

Homelessness final project

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The perspective that Sociology gave to my eyes made the issue of homelessness seem different than it ever had before due to all of the ways we learned about how society works.

Rumpf-Whitten, S. (2026, April 25). *Once-charming mountain escape now battling homelessness homeowners say turned postcard city into no-go zone*. Fox News.

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/charming-mountain-escape-battling-homelessness-homeowners-say-turned-postcard-city-go-zone>



How Sociology Changed My Perspective?

Sociology has changed my perspective of homelessness and other societal issues by learning about things like conflict theory and false consciousness since my module one reflection. I wrote in my reflection that no one piece of society can change it. I no longer agree with that perspective after learning about homelessness. I now think that a piece of society can definitely make a difference. Watching our country fight about miscellaneous issues while facing societal problems like homelessness is counterintuitive. Also understanding how difficult it is to make decisions and allocate funding for homelessness has made me feel more for local governments like Asheville.

Personal troubles vs public issues

Homelessness, explained through Sociological imagination can be understood as a failure of society and not the individual. Instead of looking at the issue with the question, "why did this person lose their home?" you can approach it with the question, "what societal barriers prevent so many people from losing their homes?" this is more accurate as well. In America there is more than 500,000 people all homeless meaning you cannot pin it on a person. So instead of looking at the issue as an individual failure, one should look at the issue as a societal failure.

Inequality, Conformity, or Social movements

This course has taught a lot about how people interact with society and how society interacts with them which can be used to explain homelessness for example when we learned about the Peoples Temple and the need for an in-group. People may fall in society into something like drug abuse because of their want for an in-group which can long term negatively affect their economics which can make it easier to become homeless. Also, learning about the way our societies stratification is makes it very hard to pick yourself up if you have an unfortunate event in your life that can kick you to the streets. While our stratification system is open in theory it is hard to actually move up in our society. While people who are low in the social hierarchy do attempt to do something about problems through social movements. In my discussion board I talked about Black Lives Matter it is still difficult for movements like this to have a huge impact often times in modern day America because they follow a natural cycle and they often die before their end result is completely achieved. "the overall support of the movement has dropped a little bit since 2020 from 67% to 52%." Homeless people can do little to organize making it hard for them to advocate for themselves and even if others advocate the social movement might not

Growth Reflection

In my module 2 reflection I claimed people leading really difficult lives makes my struggles feel miniscule. I still agree with this statement. I also brought up minority groups like single mothers facing impossible problems. I didn't understand at this point that there were other countries handling these problems swiftly and efficiently. I didn't realize that there was a way for societies to get over their problems. I am still astounded after reading 9.2 of the textbook and the point that was brought up about how people in the upper class can not only control their own lives but other people's lives as well where the lower class hardly has control over their own life. When you apply this to homelessness, it becomes impossible to really blame anybody who is homeless because as a member of the lower class you can only control so much.

Status

Homelessness as a status is difficult for a lot of reasons such as you are responsible for feeding yourself and staying warm. There is little privilege that comes from it. You might receive some privilege through the social expectation of you begging for money however this is a stretch because not many homeless people even do. Homeless people are often seen through a negative lens, however making their lives much more difficult instead of easier. When looking at the status of the homeless I apply symbolic interactionism. People always look at the big picture and forget that each homeless person is a person. Looking at the micro interactions, the way that homeless people are carelessly labelled only homeless by every institution and the public in general.

Role Strain, Role Conflict, and Role Performance

Role strain, conflict, and performance all relate to how people manage expectations within their lives. Role conflict is like how being a parent and being an employee can often get in the way of each other making it hard to fill both roles adequately. Role strain is just when a single role becomes difficult to manage. Role Performance is how an individual fills the roles in their life. In the case of homelessness the role of being homeless kind of becomes a master role and it becomes the one thing that you are seen as instead of being a parent or an employee. It also make one succumb to stereotypes because homeless people are often told that they are at fault for being in the position they are in.

Looking-Glass self

Looking-glass self means that we apply how others view and think about us onto ourselves. I notice myself attempting to fill the roles that other people feel I fit into. In homelessness this would show up a lot in ones mindset. Homeless people may feel like people ignoring them or looking down on them mean that they have no purpose in society, so they internalize that negative feeling, which may lead them into addictive behaviors or mental health problems. Also, being homeless is definitely bad for one's self esteem because through this Charles Cooley philosophy, you become what people think of you and if it is this negative then it would impact mental health.

Three Approaches - Asheville (Continuum of Care) - Norway (Housing First) - Criminalization (Grants Pass)

There are approaches that differ majorly when addressing the issue with Norways definitely having been proven effective. They have extremely low populations of homeless people per capita through addressing housing and treating it as a fundamental right. Ashevilles plan offers a different approach, still holistic and not hostile. The continuum of care approach focuses on collaboration with local agencies to help provide a safety net, it also touches on affordable housing and they have plans to help address the drug problem hollistically. Norways has been executed while Ashevilles plan still has a long way to go however. Finally, there is the Grant Pass plan which entails a hostile approach. Grant Pass wants to criminalize and strictly enforce a ban on being homeless. This treats homelessness as a behavioral issue in need of punishment. The punishment is tickets and fines which people make the argument that it traps people in poverty.

Structural causes and solutions

There are many approaches to try and solve the issue of homelessness. Housing is the most rational root cause. “The Obvious answer to Homelessness” article claims that people tend to not be chronically homeless but just forced to the streets for a couple months due to an emergency. This claim supports that if there was affordable housing, homelessness would be a greatly reduced issue because less people would be struggling to get by month to month. Other solutions like employment, healthcare, and policy are definitely important too, however if the goal is to address homelessness then making it easier to put people in homes makes sense.

Local evidence

Asheville is in a rather unfortunate position with homelessness due to Tropical Storm Helene. According to wlos there has been a 9% increase in homelessness has been measured since the storm with a total of 824 people in our community facing homelessness. The organization [Homeward Bound WNC](#) focuses strictly on housing while other organizations like [Beloved Asheville](#) focus on people's basic needs like food and other basic supplies.

Sociological analysis

One could apply Conflict Theory when looking at the issue of homelessness because Homelessness is only possible due to the system of capitalism naturally competing with wage-workers livelihood. The conflict between corporations needing labor and also needing to pay their employees less and less leads people to have a lack of access to affordable housing. This is also a good example of class struggle showing the conflict between the owners of production and the laborers. Homeless people, in conflict theory are those who are unfortunate enough to not have access to the limited supply of resources that provide a stable source of shelter.

Personal Growth

Learning Sociology has changed my thinking about how society works. It has also made me question how my socialization process has influenced my way of thinking and those around me. I am taking an AP African American history class and we learned about Sociologist W.E.B Du Bois. He wrote about double consciousness and other terms that I have learned this semester and I could tie everything together. Learning about social movements also helps me understand how I can play a part in changing the world for the better in the future despite not having that much influence as an individual. Homelessness as an issue seems much more dire now that I learn about it in such detail as well.

Why This Matters

Understanding homelessness sociologically matters because it is crucial that we as a society turn to face our problems. A society that ignores their problems is a sick society, a person receiving an education about real life issues that matter is one step closer to having a strong and healthy society.