have to eat is always ready-made or can be eaten raw.

⁵³ Johnny, 33 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes at Commerce on 17 November 2019.

⁵⁴ Charlène, 35 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Commerce on 17 November 2019.

Human's transition from raw to cooked food played an enormous role in our species evolution. Food that is cooked, facilitates digestion and entails more energy intake, which in turn gave humans the time and energy for other activities regarding social or intellectual interests. This proves two things: First of all, eating cooked food has a physical advantage on the body. Secondly, it proves that easier, healthier and qualitative food consumption open the door to evolving in other areas. For instance, if homeless people spent less time begging for their food because an effective system to obtain food is put into action, they will have more time and energy for

administrative business, job hunts or socialising — all essential factors for stabilising one's lifestyle. This historical fact confirms the relevance of an ability to cook and prepare food. Even in Courtenay's book and during personal interviews, homeless people numerous expressed how much they longingly remember the act of cooking.

"I used to cook a lot and I miss it Believe it or not, I am quite a good cook"⁵⁵,

asserts Romault. Even Yves intimated that as soon as he would have a place to stay, "I would finally regain a balanced diet. I would be renewed with the pleasures of cooking!"⁵⁶ Being stripped of the opportunity to prepare their food in regular kitchens, cooking on campfires can free them from the constraining shackles of homeless conditions. However, starting a fire in the woods remains illegal and renders this option inadequate.

⁵⁵ Romault, 35 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes, Bouffay, on 30 September 2020. See Appendix 3 for raw data.

⁵⁶ Le Roux (nr°7).

5 Trash eating

When hunger is too intense to bear and energy is too low, homeless people resort to a temporary fix such as eating out of the trash or the floor. According to personal interviews, many homeless people find that type of food consumption unacceptable, but for some, trash is a conceivable possibility. Steve explained that

⁵⁷ Steve, 33 years old, homeless since 5 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Saint Nicolas on 24 May 2020.

"restaurants just throw away bulks of good food. Sushi Shop for example, had huge bags of rice in their trash, the food wasn't even touching the bin, so I took some."⁵⁷

This experience was rather empowering for him, due to the notion of saving wasted food. However, Landry described it differently:

"You sit in a park and try to watch those who don't finish their sandwich and throw it in the trash.. Then you collect the sandwich. Half of the sandwich."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Landry (nr°44).

The frustration was audible in the tone of his voice.

This reminded me of Ludwig Feuerbach's famous quote

"we are what we eat"⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Ludwig Feuerbach, German philosopher, 1848.

By that logic, homeless people are waste for eating waste. It is likely that when one eats trash regularly, very soon one will feel like trash as well. This implies a feeling of humiliation, which can eat away at one's sense of self. As soon as one's identity and self-esteem start fading, it is safe to say that the experienced conditions are neither dignified nor qualitative.

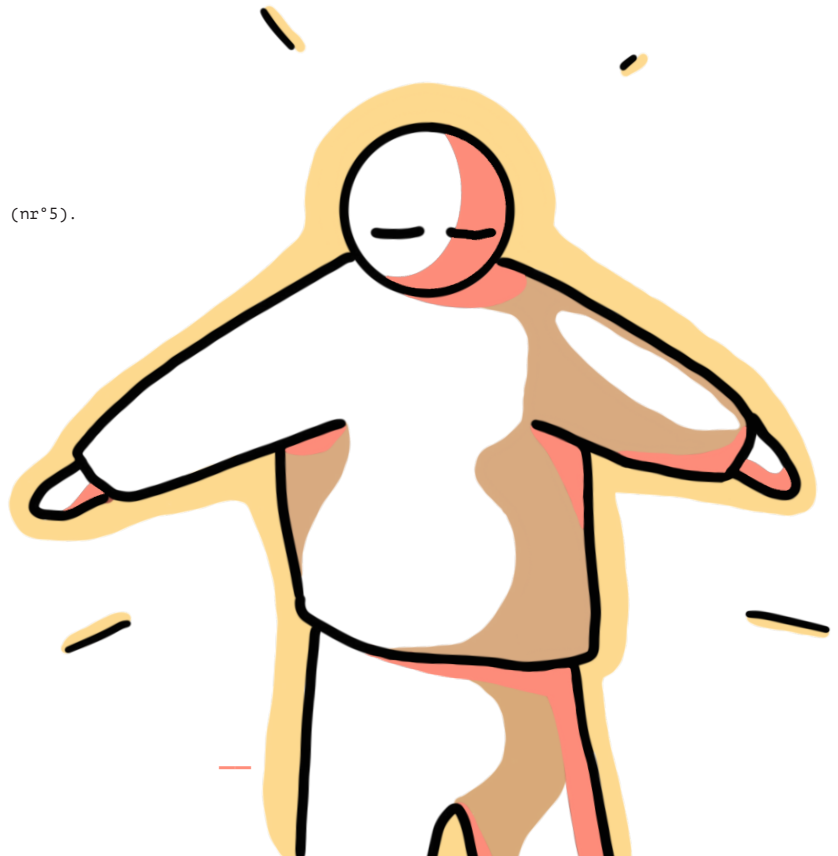
Other than the humiliation, there are further psychological effects and even physical effects of eating like this, as a homeless person. Having now elaborated on the content and options of their nutrition, the following chapter will explain the consequences of said nutrition on health.



Consequences on health

In order to be thorough, psychological and physical consequences on health will be developed separately. This chapter is very much based on information exposed by nutritionist Solène Bail during an interview.⁶⁰ After she listened to the information I had already gathered on homeless nutrition, she analysed the nutrients they are most likely lacking and explained the consequences. Generally, Bail described the homeless as undernourished and malnourished.

⁵⁹ Bail (nr°5).



Psychological and mental aftermath

An important nutrient Bail mentioned is proteins. Their ingestion lead to the creation of neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin. Dopamine is released when the brain is expecting a reward, for example "when you come to associate a certain activity with pleasure."⁶¹ For some people, this might be watching a series and for a homeless person, it might be drinking with their peers. However, when the body is deficient in dopamine, it reduces alertness, makes concentration difficult, decreases motivation and enthusiasm, reduces coordination and complicates active movement.⁶² These symptoms, that arise when protein rich food is not being consumed, explain the confused and weary state, which homeless people often appear to be in. Lack of sleep may also lower dopamine levels, which doesn't work in favour for the sleep-deprived homeless. Anyway, "dopamine is not acting alone. It functions with other neurotransmitters and hormones, such as serotonin."⁶³

⁶¹ Timothy J. Legg, Ph.D., "How Does Dopamine Affect the Body?", 5 November 2019, accessed 25 September 2020. <https://www.healthline.com/health/dopamine-effects#definition>.

⁶² Bail (nr°5).

⁶³ Legg (nr°61).

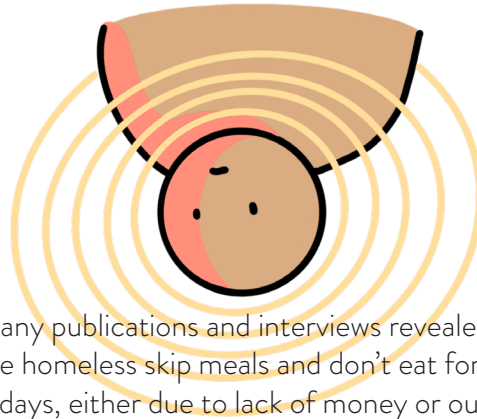
Serotonin is a second neurotransmitter released when proteins are eaten and functions as a natural mood and hunger stabiliser. In order for serotonin to be created, the amino acid tryptophan has to be ingested by eating certain foods such as nuts, milk, cheese and red meat.⁶⁴ When the deficiency of tryptophan leads to lower serotonin levels, it can result in mood disorders such as anxiety or depression or in over/under eating.

Being in a state of extreme hunger itself can be painful and uncomfortable.

⁶⁴ Debra Rose Wilson, Ph.D. "Serotonin: What You Need to Know", medically reviewed 18 May 2017, updated 19 August 2020, accessed 25 September 2020. <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/serotonin#takeaway>.

"A pulling sensation in the stomach, it twists, it makes you wobbly, it prevents you from thinking, seeing, listening, it obsesses me. I drink to compensate – it's even worse."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Le Roux (nr°7).



Many publications and interviews revealed that the homeless skip meals and don't eat for up to 4 days, either due to lack of money or out of solitude.

When one's mental health starts shifting without being aware of it, symptoms such as depression, irritation and lack of alertness begin to disintegrate one's identity and values.

**"Living on
the street is
a process of
depersonalisation"
66 ,**

⁶⁶ Le Roux (nr°7).

says former homeless Yves in his memoire, hinting the loss of personality. Therefore, it becomes clear that undernutrition has grave consequences on the mind that are oftentimes neglected or unknown. It goes to show the importance of a balanced and healthy nutrition. Being inexperienced in the field of psychological treatments, homeless people's mental issues will not be the focus of this research, nevertheless the positive effect protein has on health can be considered.

Physical ramifications

Moving on to the consequences of undernutrition on the body, Bail listed the much needed nutrients in order of importance⁶⁷.

Most significant is the body's need for fresh fruits and vegetables because they are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. These fuel chemical reactions in the body, for example the renewal of cells. Additionally, vegetables are proven to protect from DNA damage because they contain chemicals that enhance DNA repair in cells⁶⁸. Lack thereof results in the faster deterioration of the body with higher risk of disease. Homeless people rarely buy vegetables because they have no tools to prepare them with and no kitchen to cook them in. This makes for an imminent health risk,

⁶⁷ Bail (nr°5).

⁶⁸ Georgetown University Medical Center, "Veggies Contain Chemicals That Boost DNA Repair And Protect Against Cancer", 9 February 2006, accessed 30 November 2019. <https://bit.ly/39nzZ7L>.

which has already been addressed by several organisations in Nantes. These aim to grow vegetables, edible plants and aromatic plants on empty green spaces in the city to facilitate more healthy food choices for precarious people. "Stations gourmandes", which is part of "le voyage à Nantes" and "Les incroyables comestibles", which is a global urban gardening project, are only a few of the examples that currently function and nourish some people in need.

As mentioned previously, proteins make brain functions work but are also essential for proper body functions, most importantly for muscles, blood and bones. The body uses proteins for muscle creation, which means that when not ingested, the body picks from the proteins stacked in muscles. This means that a deficiency of proteins leads to the emptying of one's muscles, which homeless people need frequently, because oftentimes walking is their only means of transportation.

Furthermore, the over-consumption of transformed fats — from kebabs, McDonald's or other fast food products — increases damaging cholesterol (LDL) levels, and lowers beneficial cholesterol (HDL) levels⁶⁹. Trans fats freeze cardio-vascular systems, resulting in heart problems and proving the importance of eating qualitative fats such as olive, colza or nut oils.

Lastly, homeless people severely lack carbohydrates and calories. When one is lacking carbohydrates, the body taps into its stock to fuel the body, but in contrary to proteins, carbohydrates don't go as far as undernourishing the muscles. Consequences are low and saggy energy. Even with the frequent consumption of kebabs and bakery products, homeless people's calorie intake is still lower than what the body actually needs. Therefore, Bail emphasised that they should not be deprived of calories through a restrictive diet, such as exclusively eating fruit and vegetables⁷⁰. The

important factor is to favour step by step changes instead of radical ones, because changing nutritional habits takes time to get used to, especially as an adult.

Overall, the consequences of nutrition on health are very dependent on heretic genetics because every body functions differently and as nutritionist Bail said during our discussion:

"you can eat very differently and yet be equally healthy"⁷¹.

⁶⁹ World Health Organisation, "Nutrition: Trans fat", 3 May 2018, accessed 30 September 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/nutrition-trans-fat>.

⁷⁰ Bail (nr°5).

⁷¹ *ibid.*

It has become clear that malnutrition affects the homeless person's body and mind deeply. For instance, mental ramifications of homeless people's food consumption, such as aggression, anxiety or depression indisputably distorts their personality and identity. This makes the consideration of deficient nutrients and important neurotransmitters essential. Even though homeless people's options for eating and the consequences of that nutrition is now understood, their reasoning behind those choices still remains absurd. Why don't people regularly go to associations for free nutrition? And why favour begging in the streets over simply attending an association? Don't they receive enough unemployment allowance money from the government to at least buy their own food? By taking apart and grasping homeless people's way of thinking — their ethos — in the following chapter, these questions will all be answered.

Dis - cer - ning

CHAPTER 03

the ethos

With different lifestyles come different values,

which is why it is so significant to identify what drives the homeless people. What does a qualitative food experience mean to them? The previous chapters suggest that it might mean socially inclusive or healthy food consumption. Quality does not solely include the food's qualities — regarding nutrients or origin —, but also the respect and dignity that is conveyed during experiences with food.

In order to know what homeless people perceive as dignified, their behaviour has been analysed more deeply. Considering and respecting their ethos will also facilitate constructive communication with and for the homeless. This chapter will explain why homeless people prefer not to visit associations and rather spend hours begging for money instead. They try hard to physically and mentally take care of themselves during these tough times and yearn for autonomy and independence.

Associations as a decreasingly popular food choice

When thinking of homeless people's nutrition, the most obvious course of action is to visit food associations and obtain a free meal. After closer inspection, this might be a very superficial proposition because the environment of many associations turn out to be uncomfortable and untrusted. In 2008, a study taken place in Paris represents homeless people's views on food programs⁷².

⁷² Carole Amistani and Daniel Terrolle, "L'alimentation des sans-abri", *Anthropology of food*, published 6 September 2008, online since 6 September 2012, accessed on 27 November 2019. <http://journals.openedition.org/aof/4952>.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Le Roux (nr°7).

"Summer is difficult to overcome. We wander, more than ever, in search of survival solutions."⁷⁴

First of all, individual taste and personalisation or choice of food were not considered due to economic constraints, which also leads to redundancy of dishes. Furthermore, meals in public associations were associated with rushed eating because "the time granted for meals neither authorises nor induces a pleasant sharing moment."⁷³ Also, the capacity for food and space was already insufficient - which begs to question how those situations are being resolved during the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, plastic (packaging, plates, cups and cutlery) was described as off-putting and unappetising. In terms of a balanced nutrition, fresh fruits and vegetables were extremely rare and the soups or other meals that were served often arouse suspicion, as ingredients become unrecognisable. On top of everything, three out of four associations close during the summer, due to lack of volunteers, who take advantage of their summer vacation. This highly reduces accessibility to nutrition for several months during this season.

It also reveals the weak point in associations, which is that the entire structure breaks down as soon as the volunteers disappear. An interesting objective would be to interchange unpopular associations with autonomous systems enabling the obtention of food.

Such a system has already been suggested by "Action Hunger" in London with a vending machine accessible every day at any hour. This vending machine contains food, hygiene products and clothes at the same time. With distributed key cards, it was accessible to one homeless person three times per day. A self-sufficient and innovative concept that has unfortunately been cancelled after its one-month trial period. After 70 cards were handed out and positive feedback was received by the homeless, the city council decided it to be a

"misguided and ill-informed attempt to address complex problems"⁷⁵ and "may distract people from finding long-term solutions"⁷⁶.

Opinions on social media also suggested that instead of keeping the homeless in the street, a solution to their housing issues should rather be found.

This point of view begs the question: In what conditions are the homeless left to live, during the search for a housing solution? Couldn't an amelioration of their dignity and strength, whilst in the street, be the stepping stone for a stable lifestyle? The previous chapters have proven how strongly malnutrition affects mental and physical health, which directly correlates qualitative or dignified nutrition to a homeless person's well-being.

⁷⁵ " Homeless people's vending machine removed after trial", BBC, 4 April 2018, accessed 8 December 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-43638588>.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*



Action Hunger, vending machine for the homeless concept.

Image: Inhabitat, «The world's first vending machine for the homeless is 100% free», <https://rb.gy/kbi3pb>, viewed on 3 October 2020.



Action Hunger, vending machine for the homeless concept.

Image: Inhabitat, «The world's first vending machine for the homeless is 100% free», <https://rb.gy/kbi3pb>, viewed on 3 October 2020.

The authors of the Parisian study, Carole Amistani and Daniel Terrolle, who both work in an urban anthropology laboratory, published the issue 12 years ago, which on one hand makes it outdated information, as conditions may have evolved since then. On the other hand, it is clear that said comfort problems in associations already existed a long time ago and is relevant today because it confirms personally collected data. It was analysed from conducted interviews with associations and homeless people and describes their perspective on Nantes' associations.

The numerous programs and systems in place for a homeless person's well-being are helpful and needed, however only five out of 20 homeless people I interviewed visited or benefited of food associations. This number is quite alarming and came as a surprise at first, because people unfamiliar to the subject believe a free and warm meal with a little company is more than enough for anyone to survive. However, as mentioned previously, there is much more to an acceptable and dignified eating experience.

First of all, a lack of awareness about the times and places of food handouts exist because Julie explained:

"I'm not from here, so I don't know the associations."⁷⁷

This suggests that a problem lies in association's accessibility. Interestingly, Julie was in possession of La Cloche's brochure, which is a clear map that pinpoints and explains those locations. She did not yet read it, but several other homeless proudly

described the brochure as useful.

Second of all, the miserable conditions in associations detailed by Carole Amistani's and Daniel Terrolle's outdated study in Paris, was confirmed by the majority of my interviewees in Nantes, who immediately made a grimace when the topic came up. Jason implored to:

"imagine farmers throwing seeds into a pack of hens. So much noise and pushing",⁷⁸

which vividly describes his experience of eating at associations. Landry agrees that the spaces are usually very stuffed, and filled with irrational people he does not want to be associated with⁷⁹. Comparing one's food consumption as one of a farm animal shows the lack of dignity that is experienced.

⁷⁷ Julie, 37 years old, homeless since 12 years, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 30 September 2020. See Appendix 3 for raw data.

⁷⁸ Jason (nr°51).

⁷⁹ Landry (nr°44).

⁸⁰ Michel, 47 years old, homeless since 8 months, interviewed in Nantes, Bouffay on 3 October 2020.

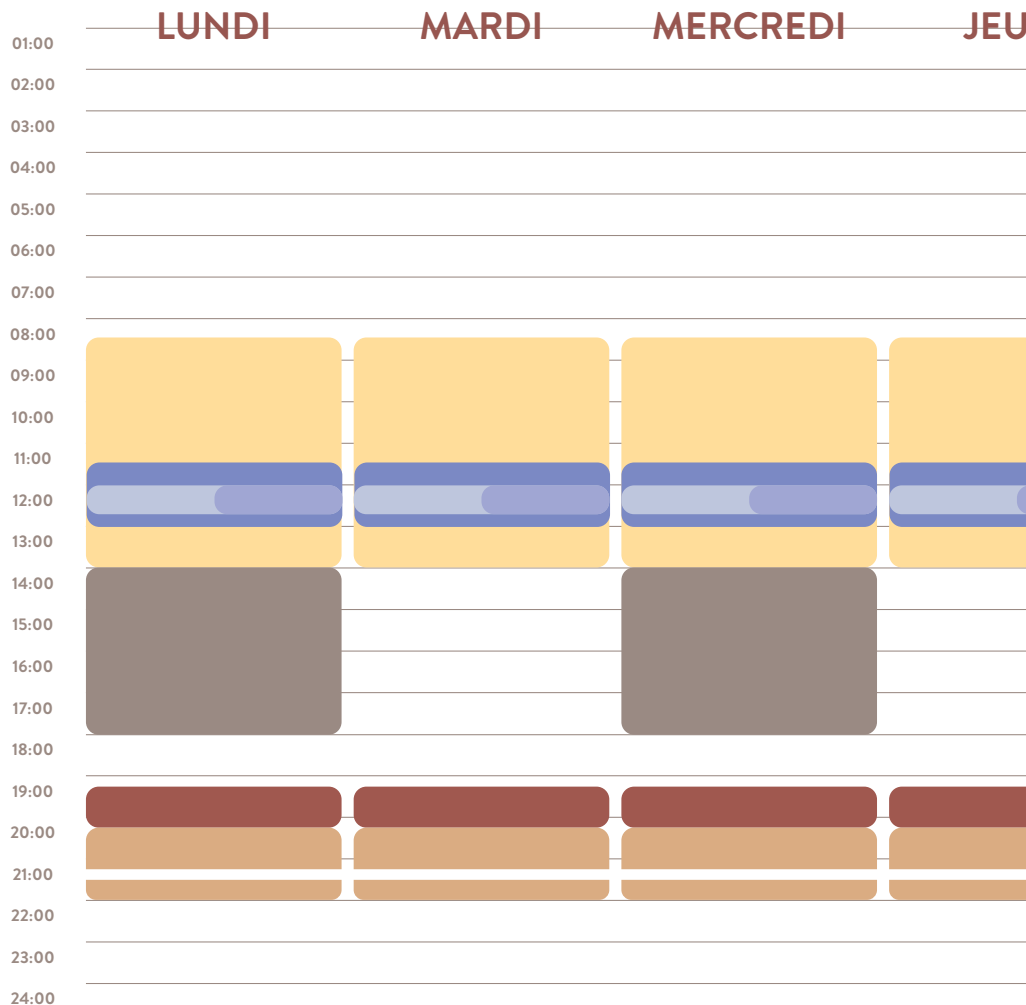
⁸¹ Dicotations [Le Monde] defines zonard as "a young, underprivileged person, living in the suburbs excluded from society." This informal word has a negative connotation.

Third of all, a very common reason for not attending associations is like Michel says:

This may sound like denial, but actually, it has everything to do with mentally maintaining oneself. The typical homeless category are also called "zonards"⁸¹, who interviewees

usually want to steer clear of and describe as loud, smelly, drunk, aggressive and hypocritical. Spending time with a group of people means sharing and adapting to values and people like Michel, who are struggling to stay mentally balanced every day, don't want exposure to the "zonard" mentality.

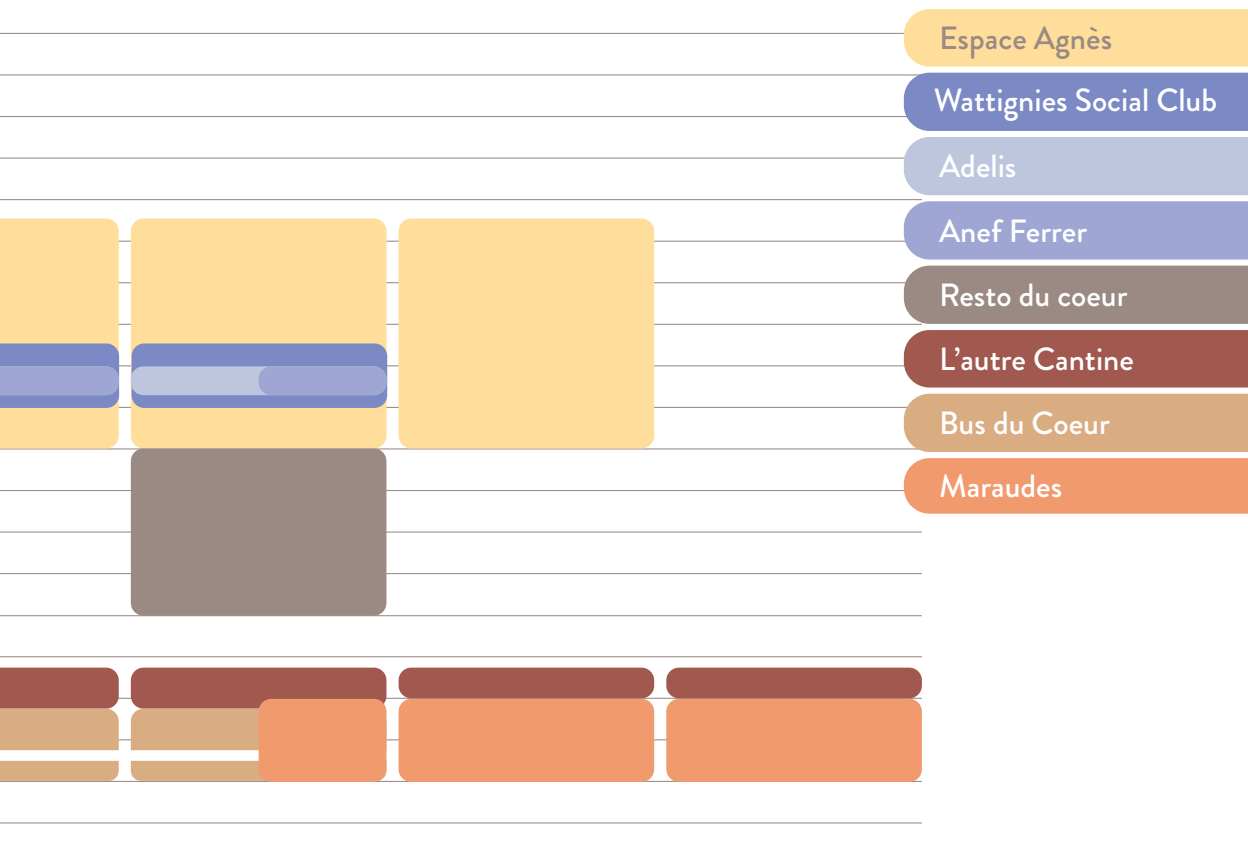
"I don't want to belong to the 'homeless' category."⁸⁰



Visual chart representing open food associations during the first lockdown 2020.

Image: Personal creation, information coming from: Asamla (Association Santé Migrants Loire-atlantique), Facebook, published on 22 March 2020, accessed 25 March 2020. <https://cutt.ly/AjchZjX>. (see next page).

DI VENDREDI SAMEDI DIMANCHE



- NANTES - ASSOCIATIONS ALIMENTAIRES EN FONCTIONNEMENT PENDANT LE CONFINEMENT

Mise à jour du 20/03/2020



L'Autre Cantine

7j/7 à 19h15 Marché de Talensac - distribution repas chauds
Tramway ligne 2 Arrêt 50 étages



Bus du Coeur

Lundi au vendredi
Centre ville - Quai Bacco à 20h15 & Talensac 21h30



Resto du Coeur

Colis d'urgence - ouvert à tous et toutes
Lundi / Mercredi / Vendredi 14h à 18h
Nantes est - 5, rue de la Garde
Tramway Ligne 1, arrêt Landreau ou Bus 80 Arrêt Treca



Secours Populaire

Colis d'urgence - uniquement pour les prs déjà inscrites
Lundi / Mardi / Jeudi 9h30 à 16h30
Nantes nord - Bus Ligne C2 Arrêt Le Goffic



Espace Agnès Varda

Paniers repas, bains douches & pause café
Lundi au samedi de 8h30 à 14h
16, rue Pierre Landais
Centre ville - Tramway Ligne 1 Arrêt Chantiers Navals



Adelis - Edit de Nantes

Restaurant social
Lundi au vendredi le midi uniquement
Beaulieu - 9, Bd Vincent Gâche
Tramway Lignes 2 & 3 Arrêt Vincent Gâche



Resto social Aurore

Distribution paniers repas - Mineurs en recours unique
Lundi au vendredi le midi uniquement
29, rue de l'Indre
Centre ville - Tramway ligne 1 Arrêt Gare
Busway Arrêt Cité des Congrès



Anef Ferrer

Distribution de sandwich
Lundi au vendredi le midi uniquement
Devant la MAJE, rue Francisco Ferrer
Centre ville - Tramway ligne 1 Arrêt Moutonnerie



Wattignies Social Club

Distribution repas froids
Lundi au vendredi 11h30 à 13h
Tramway Lignes 2 & 3 Arrêt Wattignie



Maraudes alimentaires

Action Froid : vendredi soir
Croix-rouge : samedi & dimanche soir

Facebook post about open food
associations during the first
lockdown 2020.

Image: Asamla (Association
Santé Migrants Loire-
atlantique), Facebook,
published on 22 March 2020,
accessed 25 March 2020.
<https://cutt.ly/AjchZjX>. (see
next page).

Last of all, the confinement in 2020 due to the coronavirus meant even bigger dependency of homeless people on food associations because few money could be made by begging. An anonymous homeless person told me that

"the worst situation that could ever happen, is another lockdown [which unfortunately happened 2 months later]." ⁸²

⁸² Anonymous homeless person, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 30 September 2020.

⁸³ Asamla (Association Santé Migrants Loire-atlantique), Facebook, 22 March 2020, accessed 25 March 2020. <https://cutt.ly/AjchZjX>

He described associations during that first lockdown as overcrowded which lead to a paranoid fear of infection. The created chart visualises all open food associations during that lockdown in Nantes⁸³. It shows that firstly, there was no possibility for breakfast. Secondly, during lunch time there were only four associations opened per weekday. And thirdly, the only way of obtaining food on a Sunday was waiting for donations by marauders in the evening. It is doubtful that the few marauders were able to carry enough provisions for everyone in need. Additionally, the shown diagram is a personally created summary, whilst the information shared with the homeless was a less visual Facebook post and more complex to comprehend. Since it was communicated via Facebook, it is unclear how many homeless were people really informed. This uncovers the unsafe and even less dignified environment the pandemic has created for homeless people.

All in all, "Food distribution can have reverse effect. By stigmatising its recipients, by creating a sense of dependence and by removing power and autonomy from people already socially marginalised, it can contribute to their further exclusion from society."⁸⁴ Associations try to target the homeless and although food programs are a rare opportunity to obtain free food, homeless people are not using what is offered to them. Therefore, it is clear that improvement in accessibility, environment and nutrition are

needed to turn associations into more dignified eating spaces. Yet, even the most pleasant and trustworthy associations are not as sought after as one might expect. Many interviewed homeless people could not fully explain why they are opposed to associations, but the phrases "I can take care of myself"⁸⁵ or "I don't owe anything to anyone this way"⁸⁶ uncovered an entire philosophy, guiding their behaviour and decisions: independence and autonomy. "Often denied and little studied, the autonomy in

food of a population without housing and without income should not be neglected"⁸⁷, analysed Carole Amistani's and Daniel Terrolle's research paper, confirming this under-considered need for homeless people. At this point, deeper research into their need for autonomy had to be conducted to unravel and completely understand their manner of thinking. To do this, a closer look will be taken at why homeless people constantly turn to begging, although it is so mentally and physically testing.

⁸⁴ FEANTSA, "Policy Paper on Food, Nutrition and Homelessness", n.d..

⁸⁵ Romault (nr°55).

⁸⁶ Max, 24 years old, homeless since 4 years, interviewed in Nantes, Commerce, on 13 November 2019.

⁸⁷ Carole (nr°72).

The merit & freedom hidden in begging

Towards the beginning of this project, my first banal question to the begging homeless was "don't you receive unemployment benefit money from the government?" It is known as "revenu de solidarité active" (RSA), translating to "active solidarity income", and consists of 550,93€ per month. Surprisingly, the ability to receive the RSA depends on a number of conditions. Teenagers such as Jason, a 16 year old orphaned homeless

boy I interviewed⁸⁸, are not admitted the RSA⁸⁹. Receivers have to be at least 25 years old. 18 year olds are only eligible under the condition of having isolated parents or being able to justify a professional activity. Moreover, one has to be in possession of administrative documents, which might already be lost or stolen. Nevertheless, 550,93€ per month barely allows a person to subsist, considering that it is not simultaneously enough for renting a room, nutrition, tools, clothes and social activities. However, an unexpected response towards the RSA was the number of homeless people rejecting it. The recurrent answers during conducted interviews revealed two reasons: Firstly, a dismissal of RSA money

⁸⁸ Jason (nr°51).

⁸⁹ Service Publique, "Revenu de solidarité active (RSA)", accessed 31 October 2019. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N19775>.

due to personal opposition towards the government and society's values. Secondly, many homeless people renounce the RSA because they have contributed no form of work to deserve this amount of money.

"I don't work or do anything, I don't deserve that money"⁹⁰,

admitted Max during our conversation. Literature and personally conducted interviews have unveiled the importance homeless people attach to feeling merit and reward, which is the reason why numerous homeless prefer to beg for money instead of accepting the RSA.

Sigmund Freud believed that work gives people "a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community" and is "something indispensable to the preservation and justification of existence in society."⁹¹

Therefore to work means to belong, to exist and to have a purpose. Whilst homeless people are unable to work, it is logical for them to search for merit, purpose and occupation elsewhere. That being so, begging for money is used to achieve feelings of merit. Melissa, for example, refuses the RSA because

"I want to say that I worked for it...that I spent seven or eight hours earning a tenner begging 'cos then it shows...it's like working, in a way...even though it's begging."⁹²

⁹⁰ Max (nr°86).

⁹¹ Sigmund Freud, "The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud", James Strachey, 1953.

⁹² Courtenay (nr°2).

Restaurants have started hiring homeless trainees or interns⁹³, teaching them basic cooking techniques, which eventually facilitates job hunts and perfectly coincides with homeless people's will to work. Denise, working for "La Maison du Partage", a solidarity integration space helping to house the homeless, said:

"Allow them to give. As a result of constant receiving, they lose this dimension. They are not in a condition to work eight hours a day, but an hour, if they can. A little later, two hours, three...The homeless do not only need administrative assistance, they have to relearn the planning, the constraints, the patience, the organisation..."⁹⁴

⁹³ Lisa Held, "How Food Helps Homeless People Get Back on Their Feet", Civil eats, 8 September 2016, accessed 10 October 2020. <https://civileats.com/2016/09/08/how-food-helps-homeless-people-get-back-on-their-feet-doe-foundation/>.

⁹⁴ Le Roux (nr°7).

Planting and harvesting food on agricultural fields has also been a way for associations such as L'autre Cantine to fulfil homeless people's wish and need for a sense of purpose.

Besides merit, another important value stated during interviews is independence. The reality is, that homeless people are severely dependent on the government,

associations and by-passers' donations. With that in mind, clinging to every possible liberty and independence, is a means for compensating and experiencing freedom.

That is how one might explain homeless people's refusal of the RSA, or the reluctance of reaching out to associations for help.

Considering this mental compensation will be instrumental during the design and creation process, since interviews showed unanimous agreement towards needing more liberties. In regard to homeless people's ethos and perspective, it is now obvious that autonomy and independence are synonyms for dignity because they represent much needed privilege and freedom. The homeless also try to express freedom in other ways, namely in the way they dress, or look after their physical appearance. It is important to mention that the majority want to improve their situation and work hard to not let go of hygienic values, because it plays a part in their perception of dignity.

Maintaining oneself against all odds

"Satisfying one's basic needs, eating, sleeping, keeping clean becomes so incredibly complex that there is no more room for nourishment of the mind and heart."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Le Roux (nr°7).

The great economical and social constraints of homelessness make taking care of oneself the way general society does, very difficult. As dependency on other's help is growing and moral force is diminishing, it affects one's ability to manage hygiene, nutrition and mental or physical fitness. However, next to interviews and literature, even research supports the fact that it is homeless people's intention to maintain oneself, which drives them.

Individuals cope with the multiple constraints imposed on them, by upholding their moral appearance for society⁹⁶. It is a manner of holding on to former values and to one's former self. This firm sense of sustaining oneself solidifies people's longing for dignified and nutritive eating solutions. Romault, for example, mentioned his eagerness to take care of his hygiene and even upholding a vegetarian diet⁹⁷. Whilst he was explaining this to me, I observed the empty packagings surrounding him, the stained clothes, his bare feet covered in dirt and the trolley, on which countless repurposed objects were tinkered onto. He also held onto a tiny, worn-out baby bottle, in which he had mixed coffee powder

with water, and sucked on from time to time. It was not rare to see the homeless use objects during interviews, in a manner that was not intended but rather practical for their situation. For example plastic bags for shoes, pans for collecting money, or umbrellas for protection against the cold. This philosophy can be connected to a frugal way of living, because they use less objects for more usages. It also speaks volumes about homeless people's determination but incapability to maintain themselves — at society's standards anyway

⁹⁶ Gardella (nr°4).

⁹⁶ Romault (nr°55).



Romault after our interview.

Image: Personal photographs, at Bouffay, 3 September 2020.



Reusing old packagings.

Image: Personal photographs, at Bouffay, 3 September 2020.



Reusing old packagings.

Image: Personal photographs, at Bouffay, 3 September 2020.



Romault after our interview.

Image: Personal photographs, at Bouffay, 3 September 2020.



Romault's decorated chariot.

Image: Personal photographs, at Bouffay, 3 September 2020.

DIGNITY

Maintaining oneself also includes maintaining one's health. Literature and interviews confirm the fact that the homeless don't oftentimes consider healthy food a priority. Meanwhile, the general society heads toward an obsession about balanced nutrition, creating a trend around healthy products. So why do people, who live in stable conditions, consider it more important to eat healthy? One probable explanation is that stable people reflect on their future health, whilst for homeless people "the future is unthinkable and impossible to project for oneself"⁹⁸. Every day contains too many variable factors such as the amount of money they have left in the morning, the unoccupied spaces where they can beg, how much money they will obtain begging, what and when to eat, finding a sheltered space for sleeping and finally the safety during said sleep. These uncertainties make it unfeasible to predict or estimate their time ahead.

"I just think, 'Right, today's today, let's see what happens,' and I go day by day. I don't think ahead"⁹⁹,

says homeless Charisse in *Four Feet Under*. By this logic, making the homeless give thought to their future with regular and steady food consumption, can increase health and stability in the life of a homeless person. If general society eats healthy for their future, then homeless people can be motivated similarly for a better future.

Enabling them to eat in a healthy manner also rebuilds their dignity, because they need to be reminded of how deserving they are to eat qualitatively. Their need for dignified nutrition should be perceived as equally important as any other's. For the homeless, this means less exclusion, more inclusion, better psychological health and more happiness.

⁹⁸ Gardella (nr°4).

⁹⁹ Courtenay (nr°2).

The German constitution's first article states that "human dignity is inviolable"¹⁰⁰, which is an effective law since 1949 that cannot be altered or abolished by jurisdiction¹⁰¹. Similar laws are stated in the French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen: "all citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are eligible to all dignities"¹⁰². It is therefore abundantly clear that dignity is everyone's right. The Abbé Pierre Foundation summarised

¹⁰⁰ Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Constitution), "Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland", Article 1, 23 May 1949, Bonn (Germany).

¹⁰¹ Soroptimist worms, "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar", 10 December 2020. <https://www.soroptimist-worms.de/über-uns/themenschwerpunkte/menschenrechtstafel/>.

a declaration reaffirming the fundamental rights of a person stated in the Constitution, national law and international obligations. It states that "everyone who is homeless has the right to food and hygiene. [...] These services must exist in sufficient quantity so that their accessibility is not an obstacle to hygiene and health."¹⁰² However, after thorough research, it has become clear that a homeless person's accessibility to human's basic needs, can hardly be described as "sufficient".

¹⁰² Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, "Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen", Article 6, 10 August 1793.

¹⁰³ Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA, "Déclaration des droits des personnes sans abri", Fondation Abbé Pierre, 31 January 2020, accessed 15 September 2020. <https://www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/droitsdespersonnessansabri>.

Conclu- sion

The previous chapters explain how homeless people are destabilised by the lack of dignified treatment, which simultaneously clears up the areas in which solutions are most needed. Having now assessed ample research fields including sociology, anthropology, biology, psychology and the law, it has become clear that the lack of dignifying nutrition hinders the ability to progress socially whilst threatening mental and physical health. Homeless people's drive to maintain themselves in terms of hygiene, intellect and health, shows the relevance and need for this research. As a designer it is clear that it is not in my capacity to get homeless people off the streets directly,

but it is doubtlessly possible to restore strength and dignity by focusing on their food consumption. Given that,

how can homeless people's dignity be improved through food consumption?

The already dangerous circumstances in which the homeless were living have now been amplified by the coronavirus crisis. Several associations are closed since the first lockdown to protect the volunteers. This however crams homeless people into the few spaces that are still open, leaving them vulnerable to the virus. It is no secret that the homeless are considered disconnected from society

and are treated as such. Social exclusion is part of the homeless environment because being intolerant of them has become customary. This classicism condemns the homeless to anxious, restrained and oftentimes lonely daily lives. This is why the social value of common food experiences has to be emphasised because sharing a meal also means enjoying social life.

The described context entails social but also economic constraints which strongly affect the way food can be consumed. For that reason only few options like eating at food associations remain. With the money earned from begging, it is also common for the homeless to buy junk food,

which implies critical health issues. Consultation with a nutritionist revealed that homeless people lack crucial nutrients in their diets, leading to physical and psychological problems including muscular degradation, exhaustion, depression and mood swings. This also concerns food donations from by-passers, because they are redundant and contain no variety of nutrients. In the search for the ability to cook, some homeless choose to illegally light forest fires, which gives them liberties in personalising their food but is no dignified solution for their needs.

In order to help their way of obtaining, preparing and eating food, the homeless perspective had to be studied

and understood more closely. The associations for example are perceived as crowded, rushed, and aggressive atmospheres, which is why many homeless are reluctant to attend. Reflection upon their ethos revealed that due to the constrained environment they live in, the homeless carry a profound need for freedom and autonomy. This includes a devotion for deserving and meriting their rewards. In part, this explains their unwillingness to attend food associations, or to accept the government's money. In accordance with the notion of autonomy, it is logical that the homeless prefer buying food with their own money they have worked hard for.

In summation, homeless people's dignity can be improved with the bettering of social experiences with food, the increase of healthy nutrition and by increasing autonomy for food consumption. Homeless people should experience and learn of the positive affect food consumption can have on one's lifestyle through inviting designs that are adapted to their ethos. Offering the opportunity for dignity in food consumption will clarify the direct link to improved well-being as well as mental and physical abilities. Currently, associations are working towards a more solidary and socially inclusive society and have also started to educate on the significance of balanced nutrition. However, homeless people's need for autonomy has not yet been addressed and represents a deeper insight into their emotional experience. The freedom found in autonomous ways of preparing, obtaining

or eating food can help satiate homeless people's need for independence and also give a sense of control. In order to create a pleasant experience, feelings of safety, joy and no-judgement should be encouraged, whilst environmental conditions have to be considered carefully, since the most accessible areas are in public spaces. This raw, low-cost environment will exclude expensive, automatic or digital systems and open up the possibility for manual and artisanal solutions. After having measured and weighed the different possible directions,

This may consist of creating an autonomous alternative to food associations, as they are too dependent on irregular volunteer work and cannot be available 24 hours a day. Another option is to harness homeless people's will to work and create an autonomous system for earning their food. There also exists great potential to let the homeless cook and prepare food on their own. Various possibilities will be closely considered, tested and adapted to finally create the most useful and helpful solution to homeless people's undignified obligation to consume food.

**this design project
will work to offer more
autonomous ways of
consuming food to answer
homeless people's need
for dignity and user-
friendliness.**

Bi- blio- graphy

Personal interviews

Expert Interviews

- Corinne Hemonic, Director of Bains-Douches, Interviewed on 22 November 2019 at 8:00, in Bains-Douches Municipaux.
- Maxime Hurault, Director of Le Carillon, interviewed on 2 December 2019 14:00, at Le Carillon Nantes.
- Solène Bail, nutritionist, interviewed at L'École de Design Nantes Atlantique on 25 September 2020. See Appendix 2 for raw data.
- Two anonymous volunteers at L'autre Cantine, interviewed on 20 November 2019 at 15:00, in L'autre Cantine.

Homeless Interviews

- Anonymous homeless person, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 30 September 2020.
- Charlène, 35 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Commerce on 17 November 2019.
- Jason, 16 years old, homeless since 3 years, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 11 November 2019. See Appendix 3 for raw data.
- Johnny, 33 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes at Commerce on 17 November 2019.
- Julie, 37 years old, homeless since 12 years, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 30 September 2020. See Appendix 3 for raw data.
- Landry, 45 years old, homeless since 8 months, interviewed in Nantes, Place du Cirque on 11 November 2019. See Appendix 3 for raw data.
- Max, 24 years old, homeless since 4 years, interviewed in Nantes, Commerce, on 13 November 2019.
- Michel, 47 years old, homeless since 8 months, interviewed in Nantes, Bouffay on 3 October 2020.
- Oliver, 43 years old, homeless since 3 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Commerce on 17 November 2019.
- Romault, 35 years old, homeless since 2 years, interviewed in Nantes, Bouffay, on 30 September 2020. See Appendix 3 for raw data.
- Steve, 33 years old, homeless since 5 years, interviewed in Nantes, at Saint Nicolas on 24 May 2020.

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Appendix 1

Diagram of the number of homeless people in France.

In order to visually represent the rising number of homeless people, data from numerous documents was collected. The INSEE and Foundation Abbé Pierre have different methodologies of research, which is why the numbers vary to this extent. The following sources were used to create this diagram.

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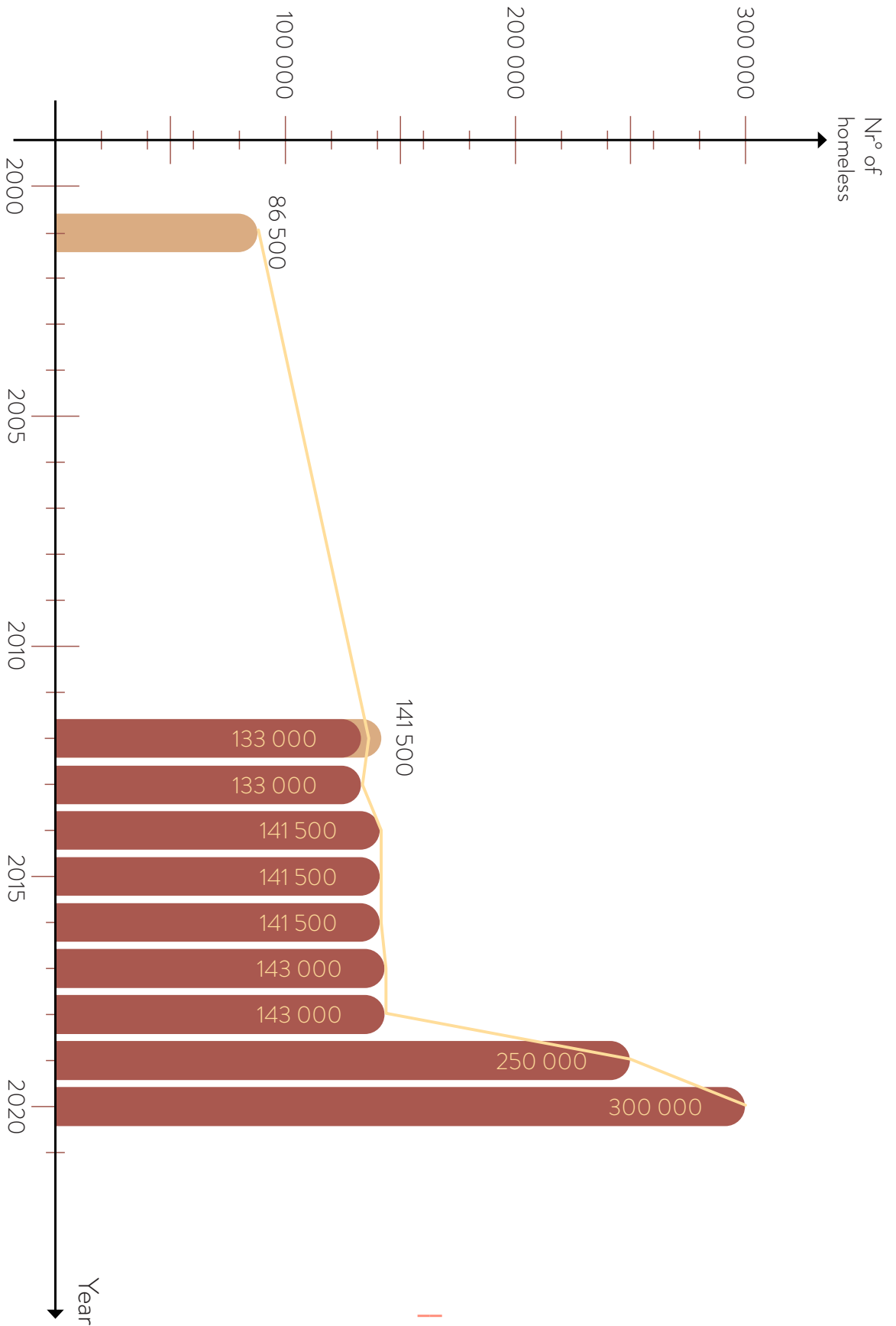


FIGURE 1 – Nr of homeless people in France (see Appendix 1)

Appendix 2

Expert Interview Transcript.

All interviews were conducted in person in a private or public setting and were recorded with a smartphone. Appendices one to three, will be written in French because that was the original language used during the interviews.

Interview with Solène Bail.

Duration: 30 minutes. Location: École de Design Nantes Atlantique. Date: 25 September 2020.

Après vous avoir résumé le contexte et les habitudes alimentaires des sans-abris, les carences en nutriments les plus importants sont lesquelles d'après vous?

Le contexte de manque d'hygiène n'est pas celui qui m'inquiète le plus parce que l'être humain est très aseptisé maintenant. Bien sûr que des cas graves peuvent être causés, comme l'intoxication alimentaire, mais au quotidien, je suis pas inquiète. Les personnes les plus exposées développent souvent le plus de ressources pour faire face aux intoxications. Par contre il ne faut pas être carencé dans tous les nutriments non plus. Donc, à mon avis la vraie question à se poser est le contenu de ces poubelles qui est mangé. Ça sera de la junk food ou des choses vraiment pas qualitatives. Donc ce qui va manquer sera du frais, du vivant, des vitamines, des minéraux, des choses qui sont vraiment fraîches. S'ils pouvaient acheter une pomme au lieu du kebab, ça leur apporterait moins de calories, moins d'énergie long-terme, mais la vitalité de renouveler les cellules. Rapporter dans les réactions chimiques du corps, de quoi travailler. Donc pour moi c'est le frais.

Qui dit frais, dit principalement légumes, ce qui doit manquer beaucoup. Et pour éviter la dénutrition, c'est les protéines. C'est à dire les glucides, à la limite, il y a des personnes qui vivent sans manger de glucides. On est dans une alimentation différente. Les glucides, si on en manque, on va manquer d'énergie. On va être mou, mais on ne va pas être dénutri - on ne va pas vider ses muscles. Si on manque de protéines, on va vider ces muscles, ce n'est pas la même chose. Donc d'abord du frais - donc légumes -, la protéine ensuite en quantité suffisante, et puis derrière du gras qualitatif.

C'est sûr que le seul gras qu'il y aura dans ce type d'aliment - soit kebab, soit les aliments malheureusement récupérés - va être des graisses qui seront plus ou moins transformées par l'industrie. Qui seront pas première pression, à froid, vierge, mais plutôt raffinés et chauffés. Et c'est des graisses qui seront peut-être plus même athérogènes, c'est à dire des graisses dures, des graisses qui figent le système cardiovasculaire, les artères par exemple. Des graisses qui sont inflammatoires. Donc à la place, c'est vraiment d'aller apporter des vinaigrettes, avec de l'huile d'olive, avec de l'huile de noix ou de colza. Et derrière d'avoir des noix à manger, des noisettes, des amandes. Cela coûte très cher, ce n'est probablement pas vers ça qu'ils vont aller, les sans-abris.

Culturellement, ce n'est généralement pas des personnes qui vont être dans la disponibilité d'apprendre et d'avoir envie de se dire 'ah ouais, je vais faire un truc zen, cool'. Ce ne sont pas des bobos, quoi!

Habituellement, ils cherchent un aliment qui est chaud et peut remplir leur ventre.

Mais oui. Je pense que dans ces cas là, le meilleur choix est un kebab. C'est-à-dire au sens de l'instinct de survie, c'est très bien régulé parce que un kebab contient du gras et des glucidiques élevés. Il faudrait juste leur souhaiter des conditions, où ils soient extraits de l'instinct de survie. Ils ont un bon instinct de survie, effectivement, un kebab c'est la meilleure des choses pour essayer de tenir en vie. Par contre en quelle condition? Le système nerveux n'est pas entretenu de façon à avoir des pensées positives après. La

dépression, voir tout en noir, avoir des carences telles qu'on va aller vers l'alcoolisme encore davantage. Je dis pas que tous les sans domiciles sont alcooliques, mais quand même, ça peut tendre vers la dépression et l'isolement sociale etc. Quand on est carencé en Vitamines de groupe B, on est plus facilement alcoolique. Ça ne veut pas dire que c'est cela l'origine, mais de toute façon si on a pas les minéraux, les vitamines, les antioxydants, notre corps vieillit mal.

J'ai lu qu'une malnutrition peut avoir des effets de dépression, comment cela s'explique?

Il y a plein de raisons. En particulier, la dénutrition protidique, c'est à dire qu'on va avoir moins de muscles. Donc on va utiliser et perdre nos muscles. Quand on a moins de masse musculaire, on est plus dépressif. L'activité physique génère des endorphines, qui sont des molécules qui font égayer notre cerveau. Mais il y a certainement d'autres raisons.

La deuxième raison c'est que les protéines qu'on mange sont faits de petits morceaux, qu'on appelle les acide aminés. Le tryptophane ou la tyrosine sont des acide aminés bien spéciaux qu'on a en quantité suffisante, quand on mange assez. Plus on mange un petit déjeuner protidique, plus on va avoir au bon moments la tyrosine pour fabriquer la dopamine — vous connaissez peut-être pas forcément bien mais la dopamine est le coup de pied aux fesses. 'Je vais me lever, je vais faire des choses dans ma vie. Ça arrive le matin, idéalement si on mange des protéines le matin et on donne de la tyrosine, qui aide à fabriquer la dopamine. Donc on va être motivé! Et dans le reste de la journée, en particulier dans l'après-midi, on va se mettre à commencer à fabriquer la sérotonine, qui est le neurotransmetteur du bien-être, 'je me sens zen, tu peux me dire tout ce que tu veux, ça m'atteint pas'. La sérotonine à besoin de tryptophane pour sa fabrication. On retrouve le tryptophane dans certaines protéines. Alors, c'est pas dans la viande, forcément, mais dans les produits laitiers, dans la noix de cajou, dans le cacao... Il n'y a pas de protéines spécialement dans le cacao, mais il y a quand même ce petit acide aminé-là en quantité intéressante. Donc avec une malnutrition, on va manquer les matériaux de base pour fabriquer nos neurotransmetteurs contre la dépression.

Donc la dénutrition protidique aura un effet sur le mental, mais ça aura aussi un effet sur tout l'équilibre général.

Il y a donc des conséquences physiques aussi?

On se remet moins bien d'une infection, quand on est dénutri protidiquement. Mais là, on est au delà d'une dénutrition protidique, on est dans une malnutrition globale.

Et là c'est beaucoup plus complexe.

Pourquoi plus complexe?

Parce qu'il n'y a pas que les conséquences d'une dénutrition protidique, c'est en plus un manque de vitamines, en plus ils manquent d'antioxydants, en plus ils manquent de minéraux, ils vont manquer aussi de graisses protectrices. Donc il y a un terrain complètement anarchique éventuellement et dépendra beaucoup du patrimoine génétique, c'est à dire l'hérédité. Ont-ils un patrimoine de vainqueur ou un patrimoine hyper faible, où ils vont effectivement mourir plus jeune et avoir des tas de troubles. La génétique ça joue énormément. On peut manger très différemment et avoir une santé égale. Mais là, ça va baser beaucoup sur ça.

Le film "Super size me", qui parle d'un homme se nourrissant exclusivement de McDonalds, peut être un exemple de dénutrition d'un sans-abri?

Il était pas dans une alimentation hypocalorique. Parce que les sans-abris sont dénutris, quand même, ils n'ont pas assez de calories. Donc c'est encore différent. Dans Super size me, il prenait des burger king size et avait un apport calorique extrêmement élevé par rapport à ses besoins. Alors que là, ils ont un apport calorique inférieur à leur besoins. C'est la course aux calories. Donc l'instinct de survie leur permet de — et puis l'argent que ça coûte, ça coûte pas cher relativement — d'avoir retour sur une alimentation de survie. Super size me a une réputation de dégradation rapide de méthode de santé. Mais c'est sûr que c'est dramatique qu'ils aient que accès à ça.

Concernant la loi, les sans-abris doivent avoir assez d'accès à la nourriture et aux associations, pour que leur santé ne soit pas atteinte négativement. À votre avis, de ce que j'ai pu vous expliquer, c'est le cas aujourd'hui?

Ah oui, on est même loin d'arriver à ça. Et à la fois, il y a des facteurs relationnels, parce que ce ne sont pas des pions qu'on va placer là ou là. C'est des personnes avec des choix influencés par beaucoup de conditionnements mais c'est des choix aussi — ou des incapacités des fois — d'accepter des telles ou telles aides. C'est pas forcément facile non plus d'accepter. Et des fois l'aide n'arrive pas non plus, c'est des choses très compliquées à cause des liens sociaux, qui doivent être teintés d'une atmosphère assez particulière. Il y a une façon de vivre avec des tensions, des peurs, des choses que dans la vie normale, on a pas forcément tous les

jours.

Il y a aussi l'indépendance qui compte fortement pour les sans-abris, parce qu'ils vivent dans un monde assez contraint et dépendant. C'est pour cela que souvent ils n'acceptent pas l'aide des associations ou la RSA. Ils cherchent de l'autonomie.

Ça me fait penser à mes patients ou des personnes que je côtoie dans d'autres contextes, qui viennent, payent une consultation, mais ils ne veulent pas changer. Parce que c'est dur. Parce que 'mince, quoi, j'ai le droit de décider de me 'faire du mal' entre guillemets, de vivre comme je veux'. Parfois par manque de connaissances, parfois par 'ça va, foutez-moi la paix'. Pleins de personnes savent qu'elles pourraient viser une alimentation meilleure, ou ont peur d'avoir une maladie, ou ont déjà une maladie qui les invalide, mais c'est un choix. Finalement, ça reste à chacun. Et des fois, nous on se dit 'moi je vais faire pour les autres, il suffirait de faire ça' — moi, il ne faut pas me mettre à la tête des cantines en France, parce que les gamins vont pleurer. Je vais leur mettre pleins d'épinards! [rigole] Non, mais ils mangent des fritures, du cordon bleu, des nuggets, il faut arrêter! Bon bref! Mais heureusement que c'est pas mon métier, moi je serais mauvaise vendeuse de cantine, parce que les gamins se plaindraient à leur parents, les parents seraient pas contents. C'est un peu le même sentiment que j'ai envers les personnes, qui vivent dans des conditions qu'on peut pas bien comprendre ... qui ont des choix ... une façon de vivre. Et on arrive 'bah non, mon gars, tu peux pas faire ça, parce que je SAIS que c'est bon pour toi'. C'est pas facile, on a pas envie de se faire dicter, surtout quand on a choisi des voies vraiment pour la liberté et l'autonomie ... [souffle]. Donc non, c'est des sujets hyper essentiels. Est-ce qu'on peut décider à la place des gens? De ce qu'ils doivent faire, ce qui est bon pour eux? On s'inquiète pour eux, donc on doit les forcer à faire?

Planter des fruits et légumes serait une bonne solution à votre avis?

Ça, il y a déjà pas mal, je sais pas s'il y a des rapports qui ont été fait sur la fréquentation des sans domicile.

La plupart, non, ce sont des produits qui sont cueillis par les associations par exemple, qui de leur côté distribuent les fruits et légumes.

Parce que les stations gourmandes c'est des endroits comme ça en plein cœur de la ville de Nantes où il y a de l'alimentation qui pousse. Il y a du choix, des tomates, il y

a des poires, des pommes ... À l'origine c'est fait pour que tout le monde se serve. Il y a les incroyables comestibles aussi. J'ai fait parti en Inde, donc c'est les Inde'royable comestibles. On a demandé à la mairie, il y a tel terrain qui sert à rien, c'est de la pelouse. On voudrait planter des potagers. Maintenant c'est une autre asso qui a repris et qui s'investit dedans mais c'est libre accès. C'est au milieu des maisons. Il y a des gens qui passent, ils voient un potiron et ils le cueillent. L'idée c'est de se dire 'réapproprions-nous le territoire, au lieu des arbres décoratif, on a le droit d'avoir des arbres fruitiers.' Au lieu d'avoir des haies comme ça, on va avoir des framboisiers. Pour la biodiversité, c'est bon, mais nous on peut manger derrière.

Vous parliez avant de comment on peut activer la création de sérotonine et je me demande si des petites portions ne suffiront peut-être pas et devraient être très régulières.

Tout. Pour un fonctionnement optimal de l'organisme, c'est important d'être régulier effectivement. C'est pas en une fois qu'on fait ça quoi. Et puis, c'est des circuits qui sont longs à redémarrer.

Voilà, on leur dit 'voici un repas pour améliorer votre alimentation et votre bien-être mental et physique', mais ils vont pas pouvoir sentir une différence radicale tout de suite. Ce qui va certainement les démotiver.

Complètement. Il faudrait réussir que ça soit à l'insu du mental. Faut pas que ce soit 'je sais ce qui est bien pour toi, c'est bon pour toi'. Faut que ce soit plutôt 'ni vu, ni connu'. Comme effectivement les plantations dans la rue. Quand ils ont vraiment faim, ils mangent un truc par terre et ils savent qu'il y a ça à cet endroit là, donc ils vont manger les légumes. Naturellement ils ont donc des produits vivants. Sinon ça ne parle pas forcément.

L'effet de la famine sur le corps est intéressant parce qu'il crée un effet yo-yo. Donc on mange beaucoup plus compulsivement après. Il faudra peut-être aussi faire attention à ça?

Ça dépend des situations. Là dans cette situation d'instinct de survie, le corps est fait aussi pour tout capter, de manger en excès, quand on a pas mangé depuis longtemps. Une personne en excès de poids, qui essaye de se régler à manger, on va lui donner un goûter dans l'après-midi pour qu'il n'arrive pas le soir à manger comme une vorace. Une personne qui manque de calories, et qui n'a pas le choix que d'en manquer, il n'y a pas de moral — c'est à dire qu'il n'y a pas de bon ou mauvais fonctionnements. Quand il a des

calories à manger, s'il en a trop il va les manger et stocker et ça va lui servir à plus tard aussi. Notre organisme est prévu pour le manque. Le manque et 'quand j'en trouve, je stock'. Donc le problème c'est que ce sont les mauvais aliments pour les sans-abris. Mais sinon le corps est vraiment fait pour survivre. Des moments, il s'accroche et il tue un animal parce qu'il n'a pas mangé depuis 15 jours, ou il trouve enfin de l'eau.

Dans votre avis, comment on pourrait les inciter à manger mieux?

Comme pour les enfants, pareil, qu'est-ce qui va permettre de manger plus de légumes? Alors, s'ils ont accès aux protéines, je pense qu'ils vont vouloir manger de la viande ou du poisson. Il y a des freins aussi de goût, mais en général c'est pas ça qui pose le plus problème, c'est plutôt les végétaux frais, des légumes. Donc on les mélange systématiquement à un féculent, et on peut mettre du fromage par dessus pour que ce soit bon. Et on peut mettre des sauces aux épices pour que ça noie le goût. Très souvent j'utilise des légumes que les enfants ou personnes n'aiment pas du tout. On les mixe finement, on les mélange à un coulis de tomates et un peu de vinaigre dedans pour lui donner un côté presque ketchup. On peut le mettre en lasagne ... il y a pleins de possibilités. À quelqu'un qui veut manger plus équilibré, à qui on offre une possibilité de manger plus équilibré — dans des asso notamment, de lui cuisiner quelque chose — il y a moyen de lui faire aimer, même s'il aime pas trop les légumes. Et puis là on s'en fout de lui donner plus de calories. Il n'est pas au régime! Donc là on va pouvoir lui mettre plein de fromage par dessus, on va le nourrir aussi. Cela fera passer le goût des aliments. Et toujours pas lâcher les féculents avec les légumes parce que légumes tout seul, pour pleins de gens c'est connoté négativement. C'est fou hein mais bon!

Et les personnes qui mangent trop de calories, comme avec les kebab, ça déséquilibre leur alimentation. À la limite, s'ils viennent que 2 ou 3 fois par semaine en association pour manger, et que le reste du temps ils mangent des kebabs. Ce n'est pas le temps de les mettre au régime, parce que sinon ils viendront jamais. Mais travailler sur la durée — c'est ça le plus dur, avec des personnes qui n'ont pas de point d'attache, c'est des contextes hyper déstabilisant. Donc pour eux et pour les personnes qui accueillent. De permettre aux gens d'abord d'être bien, de séduire, qu'ils aient tout ce qu'ils veulent, qu'ils ressemblent à ceux qu'ils aiment. Et puis après, petit à petit on peut dire, tiens la prochaine fois, si il y avait pas de sauce, tu mangerais? Si il y avait un peu moins de fromage? Si il y avait un peu plus de légumes, ça passerait ou pas? De tenter les soupes aussi, les soupes ça réchauffe, c'est quand même roboratif — c'est à dire ça remplit correctement. Et puis on peut faire passer

des épices, des aliments qui vont pas faire sentir trop les légumes.

Si ils mangent que des kebabs, ils perdent peut-être aussi l'envie de manger les légumes?

Oui, on est tous comme ça. Et c'est réversible mais au début c'est une frustration. Les personnes qui veulent s'en sortir — les personnes très obèses par exemple — on sait qu'elles ont tellement de facteurs hormonaux qui les poussent vers du gras et du sucre, que c'est un effort démesuré et ils ne trouvent rien d'autre bon. C'est saturé à ce niveau là. Et tous les capteurs sensoriels veulent du gras, du sucré. Donc ça se déshabitude, et après quand on retrouve le plaisir de manger, des choses qui sont fraîches pour nous, nous font du bien. On en a envie, mais au départ on a envie de gras et sucre parce qu'on a été conditionné à ça au niveau hormonal — la leptine, la ghréline — toutes ces hormones qui font le glucagon-like peptide aussi. C'est une hormone qui doit être faible, sinon on a tout le temps faim pour tout de suite.

Appendix 3

Homeless Interview Transcript.

Not all interviews with homeless people could be recorded. Either the homeless did not give their permission or the conditions were not adapted for recording. For example the social setting of informal, random meetings or being surrounded by other people, which did not enable confiding intimately or speaking freely of one's experience. Only the recorded interviews are shown below.

Discussion with Landry (L), Jason (J) and me (D).

Duration: 17 minutes. Location: Place du Cirque. Date: 11 November 2019.

Avant l'enregistrement, nous avons commencé à parler de mon projet, qui, au début, était axé sur l'artichaut et ses plus-values nutritionnelles. Le but de la conversation était de mieux connaître les problèmes et soucis de la vie quotidienne d'un sans-abri. Landry racontait sa vie avant quand il avait encore de l'argent.

L: Tu vois, avant je gagnais super bien ma vie —

J: Arrêtez de discuter avec nous. Je veux pas te taxer, je vais taxer les bourgeois.

D: Comment?

J: Au lieu de taxer toi [en s'adressant à moi], parce que tu t'arrêtes pour parler avec nous —

L: Elle est étudiante, sans sous!

J: Non, mais je sais, les étudiants c'est vraiment chaud. Ma pote, elle a payé 15 000 Euros la bourse étudiante là, ou je sais pas quoi.

L: Non, mais là ils sont ... Va y avoir convergence des luttes —

J: Ouais, grave!

L: Et donc, avant je gagnais bien ma vie, donc je mangeais super bien quoi. J'étais végétarien, je mangeais bio, ... euh j'allais manger souvent des huîtres, voilà. Là maintenant j'ai plus le choix. [longue pause] Genre là maintenant, c'est pain, viande. Il y a plus de légumes.

D: Comme ... des saucissons, ou...?

L: Non ... Ouais saucisson ... kebab ...

D: C'est cher le kebab, non?

L: Mais, non c'est 4 Euros, 5 Euros, ça va.

D: C'est vrai. Les légumes sont moins cher par contre.

L: Mais, oui, mais il faut les cuisiner quoi! Et donc, si t'as rien, tu peux pas les cuisiner. Et en plus, ça [en pointant vers la bière dans sa main], ça coûte 1 Euro 30 et quand on en boit 2, t'as fait un repas. T'as plus besoin de manger.

D: D'accord, oui. J'ai l'impression que c'est hyper psychologique aussi, parce que peut être que tu te sens rassasié mais au niveau des nutriments et du corps ... c'est pas —

L: Oui, j'en aurais — ... En ce moment je me fais soigner d'un cancer, donc j'en aurais vraiment énormément besoin. Et donc, tu vois, genre l'autre jour j'ai un ami qui était là-bas [montrant vers le Monoprix], il faisait la manche au supermarché et on lui a donné un potimarron. Je sais pas si tu vois les potimarrons ... c'est comme une citrouille mais en plus petit. Tu vois. Et je lui dis, 'Ah oui, on t'a donné un potimarron?', et il m'a dit 'mais oui, mais moi je suis en squat, je vais le cuisiner en soupe ce soir.' Tandis que moi, je dors par terre ... donc je peux pas! Je peux rien faire ...

D: Et alors tu te fais soigner d'un cancer là en ce moment?

L: Ouais, en ce moment. J'ai fini mercredi.

D: Ah oui! Je sais pas comment ça se passe normalement —

[Une manifestation est en train de passer, donc nous marchons plus loin pour pouvoir s'entendre.]

L: Viens ...

D: Je sais pas trop comment ça marche par rapport à la sécurité sociale, tu ...

L: Ah bah tout est pris en charge en France.

D: *D'accord, ok! Trop bien. Et t'as bientôt fini à l'hôpital?*

L: Mercredi là, j'ai fini le traitement et dans un mois je sais si ça continue ou pas.

[Notre attention est prise par la manifestation, qui s'élargit.]

L: C'est quoi ce drapeau Français de merde là ... [Jason qui hurle inaudiblement à côté] Vas-y, il est où le drapeau noir là?... Fasco [fasciste] de merde, va!

D: *Je connais même pas le —*

L: Ah tu sais pas? —

J: Rouge ou noir c'est l'anarchie en fait. En fait je suis pas anarchiste, mais j'ai quelques valeurs de l'anarchie parce que l'anarchie ... si ça va partir en politique anarchique, ils seraient tous en train de se fusiller dessus.

D: *Mais eux, ils veulent quoi avec leur manif?*

L: Ah eux, ils veulent quoi? Euh...

J: Euh...

L: Ils veulent juste manger des foin, mais pour certains, c'est juste vivre.

J: Ouais. Alors que nous, on est là à la rue tu vois. Moi ça me fait rire de voir ça en fait. Surtout à 16 ans. Parce que les mecs se plaignent, mais viens, viens, VIENS! [voix très aigüe] Prend ma place 5 minutes, eh ben tu verras, te faire dégager par les keufs; te faire réveiller à 5 heures dans un parking, c'est super! Surtout l'hiver. [longue pause] Oui si tu vois des mecs bourrés en fait, [leurs deux voix se chevauchent] le soir et l'hiver c'est ... —

L: Et toi tes ... ton truc c'est sur l'alimentation? [dirigé vers J:] Elle est en train d'enregistrer.

[Jason part en souriant.]

L: Ton truc il est dans l'alimentation, on revient au sujet. Je te recadre. [il sourit]

D: *Parce que tu préfères que j'arrête d'enregistrer?*

L: Non non, je sais bien ... en plus si tu m'aurais dit vidéo, je t'aurais dit non direct, mais ma voix c'est bon.

[bruits forts de la manif nous interrompent]

D: *Attend on en était où ... Ah oui, tu as dit tout à l'heure que l'artichaut, ça ne te remplit pas le ventre. Là je suis en train de faire des recherches justement et l'artichaut, tu peux le manger cru, donc tu vois —*

L: Non.

D: *Sisi.*

L: Ah non, c'est dégueulasse ... c'est vrai?

D: *Oui, il y a des petits artichauts violets qui se mangent facilement.*

L: Tu fais comment, tu les coupes en salade, ou ... ?

[Nous continuons de parler de la manière dont les artichauts crus sont mangés habituellement et tombons sur le sujet des petits déjeuners en Allemagne. Landry raconte son séjour dans une famille protestante quand il était plus jeune. Nous parlons d'endroits touristiques, comme les châteaux connus en Bavière et de son expérience dans ceux-ci. Finalement nous revenons sur le sujet des artichauts.]

L: Il y a plein des Vitamines E dedans, non?

D: *Je pense que c'est plutôt les vitamines B.*

L: Ah, la vitamine B est bien pour arrêter de boire! Oui, ça m'est déjà arrivé pleins de fois d'arrêter de boire, donc j'avais besoin de vitamines, et voilà. Ça aide aussi.

D: *D'accord, c'est intéressant ça. Et comment tu décrirais ta journée habituelle, de tous les jours? Par rapport à ta nourriture par exemple?*

L: Ah ouais, non mais ... Ma journée, elle se rejoue à aller à l'hôpital, passer sous les rayons pour me faire soigner du cancer et ressortir de l'hôpital.

D: *C'est tous les jours?*

L: C'est tous les jours. Et après t'es ... t'es épuisé.

D: *Mais tu manges pas de la journée?*

L: Si, si ça m'arrive de prendre un petit sandwich ou de prendre un petit truc mais ... non sinon je mange pas. Et après, je prends un livre et ... je bouquine. C'est tout. J'essaye de me tenir à l'écart de tout ces gens là [rigole] mais ...

D: *'De tout ces gens là', ça veut dire?*

L: Des gens à la rue. Je suis de la rue aussi, hein, mais ...

D: *Pourquoi tu essaies de te tenir à l'écart?*

L: Parce que ça ... ça permet d'éviter beaucoup de choses.

D: *Avec ... la police, ou ... ?*

L: Ouais, avec tout, ouais. Et puis même moi, ça m'évite de ... de me polluer le cerveau. C'est ... [se reprend] Mais après voilà, au niveau de la nourriture, maintenant on est limité. J'ai eu des semaines, où j'ai eu pas du tout de sous ... Bah, tu te poses dans un parc et t'attends que les gens ils aient fini leur sandwich. T'essayes de regarder ceux qui ne finissent pas leur sandwich et le jettent à la poubelle ... et tu récupères le sandwich. La moitié du sandwich, quoi. Mais voilà, et donc, j'ai une très mauvaise alimentation. Et pourtant dans ma vie j'en ai eu une très bonne.

D: *Ça doit pas être facile, d'avoir ce contraste ...*

L: Ouais c'est dur. C'est dur. Ouais, c'est super dur hein. Surtout que c'est vraiment un moment où ... là, le pire ça a été en été là. De pas pouvoir se faire un pastèque.

D: *Oui, c'est cher?*

L: Non, c'est pas que c'est cher, mais tu peux pas la manger en entier. Donc il te faut une famille quoi. Et donc c'était mieux ... en famille à la maison, tu mettais la pastèque ... au frais et voilà! T'as plein de produits comme ça, que tu peux pas manger.

D: *Mais oui, ça fait du sens. Et rien à voir, mais les endroits que tu côtoies le plus sont où?*

L: À Nantes, je suis ... gare, jardin des plantes — surtout jardin des plantes — il est magnifique! En automne, c'était beau, c'était ... ouais, jardin des plantes surtout. Gare un petit peu, mais voilà et Médiathèque. Et voilà. [en rigolant] Intellectuel - et nature! Mais voilà. Et toi, tu manges quoi?

D: *Moi?*

L: T'arrives à manger bien ici?

[Surprise de sa question, nous continuons brièvement, mais à cause de bombes lacrymogènes, la discussion s'est vite terminée et chacun est parti de son côté pour se protéger des fumées.]

Discussion with Jason.

Duration: 9 minutes. Location: Place du Cirque. Date: 11 November 2019.

Alors, tu manges comment dans la journée?

J: Alors, je manges comment? Soit, je m'amuse à taxer les gens avec la carte bancaire. Parce que là ils me disent 'oui, j'ai que la carte', donc je demande 'est-ce que t'as un café à dépanner?' Des fois c'est oui, des fois c'est non. Des fois il y a des associations en fait le soir pour manger, donc toute la semaine t'as les resto du cœur. T'as le lundi soir une maraude qui s'appelle 'les p'tits gilets' qui est un effectif en fait de maraudes dans toute la ville. Les resto du cœur c'est à Tabaco et Talensac vers 21h30. Le vendredi soir t'as une association qui s'appelle 'action froid' qui peut donner de la bouffe et sinon c'est des gens qui donnent à manger, qui disent 't'as faim?' Des fois je vais manger kebab, parfois je vais faire les invendus ... [tousse fortement] Des fois c'est cher et si j'ai assez d'argent je vais m'acheter à graille.

Et tout à l'heure t'as dit qu'il y a beaucoup de migrants qui vont aux associations.

J: Oui, il y a énormément de migrants, par exemple, à l'époque à Talensac, j'ai juste envie de te dire, que ... tu vois les poules? T'imagines le fermier qui va au milieu des poules dans l'enclos et qui balance les graines. Avant - même que le fermier arrive, t'as tout les migrants qui se **POUSSENT** [il imite le mouvement brusque de pousser quelqu'un]. Tu vas voir un moment, si t'as le temps, tu vois un migrant prendre la bouteille d'eau, se servir un verre tout seul ou prendre un chocolat tout seul. Ils vont essayer de grater un deuxième sandwich, mais non t'es en mode 'putain frère, déjà tu les laisses faire, tu leur parles pas comme ça et tu leur demande poliment en fait.' C'est pas des chiens en fait. Ils sont là, ils font des sandwichs tous les soirs pour nous, ils sont pas obligés de les faire, c'est une association, ils sont pas obligés de venir, hein. Déjà, il y a 2 ans, ils faisaient une maraude au niveau de la Fnac. Ils ont arrêté de la faire, parce qu'il y avait vraiment trop de bruits.

Ah d'accord. Et il y a suffisamment de bouffe?

J: Des fois, t'as vraiment pas assez de bouffe. Des fois, il y en a encore parce qu'ils ont des sacs mais enfin bon il y a beaucoup, beaucoup trop de gens aux associations, et c'est ça qui est chiant. Tu vois, aujourd'hui dans la rue, t'as un seul truc pour dormir au chaud. T'en a pas qu'un seul mais t'as 'la halte de nuit' — où tu peux aller dormir — mais il y a que les majeurs qui sont acceptés à l'intérieur. Et en fait, juste pour te dire qu'aujourd'hui t'as pas d'association pour les mineurs à la rue, c'est ça en fait. À part la Ressource, qui est une association pour les moins de 25 ans, mais il n'y a pas beaucoup de solutions d'ailleurs. C'est plus un lieu pour se poser, parler, faire ses papiers.

Et toi, normalement, t'es où?

J: Moi, normalement, je suis censé être en foyer. En protection d'enfance en appartement semi-autonomie.

Et tu t'es cassé?

J: Non, je me suis fait viré parce que j'hébergeais les gens. Et t'as pas le droit.

[Nous continuons de parler de l'artichaut (le sujet initial) pendant quelques minutes.]

J: Les artichauts, j'aime pas trop ça. Après j'aime pas beaucoup de choses. Les légumes, j'aime pas trop ça en fait. Tu va me filer un truc, oui je vais le bouffer. La tarte aux poireaux par contre, c'est un truc que j'aimerais bien manger. C'est trop bon.

Un truc chaud en fait, non?

J: Ah oui, manger quelque chose de chaud, mais ... Un kebab, tu vois, ça commence à me faire chier, ça commence à vraiment faire chier de bouffer des kebab. Donc personnellement, tu me files un peu de choucroute, je vais la bouffer, [voix devient très aigüe] même une pizza! J'te la prend, j'te la prend, j'te la prend! ... J'te la prend. Mais par contre le truc que je déteste le plus maintenant à manger, c'est les triangles sandwich. Je peux plus en bouffer. Ah oui, mais les assos, ils ont que ça. Moi, j'te jure c'est chiant. Mais enchanté de faire ta connaissance.

[Il signale qu'il veut partir.]

Oui, absolument! Merci beaucoup.

J: T'inquiète.

Je voulais pas te déranger.

J: Sinon, mais moi, je fais souvent la manche là, donc pourquoi pas si tu veux qu'on se reparle.

Oui, avec plaisir.

J: Ça marche, j'te fais la bise!

Discussion with Julie.

Duration: 9 minutes. Location: Place du Cirque. Date: 11 November 2019.

Julie était assise par terre sur le trottoir ayant sa tête posée sur ses genoux, le regard par terre. En me présentant, j'ai remarqué ses yeux oscillants et des problèmes d'élocution. Elle était ivre. Je lui ai proposé un masque neuf, car elle n'en avait pas.

Tout d'abord j'aimerais bien te poser la question: qu'est-ce que tu as mangé aujourd'hui?

J: Aujourd'hui, j'ai mangé ... de la bière.

Tu remplaces souvent tes repas par la bière?

[elle hoche la tête]

Pourquoi ça?

J: Parce que je suis alcoolique.

Du coup tu priorise la bière à la nourriture?

J: Quand j'ai de la nourriture, j'en mange, mais s'il y en a pas, ça me calme [parlant de sa bière] et j'ai plus faim quoi.

Tu manges combien de fois par jour à peu près?

J: Une fois.

Et ça t'arrive de pas manger dans la journée?

J: Oui.

Est-ce que tu vas aux associations?

J: Non, pas du tout. Je ne suis pas d'ici, donc je viens de Cherbourg, et là-bas ... il y a une association c'est là ... j'ai oublié. La Chaudière. Et tous les soirs, ils offrent un repas gratuit de 17h à 20h. Et là, t'as un repas gratuit. Ça va de la soupe jusqu'au dessert.

Trop bien. Ici tu connais pas trop les associations?

J: Pas trop.

C'est pas trop communiqué?

J: Si, on a des petits bouquins, il y a un descriptif quoi. Je sais pas, si tu veux voir?

Avec plaisir.

[Elle essaye de se lever, mais n'est pas stable sur ses deux jambes]

J: Il y a des restos et des bars, des machins. Tu peux aller recharger ton téléphone ... C'est la maraude qui m'a donné ça. Ce matin je voulais recharger mon téléphone, donc je demande aux gars de recharger mon téléphone et il me dit 'si tu veux, il y a un café en attente'. Donc voilà.

Et les horaires des associations t'en est au courant?

J: Non.

C'est quoi ce que tu manges de plus?

J: De tout! Les sandwichs en triangle, j'en peux plus, j'suis écœurée. J'en ai mangé de trop. Sinon, l'alcool. Je mange ce qu'on m'offre aussi. Quand je fais la manche et qu'on me dit 'qu'est-ce que vous voulez?' Je demande ce que je veux quoi. Les gens sont sympa et ils offrent.

Des entretiens que j'ai pu faire avec d'autres sans-abris, il y a des problèmes communs que j'ai notés. Tu pourras me dire lesquels sont importants pour toi ou pas trop. Premièrement, le fait d'être indépendant, ça a de la valeur pour toi? ... Par exemple tu préfères faire la manche ou aller aux associations?

J: Les deux.

Et le fait qu'on ne communique pas par rapport aux associations, tu ne sais peut-être pas toujours où trouver de la nourriture?

J: C'est pas un problème. Je me débrouille.

Tu manges seule ou plutôt avec des potes?

J: Les deux.

Ça te dérange de pas manger beaucoup de légumes frais?

J: J'en mange pas beaucoup, mais si j'en ai pas tant pis. Si j'en ai, tant mieux, mais ...

Est-ce que parfois tu manges des poubelles ou —

J: Non.

Tu considères ça un problème de remplacer tes plats avec de l'alcool?

J: Bah, c'est un problème parce que ça fait partie de la maladie quoi. J'aimerais bien m'en sortir de ça, mais c'est difficile.

Le fait de travailler te manque?

J: Ça me manque. Parfois ça me manque.

Quel problème est le plus dérangeant pour toi?

J: ... J'aimerais bien travailler dans un jardin. Travailler la terre, la nature, ça me tient à cœur, quoi. Et ça m'évite de boire.

Après, Julie a commencé à me poser des questions sur le but de mon projet et le métier de designer. À la fin, je lui ai dit que ça a été un plaisir de la rencontrer et elle m'a remerciée pour notre conversation.

Discussion with Romault.

Duration: 9 minutes. Location: Place Bouffay. Date: 11 November 2019.

Romault était assis à côté de la Place Bouffay, sur un petit carré d'herbe et il se protégeait du vent avec un parapluie, son chariot décoré et plusieurs couettes. Je lui ai proposé un masque car le sien était fortement dégradé. Avant l'entretien, il m'a demandé un service: acheter du café instantané au carrefour. Il n'est plus autorisé à y entrer, car il ne se sépare pas de plusieurs poupées Barbie qui ont dérangées les autres clients à l'intérieur du supermarché. Il m'a donné toute la monnaie qu'il avait récoltée et j'ai complété le prix à la caisse avec mon argent personnel. Il m'en remerciait plusieurs fois et j'ai ainsi gagné sa confiance. Initialement, il m'a donc donné son accord d'enregistrer notre conversation.

Je vais te poser quelques questions en lien avec ta consommation habituelle et les aliments que t'aimes bien manger. J'ai déjà posé ce genre de questions à d'autres sans-abris et j'aimerais bien avoir ton avis sur leurs points problématiques. Ça va m'aider à choisir vers où guider mon projet. [il n'avait pas l'air de suivre] Tu me dis, si tu comprends pas bien ou si je parles pas assez fort, il n'y a pas de soucis!

R: Je comprends approximativement.

Ok. T'as mangé quoi par exemple aujourd'hui?

R: Un morceau de tartine, qu'on m'a dépanné. Une petite tartine.

Et hier?

R: Hier ...j'ai dû boire que du café.

Et tu bois beaucoup de café?

R: Beaucoup, beaucoup de café.

Pourquoi ça?

R: Hier, peut-être un sandwich. Ah non, c'était peut-être avant hier. Hier que du café. Hier soir je suis rentré vite fait, parce que je suis installé dans un bois, pas très loin.

C'est mieux que de dormir dans la ville?

R: Oui, après, il y a plusieurs raisons pour lesquelles je pourrais vivre plutôt en ville. J'aime bien voir les gens passer. [il sourit] Quand je suis de bonne humeur.

Tu as une routine dans la journée? Ou alors, tu fais quoi dans ta journée?

R: Je prends un petit café et mes petits [inaudible] ...

Tes petits quoi?

R: ... Je vais peut-être arrêter la discussion là.

D'accord, quelque chose ne va pas?

R: Ce n'est pas contre vous mais c'est l'enregistrement. L'industrie, on se rend pas compte mais ça se trouve que quelqu'un nous écoute là.

J'ai éteint l'enregistreur et je prenais des notes pendant que nous avons continué la discussion. Il m'a même permis de le prendre en photo.

Thank you all for having contributed to this project with your insights, answers and perspectives. It is your support and assistance that now enables the acquired knowledge to be shared and understood by many more.

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Dissertation

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By Deborah Büsing