



People in the Streets of Paris: 'A Matter Out of Place'?

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COLLECTION:
MULTIPLICITY IN THE
WORLD OF WASTE

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

My paper describes and interprets the life of people in the streets of Paris from March 2020 to April 2023. In the critical discourse analysis tradition, I contrast different perspectives to make sense of the situation: my observations from home and from the streets, the media coverage and official archives that deal with the 'public problems' of homelessness, migrants, Roma families, and the use of public space. I also compare different periods of time when the rules are different. I observe how the analyses of the situation vary depending on one's perspective, on the period of time and on the importance of categories such as home and waste as references. One key question for me is how to use the notion of 'being out of place' for people who live in the street. To do so, I reflect on the role of words, pictures and images: they reflect what I see in situ when I take the pictures but most of the pictures, I am shown tend to illustrate categories rather than situations. I reflect on the fact that what I see is not what I am shown and how it affects my relations with people who live in the street.

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INTRODUCTION

In the early stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, a group of people in tents appeared before my windows boulevard Saint-Jacques, in Paris. I also noticed people nearby carrying bags that would come to sleep every night at the same hour at the same place. I also saw a small cabin appear, down the street, later three more on the other side of the aerial metro line. Being outside exposed these people to be in contact with waste. At that time, waste was considered possibly dangerous and the people in the street were, in turn, feared as potentially dangerous. People both avoided them and tried to help as they seemed vulnerable. Three years later, after the confinement, more people have settled in my street yet their presence seems less visible than during the confinement, for the first few months of the pandemic, when we were locked up home and they were exposed outside, as if forgotten by all except us, their neighbours. At that time, we did not know if encounters, with people or goods, might prove toxic if not lethal. When we were relieved from that stress, the situation of the people in the streets of Paris was also transformed but they were still exposed to the public eye. To make sense of this transformation, I use two categories borrowed from Mary Douglas, home and waste. She defines the first as a 'micro-community' and the later as 'matter out of place'. I wonder how they operate as frames and how they relate to categorize people and goods. What do we see in the streets and what do they make us see?

My paper contrasts three periods of time and three sources of information: direct observation, media coverage and official discourses. In so doing, I attempt to better understand the life of people in the street and our collective use of resources with common tacit rules as Douglas pointed out it is not neutral for a person to be associated with waste. I begin by defining what home and waste means in reference to social categories used for people living in the street. I then detail the method of critical discourse analysis and its reflexive approach of words and pictures as part of social representations that frame public problems and their solutions. After going into a detailed description of the three periods of time I identified and what can be seen of people in the streets, I discuss the role of social categories and rules regarding home and waste in relation to Mary Douglas's notion of 'being out of place'. I am struck at how they shape what we see and what remains invisible to us, and how they may be used differently by different groups who focus on people, on material needs or on the state of the streets of Paris. I wonder how their relations to home and waste affect what we see of people in the street and how we live with them. I find such categories as 'homeless' and 'waste lives' tend to create problematic associations causing misrepresentation of life in the street.

1. ABOUT HOME, WASTE AND BEING OUT OF PLACE

In this paper, I use the method of critical discourse analysis to insist on the distance between what I see, my perceptions of the street where I live, and what I am shown about the streets of Paris and the people who live there when I am informed by the media. Some of the categories I use to make sense of the phenomenon are informed by experience, others are framed by pre-existing categories that I may not easily reconcile. To begin my investigation, I decided to reflect on the frame I use for everyday encounters. I refer to Mary Douglas's work on home and waste and how they command social rules. I then insist on the role of social categories to describe people in the street whose life consists of living without a home and be exposed to waste, the waste the rest of the people dispose of. The rest of the paper deals with this situation, of living near people outside our homes in contact with our waste, the 'matter out of place' in our homes.

1.1. ABOUT HOME IN MARY DOUGLAS' WORK

The more I try to understand the situation of people living in the street, the more I find the term of 'homeless' refers to what they have not: a home. Home is not such an easy notion to grasp as it corresponds to such a familiar reality, so obvious that it is difficult to analyse. What Douglas finds striking is how predictable it is in its time and space arrangements, as it is based on cycles:

Home is 'here', or it is 'not here'. The question is not 'How?' nor 'Who?' nor 'When?' but 'Where is your home?'. It is always a localizable idea. Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space. It does not need bricks and mortar, it can be wagon, a caravan, a boat or a tent. It need not be a large space, but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control. Having shelter is not having a home, nor is having a house, nor is home the same as household. For a home neither the space nor its appurtenances have to be fixed but there has to be some regular about the appearance and reappearance of its furnishings (Douglas 1991: 289).

Douglas observes that home is 'a memory machine', especially in stocking resources that might be needed in different circumstances based on experience. In a home, one finds all sorts of resources and solutions ordered in different categories:

The home's capability to allocate space and time and resources over the long term is a legitimate matter for wonder (Douglas 2011: 296).

For this reason, the order of the home may be deemed rigid and even 'tyrannical' (Douglas's initial expression) as it depends on people's collective use of resources and coordination the day. Synchrony and order are essential. It is especially noticeable for family meals which she describes as a 'conclave' (Douglas 1991: 302) as the occasion is used to settle all sorts of issues. The meal itself corresponds to a specific order:

Between breakfast and the last nightcap, the food of the day comes in an ordered pattern. Between Monday and Sunday, the food of the week is patterned again. Then there is the sequence of the holidays and fast days through the year, to say nothing of life cycle feasts, birthdays and weddings (Douglas 1972: 62).

This order characterizes the idiosyncratic cultural forms of micro-community with its members, its resources, and its cycles. Douglas insists on the differences between home rules and market rules in accommodating people and dealing with the cycle of human activities. Whereas the hotel 'allows clients to buy privacy as a right of exclusion' (Douglas 1991: 304) by providing paying services avoiding, the home is inclusive of all differences by defining collective rules: 'The home protects a person's body from voyeurism and intrusive scatology' (ibidem). Douglas insists in so doing, the home order 'springs up spontaneously to meet certain recurring conditions of organization' and in so doing it is 'highly efficient for maintaining itself in being' (ibidem: 306). It may explain why home rules are so strict about dealing with waste, what Mary Douglas calls 'matter out of place'. Home is a reference to define waste (Reno 2018) in relation to non-waste consumption (Arnold 2022; Cwiertka 2018) and to the global cycle of goods (Gutberlet & Carenzo 2020; Lycourghiotis 2020; Moreno-Tejada 2020) in a moment of change in our relation to the environment.

1.2. ABOUT WASTE IN MARY DOUGLAS' BOOK: PURITY AND DANGER

The people who live in the streets are out of the 'home order', its solidarities and its memories. That means they may be exposed to waste, a matter that is 'out of place' in a home.

Mary Douglas describes waste as 'matter out of place' (1966: 36), disturbing public order, in need of reordering. All symbolic patterns in a culture tends to exclude some goods as toxic, namely as: 'elements of the universe which may make no rational whole in conjunction with the other elements, (...) so much "dirt" as it were and matter out of place' (ibidem: 165). She wrote about primitive societies in contrast with (her and our) modern society. She clearly opposes the two as the first types of societies rely only on taboos and rigid interdictions (Douglas 1967: 4) to enforce collective social order whereas our modern societies

have created entire systems and technologies of control that tend to make social orders more specific, more fragmented, and also more adaptable. Both symbolic systems are based in forms of equivalence between the natural world and the moral world of values (Douglas 1967: 92-93) Taboos should guard individuals and exert a direct social influence on their choices (Douglas 1967: 5).

Just as a home traces a frontier, a frontier is traced between pure and impure dimensions of the world reinforced by rituals; many of them associated with religions. The respect of these rules may explain collective or individual fortunes in a direct or indirect way. Using specific cases, Douglas 'show(s) that rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience' (Douglas 1964: 2). She argues: 'Pollution ideas work in the life of society at two levels, one largely instrumental, one expressive. At the first level, the more obvious one, we find people trying to influence one another's behaviour' (ibidem: 3). Waste signals boundaries and thresholds: '(...) the ideal order of society is guarded by dangers which threaten transgressors. (...) They are a strong language of mutual exhortation. At this level the laws of nature are dragged in to sanction the moral code' (ibidem: 4). Some acts and some professions are taboo because they cross these lines on a regular basis, therefore: 'It is not difficult to see how pollution beliefs can be used in a dialogue of claims and counterclaims to status' (ibidem: 4). Status rules in society are difficult to elicit. Douglas finds it useful to look at different social structures because: 'Comparing various culture and understanding our culture by analysing primitive cultures in contrast, because rules seem more rigid and less obvious for taboo in foreign societies' (ibidem: 5).

She acknowledges important differences between societies: 'Each primitive culture is a universe to itself' (ibidem: 5). By contrast, the modern world is more homogeneous and complex, focusing on hygienic and scientific expertise: 'Our idea of dirt is compounded of two things, care for hygiene and respect for conventions' (ibidem: 9). To deal with this dirt, institutions are created: 'In the course of social evolution institutions proliferate and specialise. The movement is a double one in which increased social control make possible greater technical developments and the latter opens the way to increased social control again. Finally, we find ourselves in the modern world where economic interdependence is carried to the highest pitch reached by mankind so far' (ibidem: 91).

Douglas also points at different forms of associations between wasted goods and people as they get in contact, either because they are poor and homeless or because they have what is called 'a dirty job'. People become struck with taboo, in other words social stigma (Goffman 1963). Despite differences between primitive and modern worlds, in both systems, individuals associated with impurity cause trouble:

A polluting person is always in the wrong. He has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed

some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone. (...) The power which presents a danger for careless humans is very evidently a power inhering in the structure of ideas, a power by which the structure is expected to protect itself (ibidem: 114).

This system also involves a temporary dimension, the future threat looming on culprits if they have so far been spared: 'Where, humanly speaking, the outrage is likely to go unpunished, pollution beliefs tend to be called in to supplement the lack of other sanctions' (ibidem: 133). We see that social structures that define groups and grids (Douglas 2013) frame them by associations and dissociations, causing inclusion or exclusion. Douglas, however, insists on the flexibility and complexity of patterns in modern society, pointing at the transient nature of waste in relation to cultural patterns and symbolic rituals of sorting, an ongoing work of ordering.

1.3. ABOUT BAUMAN'S NOTION ON 'WASTED LIVES'

In his book, *Wasted Lives, Modernity and its Outcasts*, Bauman (2013) takes the opposite stand as he associates humans and goods in the same trajectories, forming similar essences in a postmodern global world. He also associates the treatment of waste with post-modern values in a form of disruption from past ages. He considers waste is a consequence of modernity in a post-modern world. It is caused by the design followed by a liberal political economy. As a consequence, the 'world is full', namely, it overwhelms humans who are stuck in this system of overconsumption:

The production of 'human waste', or more correctly wasted humans (the 'excessive' and 'redundant', that is the population of those who either could not or were not wished to be recognized or allowed to stay), is an inevitable outcome of modernization, and an inseparable accompaniment of modernity. It is an inescapable side-effect of order-building (each order casts some parts of the extant population as 'out of place', 'unfit' or 'undesirable') and of economic progress (that cannot proceed without degrading and devaluing the previously effective modes of 'making a living' and therefore cannot but deprive their practitioners of their livelihood) (Bauman 2013: 5).

Baumann establishes an equivalence between waste and wasted lives, as all 'wastes' are human productions. He uses Douglas's reference to symbol and ritual to make his point: 'Waste is sublime: a unique blend of attraction and repulsion arousing an equally unique mixture of awe and fear. But remember Mary Douglas: no objects are "waste" by their intrinsic qualities, and no objects can become waste through their inner logic' (Bauman 2013: 23).

To Bauman, however, waste as we know it is a postmodern phenomenon, the consequence of postmodernity, a system that demands constant change. Waste is also the consequence of globalization: 'the planet is fast running short of refuse dumps and the tools of waste recycling' and 'the "problems of (human) waste and (human) waste disposal" weigh ever more heavily on the liquid modern, consumerist culture of individualization' (Bauman 2013: 7).

Bauman deliberately associates poor people with waste as they are socially treated as 'matter out of place', being avoided to the point of what Honneth (2014) would call a complete lack of recognition. For instance, Bauman insists that refugees and outsiders to Western countries who want to settle there are treated as 'waste' even before they experience professional failure and exclusion. 'Immigrants, let us note, fit better into such a purpose than any other category of genuine or putative villains. There is a sort of "elective affinity" between immigrants (that human waste of distant parts of the globe unloaded into "our own backyard") and the least bearable of our own, home-grown fears' (Bauman 2013: 56).

This choice raises an important question. Should I follow Douglas in defining everyday institutions as collective, adaptive solutions to social problems or should we doubt our categories as stigmatizing representations of others as Bauman does? I realize my analysis of what happens to people who live in my street changes depending on the categories I use, as categories interact to describe social life.

1.4. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND CATEGORIES MADE FOR PEOPLE IN THE STREET

Many answers already exist to answer my questions. For the sake of this investigation, I will consider that I should suspend my judgement and consider these answers in a distance. Many of these answers come from official informants such as public authorities and the media. Contrary to Mary Douglas's probe into everyday institutions, they tend to mention everyday life situations through a series of categories they find have an obvious meaning for a common-sense citizen familiar with the way of life of large cities like Paris.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2013; Fairclough & Wodak 1997) tends to challenge such ready-made categories as homelessness and waste as used in the media or official discourses. It insists on what the dominant order of discourse presents as obvious and what it fails to mention. The same is true about pictures that often feature, in the media, as illustrations (Ch eroux 2009; Freund 1974; Gorin 2009) of the dominant order of discourse (Van Leeuwen 2014; Van Leeuwen & Wodak 1999).

People in the streets are associated with home as they lack a permanent place to live, and they are associated with waste as they must coexist with it in the streets. There can be many ways these relations may intersect in everyday life (Goffman 1968) and in the media, possibly as a source of stigma (Goffman 2009).

In the case of people living in the street, we find they are often associated with three types of populations that may be considered ‘out of place’ (Brysk & Shafir 2004): homeless (Damon 2020, 2002; Declerck 2001; Dobson 2022; Gowan 2010; Hopper 2003), migrants (Agier 2008; Bakewell 2014; Simon 2008; Tarrus 2002; Tinti & Reitano 2017) and Roma (Eloy 2020; Legros 2013; Williams 2003). The three categories are official and ancient, they also change with circumstances. In the case of my street in Paris, as different groups of people coexist, they are connected by the place they share and the means of existence they have, often connected to waste.

If we follow Douglas, people who do not have a home do not follow its common rules regarding waste. They are also in contact with waste in a different way than most people who have a home ruling over the circulation of waste and its cycles. Therefore, they may both be in danger and dangerous. Whereas some institutions deal with their endangered existence (Crewe & Axelby 2013; Crewe & Harrison 1998; Duvoux 2009; Mair, Marti & Ventresca 2012), others deal with the dangers they may present to others (Dutton & Dukerich 1991; Goldfischer 2020).

People in the streets must coexist with waste, ‘matter out of place’, in a collective space just as they coexist with their neighbours, people in their homes in a dense urban space (Davis 2006; Harvey 1973; Sassen 2002; 1991) like that of a city like Paris. The issue of visibility and invisibility arises to see what rules apply to them (Cancellieri & Ostanel 2015). These rules may change in time depending on the circumstances.

In this paper, I wonder how people in the street are seen in association with home and waste rules and how it affects their relations in public and their survival.

2. DATA AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

My method of analysis is based on critical discourse analysis. I use three sources of information: direct sources via participant observation, indirect sources via a written press review and official communication and public reports mostly from the French State and the city of Paris. I triangulate the data using home and waste as key references. I combine text and pictures. Some of the pictures are taken from my street, other are found online, most of them used to illustrate papers and reports on specific topics. I also code contrasting three different periods of time (March to June 2020, the confinement; July 2020 to January 2021, the ‘new normal’ and February 2021 to April 2023, ‘The pre-Olympics’) (see [Chart 1](#) on the following page).

I sorted and coded the data in reference to three dimensions that tend to connect ‘home’ and ‘waste’ rules: the homeless, and who they are; the question of resources (involving needs and material means) and the issue of toxicity and possible danger in the streets.

2.1. DATA

I gathered different types of data in the three periods comprised between March 2020 and November 2022 as visible in the chart below.

In the first period, during the full confinement, I stayed home and observed the street outside my window. I also read the papers and made phone calls to understand why people were left out in the street. I took pictures on the few occasions I could leave my house. In the second period, alternating confinement, curfews, and complete freedom of movement, I took daily walks around my district (distances were limited). I had exchanges with people in the street and social workers. I made appointments with local authorities. In the third period, I travelled between Paris and Reims for work. I compared the districts north of Paris (near the train station), Reims, where camps had re-emerged, and my street, where nothing was different except the tents had moved a little.

I used the N-Vivo software to code all the data along the three periods of Covid-19 pandemic until now, focusing on homelessness and waste, with distinct patterns I found were recurrent in public discourses. I used the same codes for all my material in an effort to document the three initial questions I had about people in the street, waste, and the transformation of the situation in time as visible in the table below ([Table 1](#)).

That made it possible to select major differences in representations in my material and in the media-treatment of the people in the street both in texts and pictures as visible in the description.

The data (indirect sources) was combined with direct sources I collected via participant observation and interviews. I combined and ordered all my data following the three-period timeline as illustrated in the table below ([Table 2](#)).

My approach is mostly based on a situated qualitative investigation. In line with the critical discourse analysis (CDA) tradition, I compare different discourses on the same object, homelessness and the use of waste as a solution, at the risk of transforming recipients’ life by associating them with waste thereby essentializing their condition. I contrast primary data, a diary of participant observation, some interviews and pictures with the same material borrowed from the written press.

There are important differences in what is visible and shown in various perspectives but I adopt a main point of view as my goal is to take a stand about the use of such categories of home and waste. All the analysis finds its anchor in my experience of the context as part of my investigation.

2.2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA VIEW OF HOMELESSNESS

Among CDA analysts, many argue that a better use of words and images helps us reframe our views so that

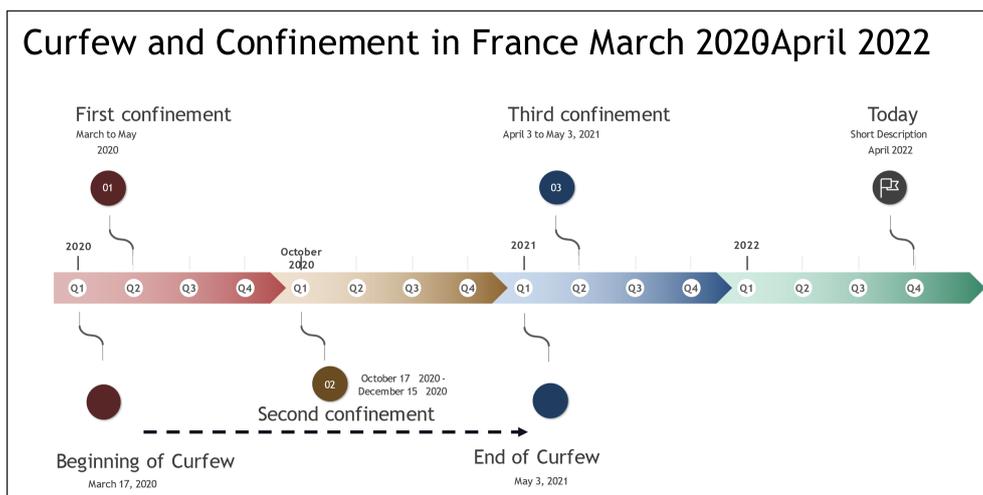


Chart 1 Timeline of the investigation.

FOUR MAIN TOPICS OF THE INVESTIGATION (CODE USED AND EXAMPLE OF VERBATIM)	NUMBER OF PAPERS COLLECTED ON THE SITE "EUROPRESS" (FRENCH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRESS)
Homeless streets of Paris: <i>It was a human tomb where poor people, forgotten homeless loomed. I have never seen looks so scared, scared of each other (Le Télégramme October 2, 2020).</i>	525
Migrants streets of Paris: <i>The problem is that housing centres are more and more numerous to refuse migrants with social workers massively enacting their right of retreat, deplores Didier Leschi, head of the French office of immigration and integration in Le Parisien (Le Figaro March 21, 2020).</i>	169
Roma Paris: <i>7000 Roma families live in 124 slums in the Region but there are no stats for Paris, they maybe 500, 700, 1000, 2000, more (Le Monde April 7, 2020).</i>	93
Saccage Paris: <i>The account#SaccageParis, dedicated to the publication of photos showing garbage on the sidewalks, ugly or damaged street furniture, would be an illustration of this (Le Parisien November 29, 2021).</i>	3392
Covid-19 streets of Paris: <i>Emergency accommodation (including hotels) is always saturated, Covid-19 or not (L'Express November 20, 2020).</i>	703
Waste streets of Paris: <i>Wind gusts heave wind gusts, tents and waste. It is not so cold, but a light rain falls continuously as the earth transforms into mud and drives men to huddle under the tarpaulin or the aerial roadway above (Le Monde November 4, 2020).</i>	223

Table 1 Coding of the Data in N-Vivo (I translated most of the quotes from the French).

they no longer produce stigma as we use them in a more reflexive way (Bullinger, Schneider & Gond 2022). In a more modest approach, using both fieldwork and media analysis, I try to see how a transforming use of words and images may operate to change the way we see others, here people in the street.

People in the street bear a stigma, and this situation causes debates as this stigma makes it difficult to see and understand these people. Many investigations using CDA show public policies and the media especially stigmatize refugees, which influences the broader public and organizations. It subjects the refugee to cultural processes that 'negatively qualify' their differences and identities. At the same time, large public and private efforts attempt to remove the stigma and provide care to the poor. Following Goffman (1963), I define stigma less as a feature of organizational actors and instead as a social process as such inverse social processes can also contribute to removing stigma. De-stigmatization is 'the process by

which low-status individuals or groups gain recognition and worth in society' (Lamont 2018: 420). A new form of recognition comes about from 'the affirmation of positive qualities of human subjects and groups' (Honneth 2014: 39). It can redraw boundaries between social groups and redefine the worth of stigmatized actors (Lamont 2018). For people to be viewed as worthy requires mobilizing moral repertoires (Lamont 2012) 'because de-stigmatization involves normative judgements about an individual's or group's contribution to societal welfare' (Bullinger, Schneider & Gond 2022: 3).

Some research indicates that visual communication plays a role in processes of (de)stigmatization (Lamont 2018), yet more should be known how processes of stigmatization and de-stigmatization transform people's lives, their interactions in public, and their social relations through pictures. What does it mean to be called a homeless, or a migrant? What does it change in your social life to have to use waste or to be given

	DIARY	INTERVIEWS	ARCHIVES
First Period (March 2020–June 2020)	Every two days (typed, 120 pages of notes)	Social services ville de Paris (4 online calls) Interviews neighbors (5) Interviews homeless (3) Interviews NGOs and associations workers (4) Interviews political activists and campaigners during the city hall elections (3) Défenseur des droits (human rights defender, 14 th district city hall) (2) Neighborhood committee (3)	32 pictures taken; 37 newspaper articles collected on the topic
Second Period (June 2020–ay 2021)	Every week	Interviews neighbors (5) Interviews homeless (3) Interviews NGOs and associations workers (4) Interviews political activists and campaigners during the city hall elections (3) Défenseur des droits (human rights defender, 14 th district city hall) (2) Neighborhood committee (1 interview and emails)	127 pictures taken Homeless policies (documents online, city of Paris, state, and association reports) Media coverage (56 media articles) Pictures sample on Google
Third Period (May 2021–April 2023)	Every week	4 new interviews with social services (looking back and looking forward in relation to the war in Ukraine and the need for more resources) combined with email exchanges on the migrant camps in Reims	73 pictures taken; 62 media articles (National and local press) Archives from the activist group (association to help the migrants in Reims) Official exchanges on the migrant camps

Table 2 Data collection.

surplus food to survive? Finally, what does it mean to be associated with matter ‘out of place’, waste, that may be associated with impurity and danger (Douglas 1966) and contaminate you? What can our reflexive use of words and images teach us?

To address this question, I use the insights of social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006) to visually analyse higher-order normative principles. Compared to written text, visuals are better at evoking emotions, capturing attention, creating involvement, and describing complex relationships (Meyer et al. 2018). Using visuals to (de)stigmatize is distinct from using verbal text because rather than writing about refugees abstractly, photographs show individuals and groups and thereby influence our ‘space of imagination’ (Bullinger, Schneider & Gond 2022; Vollmer & Karakayali 2018) and our valuations.

I contrast different frames being understood that:

(...) framing is a multimodal principle. There can be framing, not only between the elements of a visual composition, but also between the bits of writing in a newspaper or magazine layout (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001), between the people in an office, the seats in a train or restaurant (e.g. private compartments versus sharing tables), the dwellings in a suburb, etc., and such instances of framing will also be realised by ‘frame lines’, empty space, discontinuities of all kinds, and so on. In time-based modes, moreover, ‘framing’ becomes ‘phrasing’ and is realised by the short pauses and discontinuities of various kinds (rhythmic, dynamic, etc.) which separate the phrases of speech, of music and of actors’ movements. We have here a common semiotic

principle, though differently realised in different semiotic mode (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 3).

The discourse and the images I use in this paper should be contextualized in relation to the specific time and space I allude to.

3. CONTEXT

Although my investigation takes an original point of view, from the perspective of my street, it deals with a topic that is an object of attention both regarding my district in particular and the public policies in general regarding homelessness, migrations, extreme poverty, and waste management.

The context of my investigation matters as it helps explain many of the observations I make. As I mentioned before, my perspective is situated as I mostly look at my street where three types of homeless settlements could be observed during the first confinement: people with tents, people with bags, and people who built a small cabin a few steps from each other. Most of these people in the street (except a few homeless with bags) had not been seen there, along this side of the aerial metro line a few meters down the Saint-Jacques metro station.

It should be mentioned that the district has a long tradition of shelter for the poor, the ill, and the homeless since the Middle Ages. Many hospices and hospitals settled in the vicinity during the classic age and the Revolution. The quarry and entrance door to Paris was bastioned during the 1830, 1848, and 1870 revolutions before they were radically transformed after Haussman’s rebuilding of Paris along with trains and metro lines. All the ‘Carrefour Denfert’, a large slum partly managed

by religious orders charity and informal traffic, led to a boulevard. The rue Daguerre and the faubourg Saint-Jacques still concentrated popular activities, craftsmen, markets, and small businesses.

The close observation of the homeless in Parisian districts such as mine (Rullac 2005) or other wealthy neighbourhoods (Declerck 2001; Gaboriau 1993) has been documented for a long time but some of the conditions have changed, for instance Fillon, Hemery and Lannerée (2007) observed the Quai d’Austerlitz when homeless stayed there, before large constructions took place and migrant camps settled. This helped me perceive how the situation had transformed.

Since that time, people in the street attracted more attention in relation to the broad concept of ‘homelessness’, shaped especially in relation to migrants’ camps and new laws were passed to provide for the homeless as visible in the table below (Table 3).

Julien Damon characterizes the homeless in reference to dramatic life events that cause people’s trajectory to end up in the street as visible in the table below (Table 4).

Before 2018, programs against exclusion (1998; 2005; 2013) provided a non-targeted financial support (the RMI, minimal revenue for insertion), but it appeared many people did not have such benefits.

Most people in such programs may also be working. Some people in the street have a different status. The specific case of the Roma people (Eloy 2020; Legros 2013), who do not want to be sheltered, contrasts with the two other categories, who may not have a living related to the street. In a long tradition, they may carry used items such as metal pieces or clothes to sell them on authorized markets such as the ‘Carré des Biffins’ (Ragmen Square), a market located under the bridge of Porte Montmartre (Paris XVIII^e), near the Saint-Ouen fleamarket (Paris door from the 18th district). ‘Biffins’ is an old Parisian slang word describing ragmen, junkmen, all the old jobs involved in the picking industry (Legros 2013). Such activities are under more control than before as dealing with waste and second-hand goods is now a large-scale industrial activity.

During the pandemic, the demand for food help increased by 10%, and the State contributed an extra 144 million euros as documented by the ANSES (National Agency for Sanitary Security) and INSEE (National Institute for Statistics) (Buresi & Cornuet 2020).

The following table (Table 5) refers to recent reports about homelessness, food banks, and the new situation caused by the pandemic for the homeless and the poor.

The homeless are people who live in the streets. It is no longer an illegal choice since 1992.	(Loi Garot 2016; loi PACTE 2019)
The increasing number of migrants in the streets during the 2015–2016 seasons caused the city of Paris and State institutions to battle over responsibility and funding to deal with the issue of large camps developing in Paris.	In France, food banks became part of the National Strategy to Fight Poverty only in 2018. That year, 335,000 tons of food was distributed by 220,000 volunteers. The State budget for this new program was 1.5 billion euros, mostly tax credits to food banks and NGOs. Private funding accounted for twice that amount.
A report by the Abbé Pierre Foundation published on October 6, 2020, announces that the homeless are 300,000 so, twice as many as in 2012, and twice as much as in 2001. At the same time, a report from the APUR (Atelier parisien d’urbanisme) identified 3601 people in the streets on January 31, 2020, a decline from 3641 year on year with 24,900 people in shelters.	
Is homeless ‘anyone who has no shelter from the weather (rain, snow) and sleeps outdoors (in the street, in a public garden) or in a place not meant for habitat (cave, stairwell, building site, parking lot, mall, cave, tent, metro, station...)? The definition adds: ‘anyone who has spent the night before in a place not meant for habitat including overnight stops offering warmth and coffee for a few hours only or through housing services (hostel or dormitory, hotel room exceptionally open).’ (French National Office of Statistics https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/definition/c1256)	‘Food security is defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life and includes at a minimum: a) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and b) the assured ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, and other coping strategies). Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain. Hunger...[is] the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food’ (Radimer 2002: 861).

Table 3 Definitions of homelessness and waste in legal terms.

GENERATING FACT DURATION OF SITUATION	SOCIAL FORFEITURE	REASONABLE DECISION	MIGRATIONS
Temporary/accident	Life accidents	Run away	Exceptional travel
Chronic/recurrent	Repeated problems	Multiple run-aways	Pendular migrations
Permanent/continuous	Long-term homelessness	Chosen errand (zoning, punks with dogs)	Asylum seekers Undocumented migrants

Table 4 Homeless typology (from Damon 2020: 34).

HOME, FOOD, AND THE PANDEMIC	FOOD	HOMELESSNESS	COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RELATION TO FOOD AND HOMELESSNESS	
<p>Public reports during the last 6 years</p>	<p>https://agriculture.gouv.fr/lutte-contre-le-gaspillage-alimentaire-les-lois-francaises Loi Garot: Loi n° 2016-138 du 11 février 2016 relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire. https://agriculture.gouv.fr/telecharger/125530?token=040ab1de3f7acca603edb61533b1ebeb96f86abca2940ef7cfaebfb4624e4d7 https://www.restosducoeur.org/faire-un-don-en-nature/ ADEME (2016), Agence de l'environnement et de la maîtrise de l'énergie, <i>Le MAG</i>, 96, juin 2016 Secours Catholique, <i>Etat de la pauvreté en France</i>, https://www.scinternet.org/sites/default/files/publications/rs21.pdf</p>	<p>Inspection générale des affaires sociales (IGAS) 2015, sur le logement, https://www.igas.gouv.fr/spip.php?article508 Inspection générale des affaires sociales, <i>Rapport IGAS (2019), la lutte contre la précarité alimentaire</i>, https://www.igas.gouv.fr/JMIG/pdf/2019-069R-P.pdf Inspection générale des affaires sociales, <i>Rapport IGAS (2021), Évaluation de la contractualisation entre l'Etat et les collectivités territoriales dans le cadre de la stratégie nationale de lutte contre la pauvreté</i>, https://www.igas.gouv.fr/JMIG/pdf/2021-003r_-_def_.pdf Académie nationale de médecine : <i>Rapport « Précarité, pauvreté et santé »</i>, (2017), http://www.academie-medicine.fr/precarite-pauvrete-et-sante/ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, United Nations, Olivier de Schutter, 2021, https://undocs.org/A/76/177 Cour des Comptes, 2007, <i>Sans domicile fixe</i>, https://www.viepublique.fr/sites/default/files/rapport/pdf/074000208.pdf ONPES 2016, https://www.cnlc.gouv.fr/contribution-du-cnlc-au-suivi-du-1461 Médecins du Monde, INSEE 2019, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4238781 Cour des Comptes, <i>Rapport annuel 2017, Logement des sans-domicile fixes</i>, https://www.ccomptes.fr/fr/publications/le-rapport-public-annuel-2017 Haut Comité pour le Logement des Personnes Défavorisées, 2015, http://www.hclpd.gouv.fr/le-haut-comite-rend-public-son-18eme-rapport-a138.html Report ATD Quart Monde, <i>Secours catholique, Fondation Abbé Pierre on Access to Social Housing (2020)</i> https://www.atd-quartmonde.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-RAPPORT-ACCES-AU-LOGEMENT-SOCIAL.pdf</p>	<p>Fondation Abbé Pierre, <i>Rapport 2022 sur le mal-logement</i>, https://www.fondation-abbepierre.fr/actualites/27e-rapport-sur-le-mal-logement-en-france-2022 Fondation Abbé Pierre, <i>Rapport 2021 sur les sans-domicile fixe</i>, https://www.fondation-abbepierre.fr/actualites/pres-de-300-000-personnes-sans-domicile-en-france Défenseur des droits, avis au Sénat 2021 sur l'évolution et la lutte contre la précarisation et la paupérisation d'une partie des Français, https://juridique.defenseurdesdroits.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=20624 Conseil national des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale, CNLE 2021, <i>La pauvreté démultipliée</i>, https://www.cnlc.gouv.fr/JMIG/pdf/rapport_lutteexclusion_fm.pdf Direction de la recherche, des études, de l'évaluation et des statistiques, DREES 2020, <i>Les inégalités sociales face à l'épidémie de Covid-19 – État des lieux et perspectives</i>, https://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-10/DD62.pdf Secours populaire, Ipsos – septembre 2020, <i>QUEL IMPACT DE LA CRISE SANITAIRE SUR LA PRECARITE EN FRANCE ?</i> https://www.caf.fr/sites/default/files/cnaf/Documents/Dser/Sondages%202020/Soc%C3%A9%C3%A9%20IMPACT%20IMPACT%20DE%20LA%20CRISE%20SANITAIRE%20SUR%20LA%20PRECARITE%20EN%20FRANCE.pdf Observatoire des inégalités dans son <i>Rapport sur la pauvreté en France 2020-2021</i>, https://www.inegalites.fr/Le-Rapport-sur-la-pauvrete-en-France-2020-2021-1-1110182 Mission indépendante nationale sur l'évaluation de la gestion de la crise Covid-19 et sur l'anticipation des risques pandémiques – <i>Rapport final 2021</i>, https://www.vie-publique.fr/sites/default/files/rapport/pdf/279851.pdf</p>	<p>UNICEF, 2021, <i>Appel extraordinaire aux dons</i>, https://news.un.org/fr/story/2021/12/1110182 United Nations, 2021, https://gho.unocha.org/ Assemblée nationale, 2021, <i>rapport d'information sur le pacte sur la migration et l'asile</i>, https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/duel/15b4749_rapport-information# France Stratégie 2021, <i>rapport d'étape sur la pauvreté</i>, https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/sites/strategie.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/eval_pauvrete_au_temps_du_covid-19_-_oct2021_-_19.10.002_0.pdf OXFAM 2021, <i>Réunifier un monde déchiré par le coronavirus grâce à une économie équitable, durable et juste</i>, https://www.oxfamfrance.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/01/Rapport_Oxfam_Davos_inegalites_2021.pdf Secours Catholique, <i>rapport 2021 sur l'état de la pauvreté en France en 2020</i>, https://www.secours-catholique.org/sites/scinternet/files/publications/rs20-bd.pdf Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (pour la mairie de Paris), APUR, 2021, <i>impacts sociaux de la crise à Paris</i>, https://www.apur.org/sites/default/files/impacts_sociaux_crise_questionnaire.pdf?token=mdINk3Q3 Academy of Medicine (2020), http://www.academie-medicine.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Rapport-Limmigration-en-France-situation-sanitaire-et-sociale-vot%C3%A9-2020-02-25.pdf Migrant Right during Covid, OHCHR, <i>(La Covid-19 et les droits de l'Homme des migrants)</i>, Guide, April 7, 2020</p>

Table 5 Homelessness, food banks, and the pandemic situation.

All this information was both relevant and irrelevant during the Covid crisis, when the pandemic changed many of the rules structuring social care and society. The strangeness of the early confinement months was visible only from my window.

FROM A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE: NEAR DENFERT-ROCHEREAU

I observe a boulevard, boulevard Saint-Jacques, near the Saint-Jacques metro station (Boulevard Saint-Jacques, Paris, 14), where the tents were two in February 2020 and are now about eight in number with different inhabitants.

This is a specific place and so a strategic situation to observe the transformation of the streets of Paris. The fourteenth district of Paris is South of Paris, nearby the Quartier Latin, called the 'Paris green district' because of its many parks. The specific Saint-Jacques district used to be the barrier d'Enfer, Faubourg Saint-Jacques (on the road of the Saint-Jacques de Compostelle pilgrimage, a quarry, the entrance inside Paris on the margin (the fortifications), a specific place with a reputation, a boundary space, both a refuge for the poor and the outcast and a place where charitable institutions, hospitals, and prisons were built as well as a transportation hub between Denfert-Rochereau (metro and RER Station towards suburbs) and Paris Montparnasse Station (towards the West of France).

It is a 'left-wing' and 'green' district, one that supports the mayor's office, and it has been so for at least three decades. Accordingly, the area is officially active in all policies towards the homeless with many shelters and facilities. It was also active in organizing 'artistic free spaces' in large areas about to be restructured (for instance 'les Grands Voisins' in the space near Port Royal left after a large hospital, Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, was closed down another, hospital La Rochefoucauld, is used as a temporary shelter). However, the situation evolved rapidly during the past few months because many of these temporary shelters were closed for construction, new populations appeared in the streets and restrictions for sanitary purposes were imposed.

4. FINDINGS

I describe three periods of time when the life of people in the streets changed. The first period (March to June 2020) corresponds to the confinement caused by the Covid-19 pandemic spread. The second period (July 2020 to January 2021) sees shifts of confinement-deconfinement periods with a 'new normal' official approach. The last period (February 2021 to April 2023) corresponds to a new start with a mix of events creating competing new priorities. I begin with the messiness of everyday life seen from my street: scenes borrowed from my diary. I then provide a sample of media discourses dealing with the issue of people in the street and waste

with three key dimensions: who they are, needs and means, and toxicity. The last part focuses on what pictures (Pictures 1 to 17) tell us of the situation.

4.1. PERIOD 1: 'THE CONFINEMENT'

In this period and in each of the three periods, I chose three different perspectives: that of what I see in my street, that of what the media say, finally what pictures from both my camera and online websites show us.

4.1.1. What I See from My Street

2020 – March to June. I would call this period 'the freeze of the confinement'. Social activities seemed all suspended, few moves could be observed in the street.

The streets are full of herbs and plants I did not see before, last day I saw a jay from the window. But now I pay more attention to the growing number of tents. The people who live there tend to drink in group and they argue at night. It is not getting better. More articles talk about the problems of getting drugs for addicts, the increasing prices, and the increasing problems. I leave near Saint-Anne hospital and the jail, La Santé. Next door is a test structure where people go to get tested for Covid-19. It seems all very quiet and yet more and more I imagine the dramas around, what is hidden behind this fear. A man with bags came there to sleep at night. He vanished at dawn. It felt as if I were the only one to see him. A few days later, I mention calling the special number on the Paris city office website to deal with homelessness. The first time, a volunteer tells me I should respect the homeless' freedom if they chose to live in the street. Another volunteer had another position, mentioning her decades of experience, she told me to be wary as once settled, homeless would be impossible to move. Finally, I ventured a third call after several talks with neighbours and the concierge. As the homeless had been drinking, yelling, and defecating in public and as the waste accumulated around their tents, I could feel angst and tension among the people I talked to in the building. Some worried about their children looking at the men, others making a difference between the homeless (with bags), the newcomers (with tents), and Roma families that should have involved removing the disturbing newcomers, someone even alluded to setting the tents on fire. Others still felt all the people in the street needed help. One person had, like me, observed a homeless being chased away from the local deli where he used to beg at the express demand of worried clients. We both had been shocked by this scene. My diary mentions the allusion to the dismantlement of the Austerlitz camps and the lack of available space and services due to the 'state of sanitary urgency'. Associations and NGOs still had to officially react to the crisis. The person also mentioned the State's responsibility, and the usefulness of lodging a complaint as a Parisian so that the city of Paris could advocate for more public means. While

I was lost in the institutional logic of who took charge of what, I recognized some familiar arguments about institutional misalignments. In 2018, I followed the story of a group of migrants who had occupied the campus of my university in Reims. Different authorities failed to take charge as they were kept out in the woods. Later, a cabin appeared (replacing a tent) like in those woods build as a form of professional street construction sheltering Rom families. They added plastic flowers at the window and a doormat so that it would look like a little house in a children book. I wondered at the different ways people organized to live in the street for months, all a few steps away from each other seemingly not crossing paths. At the time, I remember disobeying the confinement rules once, to go down the metro station at the corner of the street, where I saw a few people staying on the empty quays, possibly waiting for the 7 o'clock food distribution by the Resto du Coeur a few steps away. All encounters caused anxiety on both sides except for the homeless in the tents in front of my house who acted like they did not care, convening small parties at their plastic table, a 'feast during the plague' that seemed sometimes borrowed from Bocaccio and sometimes from DIY Punk in a Haussmanian avenue.

4.1.2. What the Media Say

The press shows different aspects of the situation in the street when I look for information. First, they mention the distress of people living in the street and they detail who they are. They also mention available resources and they insist on the toxicity and risk of people who are exposed to the pandemic because they have no home of their own.

The Living Dead

Journalists' reports echo most people's shock and fear and show the people living in the streets as ghosts, shadows, living dead: Photographer Peter Turnley, who took pictures from New York to Paris during the Covid-19 pandemic looks back at his work, a visual diary witnessing the period. He explains his initial shock and his drive to produce a work that was very present in the media: He describes the metro (in New York) when he went down to take pictures in a similar way to what I saw in Paris: 'It was a human tomb where poor people, forgotten homeless loomed. I have never seen looks so scared, scared of each other' (*Le Télégramme* October 2, 2020).

The written press also reminds its readership of structural problems of extreme poverty that explain why so many people are bereft of all resource during the confinement. They insist on the case of migrants who often stay in camps in specific areas of Paris:

Since 2008, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people receiving minimum social benefits. The combination of globalization and technological change is profoundly altering

employment, leaving people on the side lines (...) emergency accommodation (including hotels) is always saturated, Covid-19 or not. Moreover, the figures of Secours Catholique show that 45% of the people who call on the association are foreigners. This proportion was less than 20% twenty years ago. This phenomenon is therefore not directly linked to the current crisis. On this delicate subject, Julien Damon reminds us that undocumented migrants must be regularized or sent back to their country, but obviously not left in this zone of uncertainty and lawlessness that is unbearable for everyone (*L'Express* 20 November 2020).

The camps in Paris are well-identified in the media, they emerged around 2013 and are associated with migrants (refugees and other populations). The media also identify other people remaining in the streets. The homeless tend to fight to keep their spot despite difficult weather conditions and hardships:

The cold decides. But people's indifference is the most tiring of all (...) after denouncing anti-homeless street installations in Paris, Chris became a spokesperson. But the street is not least cruel to him. On the night we meet, he fights for a place on the sidewalk. 'Codes must be respected'. An urban jungle law that forces him to keep, in his back, together with soap and toothbrush, a switchblade (*Paris-Match* February 2, 2018).

The same situation is true of Roma families surviving in the streets, observed by a neighbour for *Libération* as they come and go from slums to street cabins, especially women:

The narrow passages near Bastille on the La Roquette-Keller-Voltaire boulevards are now covered with small cabins. Most of them tend to be ousted because residents and shop keepers allied complains. Yet is twenty years of Rom families' resistance to remain. Their community created protean networks. They adapt by appearing and reappearing depending on circumstances and seasons, with solidarities and provision circuits. Women are in the frontline of this 'dirty job' by begging during hours near delis, bakeries and distributors. These are vital points acting as 'concessions' for small caids. 7000 Roma families live in 124 slums in the Region but there are no stats for Paris, they maybe 500, 700, 1000, 2000, more (April 7, 2020).

For the three groups of people, migrants, homeless and Roma families, some resources disappeared during the confinement especially the ones coming from small jobs

and others from local associations. During that period of time, the people in the streets seem to suffer less from the cold, it was springtime, than from hunger and the lack of care and social services, as many structures had closed.

Needs and Means: Constant Adjustments Based on Countdowns

During the confinement period, many social services are disorganised, leaving more people out of reach, as they have no permanent source of revenue. During this period, however, the headcount is still ongoing and the media echo it by balancing needs and means.

One month after the beginning of the confinement, a group of professionals issued a call to arms to prompt action in a period of confinement: '(...) how do the 250 000 homeless (according to the foundation Abbé Pierre) react to these announcements? Where are the information points? Where can they ask for housing (hotel room or other)? What is the planning? How many extra places are open to this day?' (*Ouest France* March 26, 2020). It soon appeared many of these options were missing and others were scarce.

In the 14th district of Paris as elsewhere in Paris, many structures were closed as they struggled to respected sanitary measures (distancing) and deal with absent staff:

The problem is that housing centres are more and more numerous to refuse migrants with social workers massively enacting their right of retreat, deplores Didier Leschi, head of the French office of immigration and integration in *Le Parisien* (*Le Figaro* March 21, 2020).

More specifically, at the time, in the 14th district, large open shelters such as the official squat 'les Grands Voisins' had just closed their doors:

The media mention a documentary about 'Les Grands Voisins', after five years of existence, it closed: 'In 2015, after the closure of the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul hospital, the AP-HP (central hospital organization) and the city hall decided to create a solidarity place on a temporary basis. Emergency housing and social and solidarity grassroots associations settled there. For two years, the utopian city evolved during the camera' (*SB* March 25, 2020).

People became more keenly aware of the distress before their eyes.

The mobilization for the homeless was unprecedented at the height of the Covid-19 epidemic. The government opened 21,000

emergency accommodation places, in addition to the 157,000 available in France, notably through the mobilization of hotel rooms deserted by tourists. It also left open the 14,000 places usually available only in winter. And it has twice extended the winter truce, which was supposed to end on March 31, in order to avoid evictions, first until May 31 and then until July 10. (...) The general delegate of the Foundation Abbé Pierre once again insists on the need to promote access to low-cost housing for the poorest people – in particular by increasing the APL, to intensify the construction of very social housing, or to give more means to supported housing for places in boarding houses or young workers' hostels. In short, the most disadvantaged must not be excluded from the State's recovery plan (*Les Echos* July 2, 2020).

Some housing solutions are found in hotels as tourists are not coming to Paris:

However, the use of hotel rooms is only one solution among others to help the homeless, notes the minister. Thanks to the extension of the winter truce – beyond March 31 – decided last week by the executive, the 14,000 additional emergency accommodation places released for the winter will remain open. This extension will also prevent new people from finding themselves on the street after a rental eviction (*Les Echos* March 19, 2020).

More than 10,800 additional hotel spaces have now been mobilized for the homeless during the coronavirus outbreak and 95 specialized housing sites dedicated to homeless people sick with Covid-19 have been opened, according to a new report released this Saturday, April 25, by the Housing Department (*Le Huffington Post* April 20, 2020).

More means are devoted to more people in the streets in hotels as sanitary rules of distancing add some constraints. The danger related to unprotected people and to potentially contagious materials in waste cause a collective fear.

Toxic and Taboo: What Is Made Visible and Invisible?

Although during this period, many people volunteered to help the homeless, the migrants, and the people who did not have enough to eat, the danger of being contaminated remained and the media insisted on the spread of the disease in shelters. For the homeless, gaining more visibility may also cause fear due to the spread of the pandemic and the homeless' vulnerability:

Two fifths of homeless people in Paris have been infected with coronavirus, researchers have found. Researchers said the disease was ‘hitting the disadvantaged hard’ after they found up to 40 per cent of 818 people in the study had caught Covid-19. They were polled at 14 Médecins Sans Frontières centres – two food distribution sites, two migrant worker hostels and 10 emergency shelters – in Paris between June 23 and July 2 (AFP Oct 13, 2020).

A great deal of so-far invisible workers, now called ‘frontline workers’ also made it possible to deal with people’s basic needs and waste.

Some people also take care of food distribution:

Paris (75), April 16, 2020. Every evening, the volunteers of the civil security go to meet the homeless ‘confined’ outside and distribute 4,000 meals per day in the capital (Le Parisien April 25, 2020).

Waste collectors are also still at work, and they benefit from an important media coverage that contrasts with the invisible nature of what may be considered as ‘dirty jobs’:

In the front line, they continue their activity at all costs despite fear and, often, the lack of sufficient means of protection. These who are often precarious professionals benefit from a sudden visibility that gives the street a flavour of class struggle (Le Monde April 24, 2020).

Among them, there are many who are called the ‘invisible’, these often-precarious workers who keep Paris alive despite the crisis and the immense fatigue caused by their activity ‘under tension’. Those who are known to be among the most exposed to disease (Le Monde April 24, 2020).

Like his colleague, Stéphane Arrachart, a station agent on line 8, notes that most people in the metro are precarious. ‘You don’t see the lawyers or the great philosophers. The employees of cleaning companies are always at work. The young girls who work in the food industry are also at work. They have to be transported, it’s the least we can do’ (Le Monde April 24, 2020).

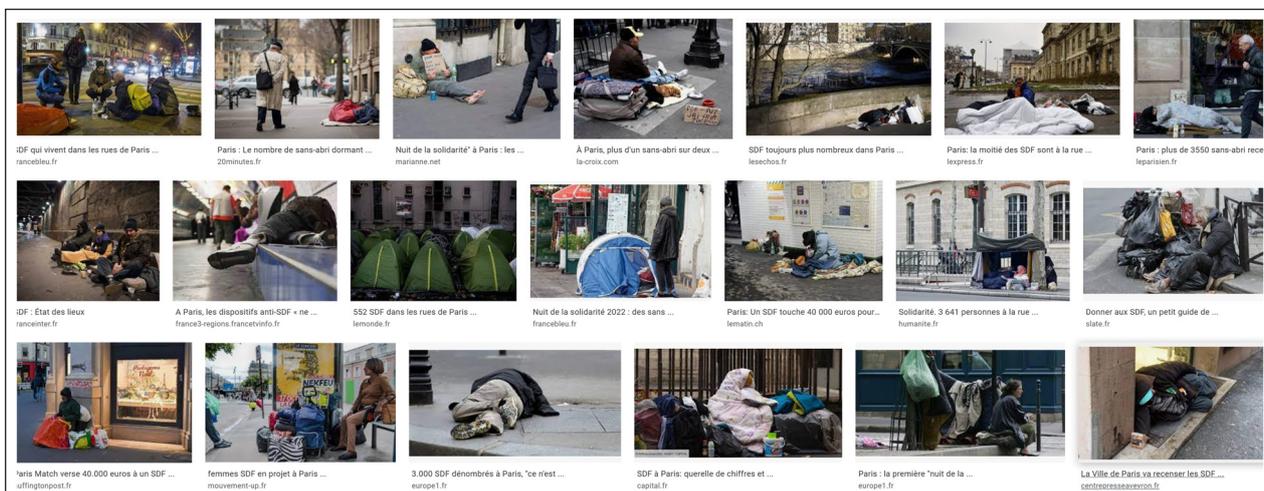
That picture of workers in the metro sharply contrasts with the initial image of empty wagons and stations with only abandoned homeless. Despite the contagion, for both the homeless and the ‘frontline workers’, life was discreetly going on.

The fact that people living in the street are more exposed and more vulnerable shows how they may be ‘out of place’ and therefore treated as ‘wasted lives’, unworthy of protection. However, looking at their daily activities and the timely help they could get from their neighbours, the situation was more contrasted. It was also true, looking back, that the streets were quieter and less crowded than usual. That made it easier to maintain, although less services for eating and cleaning were available.

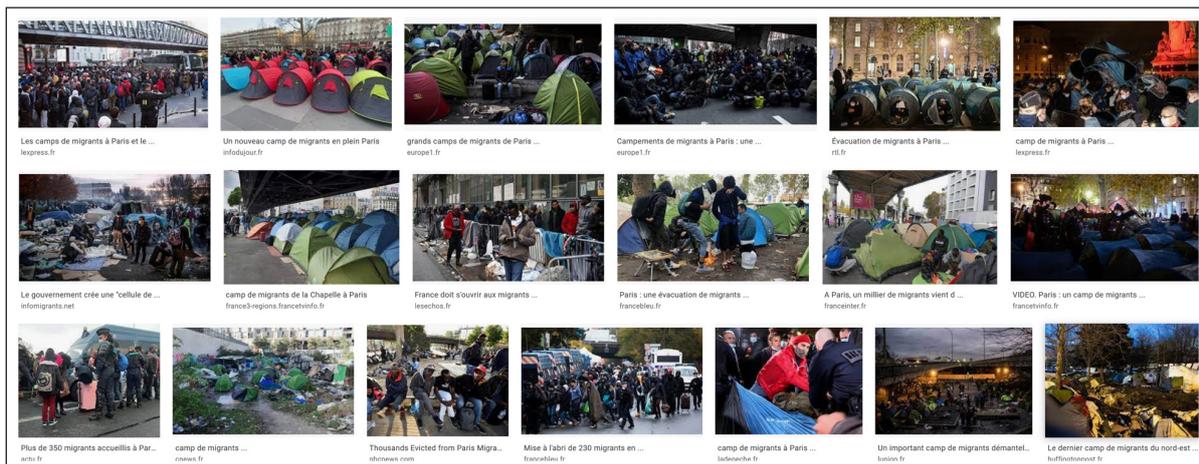
4.1.3. What the Pictures Show and What I See

Lifestyles of people living in the streets are somehow different, especially for those who are only in the street from time to time. Consistent with the official categories of homeless and their counting, Google pictures suggest three different groups with distinct types of habitats remain in the streets: the homeless, the migrants, and the Roma. Whereas the first group is often associated with people in the street trying to help them, the two other groups are isolated.

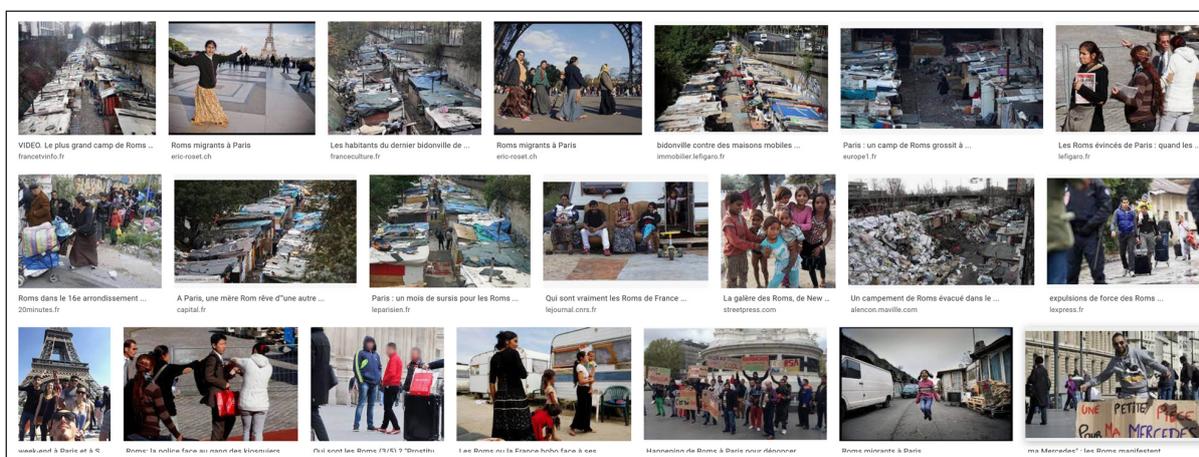
My pictures contrast with the most popular views of the three groups on Google images in that it is impossible to identify three groups although three distinct types of housing are visible in the five streets around my place.



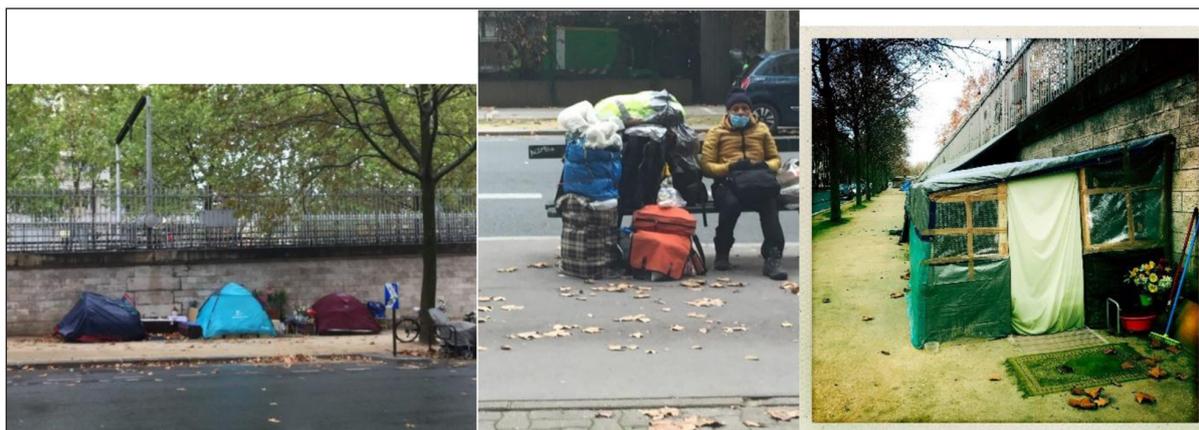
Picture 1 Most popular views of ‘homeless Paris’ on Google (retrieved on April 5, 2022).



Picture 2 Most popular views on Google of keywords ‘migrants Paris’ (retrieved on April 5, 2022).



Picture 3 Most popular views on Google of keywords ‘Roma Paris’ (retrieved on April 5, 2022).



Picture 4 Pictures of people in my street from my window.

Above, the three regular archetypal types of housing present in the streets: tents, bags, and cabins. From what I could observe, I find no evidence that the homeless carries bags, migrants live in tents, and Roma in cabins with their children. Underneath, three pictures of homelessness that could be prohibited during the pandemic for hygienic reasons, but they were not as I could see them every day unchanged.

The man in the second picture always reads at night; I gave him some books by Emile Zola as he likes that author.

4.2. PERIOD 2: ‘THE NEW NORMAL’ ERA

June (or rather Fall) 2020 to January 2021. I call this period ‘the New Normal Era’, an expression widely used at the time, although it was difficult to define.



Picture 5 Pictures of people in the streets near my home.

4.2.1. What I See from My Street

The second period, the new normal, begins with the reappearance of social services and NGOs, it comes with an effort to count down the homeless, the resources available as new populations in need have also been identified. Many services are back in organizing social services and cleaning the city, so it recovers its past appearance, although during this year or so few tourists are back. In my pictures, I can see I go around in larger circles, and I stop right before the curfew when many homeless get out. The walls become covered with posters, some to advertise products, some to denounce feminicides (made at dusk), others to push candidates in the future presidential election. In some of my pictures, I am struck how for instance feminist activists paste diatribes right behind the tents, transforming the homeless setting as if they were invisible to them, as they defend another cause. Possibly because the tents are still located in places where people walk, because the lines for showers or for food cross with people out of the metro station at peak hours, I am struck by passers-by ability to avoid the homeless whereas social workers (easy to identify with their attire and the plastic bags, water bottles and food, they carry) often circle around and become very visible in my pictures. A new form of ordering takes place. I still recognize the homeless 'with bags' on my pictures but the tents inhabitants become more and more difficult to identify as they seem to arrive after the curfew and slip away at dusk. In the beginning of this period, after reading in the news, I decide to ask the man I see more often in the tent before my window if he would like me to visit the local district Defensor of right as citizens are now able to make appointments. When I see social workers talking to him in the street, I climb down the stairs and run to talk to them. While the man is still favourable to my idea, the three social workers first tell me to get away. They mollify when they understand I am not one of those neighbours attacking the homeless. They ask me to support their cause as they need it. I say I want to help the man as he is my neighbour and I do not understand the system of rounds with bags of food as a food distribution is organized a

few steps away every night and as they seem, as social workers, to be helping maintain people in the streets. They tell me I do not understand. When I visit the Defensor of right, I discover this lady is a lawyer, she promises she will call me back after seeing if I can lodge a complaint about human rights on behalf of someone else, but she never calls me back. Of all the candidates in the elections I contact to see what they plan on doing, only one (from the Republican party, answers, to tell me she is aware many homeless remain in our district and it is very dirty. She writes several times to tell me she has asked officially why this is the case, to no avail. I understand this party finds the municipality too lenient on homelessness and waste and would use more energetic methods to 'clean the streets'). I wonder about the case of Uber workers who carry meals from bicycles they borrow at the Denfert metro station: do they have a place to stay or are they living in the tents and the camps in the North of Paris? Sometimes, I see young men scavenging, they look very much like the Uber drivers. I also wonder about the small cabin with plastic flowers in the window and a door mat where Roma families seem to live (but they are very discreet). Sometimes I come across teenage girls who fetch surplus clothing from the containers nearby my house and throw away what they do not like in the dust bin. Older Roma, mostly women, beg near the metro stations and the delis. I can see that the homeless all follow complex circuits to get by in the large city. As competition for resources intensifies, visibility and invisibility strategies tend to challenge official categories used to deal with different groups specially to channel and attribute goods and to reorder 'matter out of place'.

4.2.2. What the Media Say

The Resurrected from the Dead: When the Homeless Reappear

A symbolic newspaper article mentions the life of a homeless whom the neighbourhood thought dead. His reappearance from the dead is presented as 'a beautiful story' that displays a post-confinement solidarity and care:

In the end of November, Marwan's absence from his usual place on the sidewalk and his things vanished caused resignation in the neighbourhood and a dark rumour among hundreds of others, wanted that his precarious condition killed him. He spent most of autumn sick with a swollen body (*Libération* January 15, 2021).

The journalist insists this person is 'maintaining' in the street thanks to the help of many social instances called 'invisible ties', from neighbours to social workers:

His trajectory is tied to people who maintain him, and others in the district. The neighbour bringing down a blanket and asks how he is. Religious people, whatever the God. The shopkeeper who gives, without counting or talking too much. The everyday men with Facebook accounts asking what they can bring. Volunteers and professionals in round-ups day and night without judgment (*ibidem*).

The author of the same article also shows that many gifts are redundant yet difficult to refuse, a less 'visible' dimension of all the 'invisible ties' maybe: 'Some of the homeless, materially better as they are more anchored in their setting, hoard so many objects and goods they give them to social workers during their rounds for others with the idea that it would help them. A social worker argues five rounds-up, each implying meal, sounds like emotional chore' (*ibidem*).

This paper shows the collective role of neighbours and social workers from different associations in taking care of some of the people in the street. It also shows the different relations between people in the street and others, some being hyper visible when others remain in the shadow.

The singular case of some familiar figures in the streets of Paris should not hide, however, the increasing problems of extreme poverty that drive people to the streets with no relations that could help them. As it appears, since the confinement, more people are in need so public authorities, associations and NGOs ask for more means to avoid pitting people in need against each other. Countdowns remain an important method to attribute resources.

The situation of need creates tensions as it forces social workers to make choices between beneficiaries and so in parallel, many homeless prefer to survive with less:

Agents from the Recueil social, sent by the 'extreme exclusion mission' of the Paris region railroad are the only contact of the day (...) the heart of the problem is they must pick who will be able to sleep in a shelter (...) with too few

solutions. This year is special (...) new profiles, young people kicked out by their family, very old people out of the hospital and entire families appeared (*Vu* December 21, 2021).

In other places, like Place de la République, 'Thomas says: "I look like a skeleton." To eat, he rummages through dumpsters and begs. He drinks beer, smokes cigarette butts he picks on the floor, his face is thin and dusty. "It does me good to eat little, as I am healthy. I take care of my health"' (*Vu* December 21, 2021).

Services and goods are available but online platforms have become central. People are quite invisible if they have no functioning cell phone. This challenges the view that counting the needs and the resources to plan local supplies is an easy task:

Who are the homeless and why do some of them refuse housing solutions, although more exist since the pandemic? A survey by the federation of solidarity actors and the SAMU social (urgency health services, 115) published on May 14 reveals the invisibles' abodes (...) 71 mobile teams collected data during social-round ups, collecting 755 testimonies met in the night of January 12 (...) non-recourse is a major and worrying phenomenon (...) (*Le Monde* May 14, 2021).

The 'new normal organization' consists in building and communicating a new picture of the needs and resources available. The focus is mostly on food although housing is also a concern.

Providing more food to a larger population because they relied on small jobs in the informal sector involves informing the public of what they can do to help, as part of the public and private effort to come to terms with poverty in large cities like Paris; however, not all points of view converge. Some insist on the increasing role of food banks:

All mention the spectacular increase in beneficiaries, a 45% increase in the Secours Populaire, +30% in the Resto du Coeur, many newcomers pressing since March 2020. According to a survey made by foodbanks on beneficiaries, 12% of them come because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Resto du Coeur say they must be 15% (*Le Monde* May 4, 2021).

Other research focusing on work sociology insist on new inequalities in the population and specific fears caused by isolation:

The weeks of total or partial confinement made inequalities more visible and made the gap deeper between the French because of atypical jobs (...)

with two new consequences due to Covid. One is a fear of getting ill, for many elderly people, with the feeling of being isolated, abandoned. The other is social, as it is hard to reach public services via online platforms (*Le Monde* May 4, 2021).

The argument would be to stop denying the homeless a proper home for good so that poverty can be treated equally for all as many of the poor do have a home yet suffer from the many other issues people living in the street must deal with.

Finally, some keep insisting on the fate of the homeless in a period when many more housing solutions are offered in hotels, left empty by travellers and tourists:

A report by Secours Catholique, Utopia 56 and Action contre la faim, published in October, estimates that when camps in Paris and around are dismantled, 45% of the people get housing only for a month (...) Since 2015, 65 camp evacuation took place (*Le Monde* November 18, 2020).

Urgency solutions such as shelters, hotels, and camps are temporary, and they are the favoured urban management system in the new normal period. That explains why so many people become rough sleepers everywhere in Paris. With the return of everyday activities, other problems appear in the streets that Parisians may find more important than poor people's whereabouts. The problem of dirt may also be an indirect way to complaint about the nuisances caused by so many rough sleepers.

Balancing Needs and Means: Counting and Battling during the Elections

In the 'new normal' era, old debates emerge anew. One of the key debates is that of the need to clean the streets as Paris has a bad reputation for hygiene. However, such perspective also tends to downplay the presence of people living in the streets while focusing on the problem of waste and how it may deter tourists from coming back to Paris, a concern at the time.

Many journals have been denouncing the state of the streets of Paris, in relation to what they describe as the laxist and ideological mismanagement of the city hall. A powerful collective using social media like Twitter has been formed called 'saccage Paris' (wreck Paris) and many articles are published on this issue by the conservative press such as *Le Figaro*, *Valeurs Actuelles*, *Aujourd'hui en France*, and *Le Parisien*. All the media, if only to understand the phenomenon, follows this trend that describes the state of the city street and mostly avoids the issue of homelessness and poverty.

It's an old refrain that we often hear, especially from the opposition: Paris is getting dirtier and dirtier. The account #SaccageParis, dedicated to

the publication of photos showing garbage on the sidewalks, ugly or damaged street furniture, would be an illustration of this (*Le Parisien* November 29, 2021).

The media report that some activists changed their priorities:

He who, in 1996, was at the Saint-Bernard church at the end of the street to support undocumented migrants, has now become one of the spearheads of #saccageparis, a movement that has been spreading on Twitter for the past year to denounce Anne Hidalgo's policies in all directions.

Uncollected garbage, construction sites that never end, traffic plans deemed inadequate, poorly maintained street furniture, buildings criticized for being too high, too wide, too new, too old... 2,709,000 tweets counted in ten months, 8,000 per day on average since August, in eighth position of the # (hashtag, hash word in French) most used in France in 2021 if we believe the calculations of Visibrain, a monitoring service on social networks. (*Le Monde* January 22, 2022).

The debate became heated during the election campaign for the city house, the presidential and the legislative elections in reference to one paper published before the confinement in the *Guardian*. Since that time, the French press kept quoting its terms:

Along the boulevard to the landmark Place de la République – looking shabby despite a £20 m facelift six years ago – the homeless dozed in doorways or on benches, sleeping bags pulled over their heads. The pavements were littered with abandoned electric scooters and bicycles and punctuated by dog mess and cigarette ends. A man walking west opened a new packet of cigarettes and threw the cellophane and silver paper on the ground. The city of light and of romance has become a dirty old town, or as locals have nicknamed it, *Paris poubelle* (dustbin Paris) (*The Guardian* September 22, 2019).

For instance, a journalist from *Le Monde* contrasted the large trend of opponents to the city house to its answers to criticisms:

Cleanliness is a problem... recurring for Paris. In 2019, the British daily *The Guardian* described the capital as 'the dirty man of Europe'. It seems that two years later, things have not changed; since March 21, the Twitter account @PanamePropre, whose author remains anonymous, likes to titillate

Anne Hidalgo, the socialist mayor of Paris, on this thorny subject – and on that of amenities – by publishing and relaying a series of pictures and videos, sometimes old, accompanied by the hashtag #saccageparis. (...) The battle taking place on social networks, the teams of the city hall reacted, Sunday evening, saying that ‘the City of Paris undergoes a campaign of denigration via #saccageparis’, adding that ‘like all cities in France, Paris is faced with incivilities and problems of regulation of public space’, noting that ‘some of the photos posted are old or taken before the passage of the teams of cleanliness’, which ‘are currently reduced[e]s by 10% due to the spread of coronavirus (contact cases or carrier agents), which can lead to delays in treatment’ (*Le Monde* April 5, 2022).

The City also created online content to counter the critiques and insist on urban rules:

The city of Paris answered by publishing an administrative ‘manifesto’ with rules designed to contribute to the ‘beauty of Paris’: ‘the manifesto’ did not escape the influence of the grievances that emerged from the ‘Saccage Paris’ movement. On the side of the city hall, we assume in any case that the tsunami of criticism, including from leading figures, has significantly contributed to accelerate the pace (*Valeurs Actuelles* June 22, 2023).

The debate shows another aspect of the issue that is seldom combined with the situation of people living in the streets: the dirtiness of the city is a problem for all inhabitants. The homeless are more exposed to these nuisances. They may also be associated with them as their cause or as people who are not repelled by dirt, therefore toxic. In their answers to the problem of homelessness and dirt in their streets, the city authorities often mention the many efforts and resources available as well as individual responsibilities and choices. These are conflicting dimensions that their oppositions never fail to point at in defence of the ‘City heritage’, a focus on monuments that also fails, in my view, to take into account collective life in the city and the role of the interstitial space between homes.

Toxic and Taboo: What Is Made Visible and Invisible

The reconstitution of migrants’ camps is presented as toxic as life conditions in such places are rough. Yet camps are a way to deal with ‘undesirable’, making them less visible in the streets. It seems their presence in the streets is now more of a problem than the reconstitution of camps that were deemed, in the previous period, a dangerous source of contagion.

During this period, the media constantly mentioned food banks and increased needs to encourage people to give to charity. The obsession with gathering and distributing food in such districts like the 14th district to provide for more people in need, for instance students, tends to hide the fate of some of the homeless, especially the migrants, as camps have been rebuilt North of Paris, in most precarious conditions as their members want to avoid being dislodged and flee public space:

One can see half-naked men hastily shampooing between two bushes to regain hygiene and dignity in a dirty slum. This large open camp in the open sky recalls us recurrent difficulties sheltering, mainly, asylum seekers. Five years ago, the camp was in Austerlitz, three years ago at La Chapelle. ‘This camp is the same only it is one hour away in a pandemic and national confinement.’ says one doctor from Médecins du Monde. (*Le Monde* November 4, 2020)

Camps are the solutions when no solution is available. “‘We are late providing stable housing for asylum seekers, so it limits the houses,” says Didier Leschi, head of the OFII (office for immigration and integration). Classic urgency housing is also full. So, camps reconstitute, inexorably’ (*Le Monde* November 4, 2020).

Whereas many efforts are now dedicated to cleaning the streets (especially near camps and tents where homeless stay) in public space, camps are avoided as toxic. ‘Wind gusts heave wind gusts, tents and waste. It is not so cold, but a light rain falls continuously as the earth transforms into mud and drives men to huddle under the tarpaulin or the aerial roadway above’ (*Le Monde* November 4, 2020)

Most local actors tend to demand support from the State, and they rely on counting the needs:

In a tribune published by *Le Monde*, 130 elected representatives of Ile-de-France ask for 20 000 more beds as urgency measures and a regional conference on hospitality with the prefect (*Le Monde* November 18, 2020).

On November 17, 3000 migrants were sheltered after the dismantlement of a camp in Saint-Denis. As a result, more and more camps in more and more precarious conditions. The tension is up in the last weeks after a camp was dismantled on November 17, about a third of the 3000 migrants were left out in the street (*Le Monde* December 26, 2020).

However, ‘75% of people sheltered had to leave it and were back in the street’ (ibidem) according to an NGO report (Secours Catholique, Utopia 56 and Action contre la Faim).

During the post-confinement period, one of the dominant claims in the media is to provide help to all groups, the new ones and the ones who are made invisible by counting them down. One of the dominant trends of this period is to make counts of both needs and resources as part of the 'new normal', with social services and NGOs back at work.

Some consider this a renewed form of injustice, making migrants invisible. Activists both resist the invisibilisation of some of the people in the street because they are migrants whereas other grassroots associations and activists prefer to shelter migrants out of sight to protect them from expulsions and attacks. These are two different strategies that tend to resist counting and identification on the part of public authorities.

Against the authorities who would want to hide migrants from passers-by, Yann Manzi and his association, Utopia 56, answer by settling ephemeral camps in the most symbolic places in Paris: place de la République (...). He wants to value the 'Utopia youth' coming from all France, aged 18 to 22, often out of work, with minimal income, who volunteer for migrants. A social project inside a humanitarian project (*Le Monde* April 2, 2021).

Their actions show the limits of policing, especially during when they dismantle in such highly visible places as Place de la République. Recurrent problems of legitimacy are reported in the media:

The Interior minister, Gerald Darmanin, had found some images shocking: migrants gazed, a disproportionate use of force, observers molested. Legal complaints on 'complicity to voluntary violence' were lodged against three prefects who conducted two controversial camp dismantling in the Paris suburbs (*Le Monde* May 7, 2021).

However, some activists tend to favour camps as they shelter migrants and are less visible than other types of housing arrangements.

Many activists and volunteers' plea are to prompt migrants' integration by letting them work and have a shelter whereas the argument against is that such signal might attract more migrants.

Yet in many cases, before radical legal changes in the migrant status are voted, a common interest of activists, urban planners, and decision-makers is to hide migrants away: 'Our goal is not to be excessively visible, Romain Prunier, a representative of United Migrants, an activist NGO, euphemizes (...). People in charge told us Paris wants to get rid of all camps before the 2024 Olympics' (*Le Monde* December 10, 2021).

Camps act as a form of resettlement even in a period when less migrants arrive.

4.2.3. What the Pictures Show

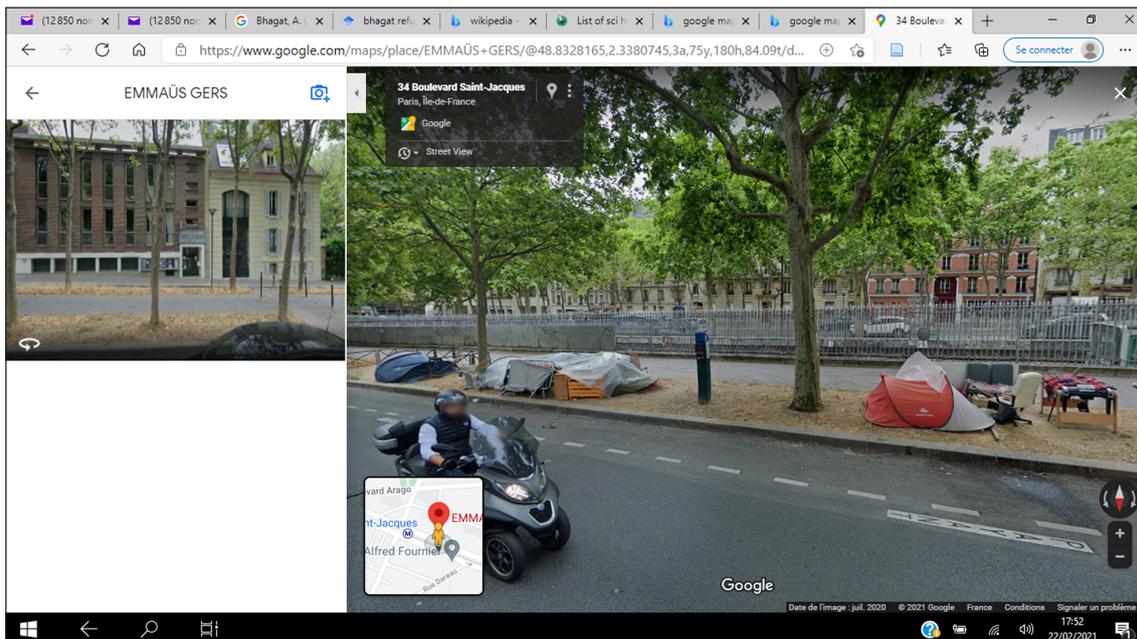
During the post-confinement period, a new cycle of movements started whereas all had been very quiet during the first three months of confinement. The atmosphere changed. The streets where people live, especially if they live outside, matter because of the amenities and the facilities nearby and also because of some nuisances. For instance, the boulevard Saint-Jacques is well situated nearby associations and various facilities but the traffic and the metro line cause disturbances.

My district and neighbourhood (between Boulevard Saint-Jacques, Denfert-Rochereau, and Montparnasse (source Google Maps, retrieved on February 22, 2021) shelter people who do not want to live in camps. Yet they remain in the street so that they become part of the landscape on Google street view, as visible above. Despite the programs presented by the City of Paris, the competition for resources is just as intense as in camps, only they may be closer to reach.

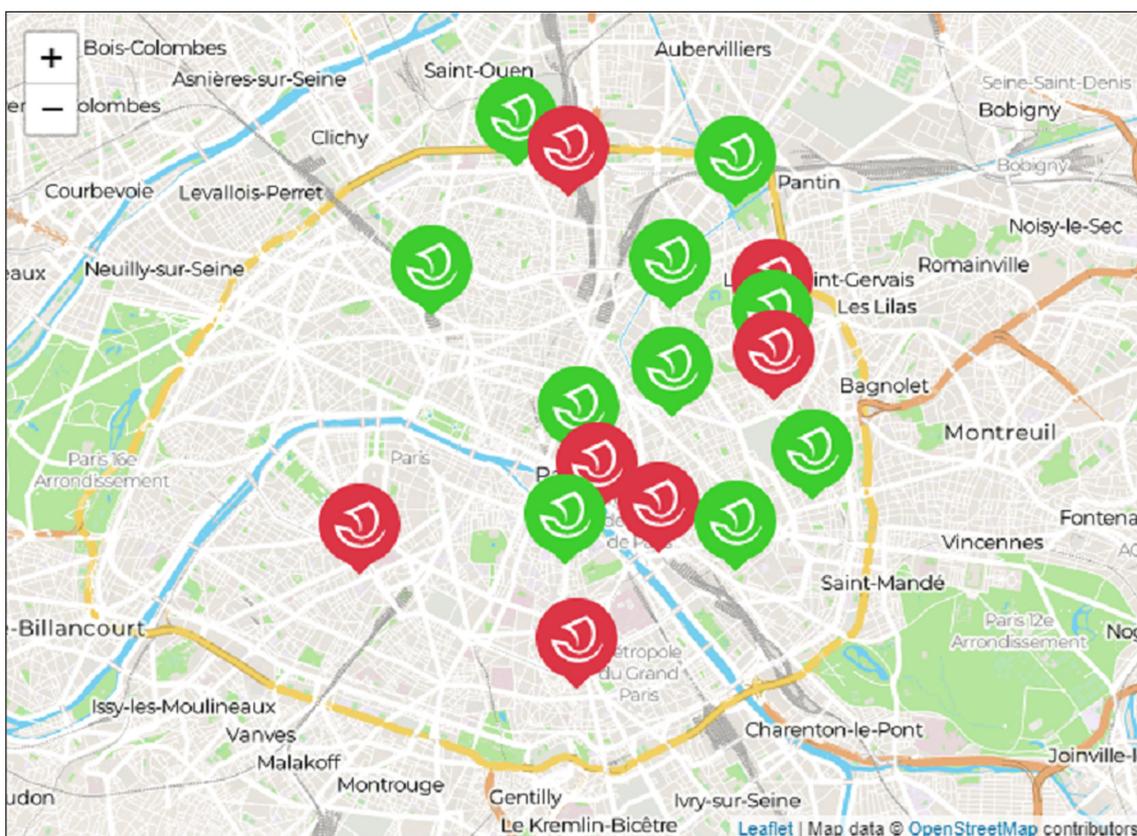
As visible in a guide for the homeless with a long list of suggested places to eat, stay, wash, and get the Internet, Paris 'Welcoming City' offers a whole range of semi-touristic services for the homeless. One needs to be well organized to attend the different centres and be at the right time in the right place. During the confinement, long lines would form avenue René Coty for the showers.



Picture 6 Maps of the neighbourhood and available space for people in the street.



Picture 7 Maps of the neighbourhood and available space for people in the street.

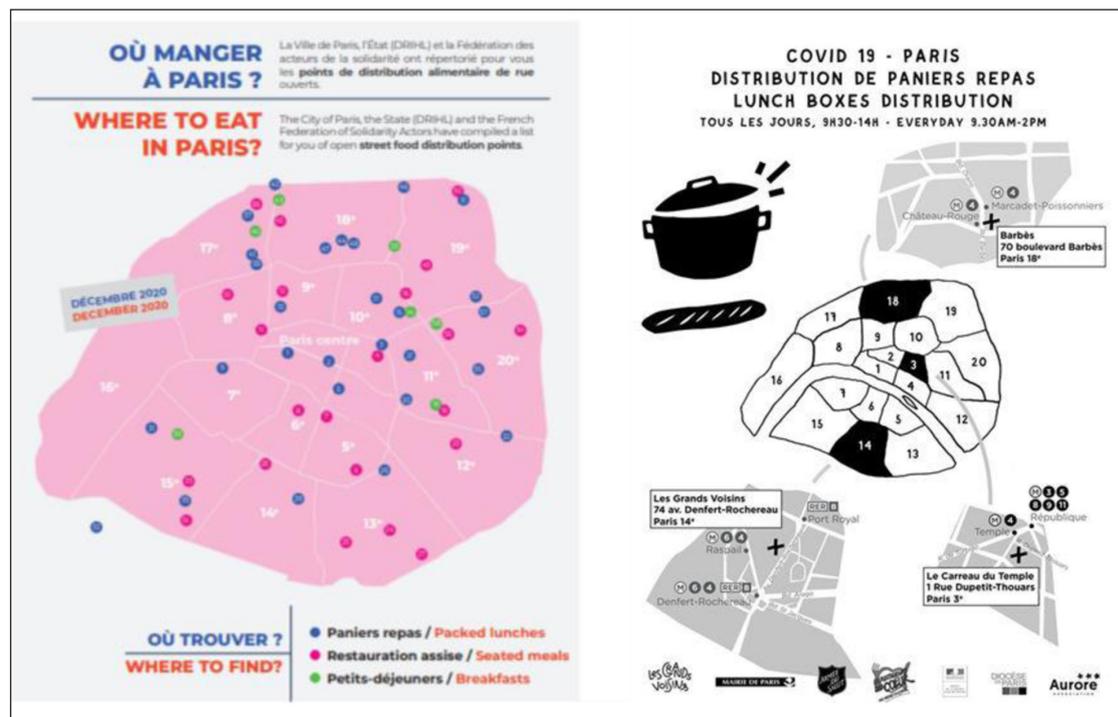


Picture 8 Shows showers and sanitation open to the homeless in Paris (<https://www.paris.fr/pages/les-bains-douches-municipaux-138> retrieved on February 22, 2021).

Free food services multiplied during the confinement and initiatives were numerous to supply the homeless with meals or bags of food. In the first confinement, people even offered home-cooked meals they would carry down from their home to the street.

My pictures show the streets of Paris are not a very pleasant place to be living in. However, the city of Paris

is officially inserted in a network of large European cities that have decided to deal with homelessness. This network communicates on its site: “Solidarity Cities brings together city representatives to share best practice in order to help increase cities’ capacity to welcome and integrate migrants and refugees” (<https://eurocities.eu/stories/welcoming-cities/> retrieved on March 29, 2022).



Picture 9 Maps of the neighbourhood and available space for people in the street (<https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2020/12/11/f20fcccceec6008e5469be43ea6c7fc6e4.pdf>).

For instance, Paris as a ‘welcoming city’ provides a full guide of its offer of a large range of services in different places. This is (possibly voluntarily) made to look like a travel guide. This also shows how, in the range of a few miles, the homeless need to go from one centre to another to find free, available services and I could observe long queues in the morning in front of a shelter offering showers (avenue René Coty) as all public baths in swimming pools were closed.

In this official non-judgmental approach, rough sleepers in the street are associated with a happy crowd of adventurous penniless tourists, astute students, and shrewd globetrotters. Roma families, when they ornate their cabins with plastic flowers and a door mat, seem to play with that image in return. Yet most of my neighbors do have a negative judgement on the fact that people live in the street down from their home. They wonder about the City Hall choice of non-intervention.

Yet, when I observed them and asked questions to both volunteers and the homeless, the interventions of social services correspond to a form of urgency in needs. They often come as both help and control as they regularly visit the tents and take notes. They bring supplies such as food bags and clean up the place. The teams leave after five minutes or so, after having taken notes in their car. After such visits, some changes may take place, for instance they provide shelter to some homeless or they dismantle a tent or a camp they find misplaced (or people inside are uncouth, disturbing public space quiet). Hygiene has become an increasing concern. Contrary to what is presented in the media, this is not the way people in the street get most of what they need; instead, they go

to different places where they can find specific resources. They must be well informed and well organized to get all that they need, and that is not limited to food.

I notice a discrepancy between the public discourse that all toxicity is under control, no person or object is left out, and the remaining spheres where the homeless remain exposed to danger during the pandemic. They seem to be left in a blind angle. More and more private charities working on urgent needs and exceptional measures offer temporary urgent support and compete on resources to provide basic needs in relation to human rights. More demands on the same services means the homeless need to find alternative solutions for housing and probably for food and clothing.

4.3. PERIOD 3: ‘THE PRE-OLYMPICS’ AGE

In the more recent period, from 2021 to 2023, refugees and tourists are back whereas new circumstances cause more competition for spatial resources. After the ‘new normal’ reconstruction period, more tensions seem to build up.

4.3.1. What I See from My Street

The last period, until now, November 2022, may be called ‘the times of the encampment’. I see signs that the situation is evolving towards the stabilization of the extended means to shelter and feed the poor. This can be seen as a good sign, as more means are available, or as a bad sign that urgency measures last longer with more and more people with no stable solution to count on, especially the migrant population. This group as well as the Rom population remain ‘out of place’ as institutions

are neither ready to let them stay in the streets nor determined to shelter them.

One day, the tents in front of my building disappeared, and the next day, other tents reappeared where they used to be for years, my neighbours tell me – that is, on the other side of the aerial metro line and under the bridge down to the station place d'Italie. At this period, I focus on reading the written press expecting major restructuring plans after the pandemic. Nothing really changes, as I understand. I go to work in Reims. I see many homeless camps and groups nearby the Gare de l'Est station (19th district) as it is very much in the media. I go look at the camps and the gardens the media says are occupied by crack addicts. All groups, in hotspots or camps, are under acute police surveillance.

In Paris, now I also recognize the same homeless (with bags and the same places to sleep), the Roma installation and migrants who are never the same, using tents. I can see their fortunes are different, because they seek different ways in the streets as we cross paths. As illustrated by the pictures taken on October and November 2022 boulevard Saint-Jacques and boulevard Raspail, in the 16th district (the wealthiest part of Paris) and near Gare de l'Est (North of Paris), past segregations are back with homeless and Roma families living in the streets and migrants being regrouped in large camps.

4.3.2. What the Media Say

The Unwanted Neighbours and the Increasing Waves of New Arrivals

The new area is full of conflicting solutions and priorities due to an increasing number of challenges in the same Paris area. People in need of housing concentrate in the area. 'The Ile-de-France region has 1.3 million poorly housed people, including 140,000 homeless people (...)' (20 minutes March 10, 2023). Most of the newcomers gather in the same region: 'The Paris region alone accounts for nearly half of all homelessness (...)' (Le Monde December 16, 2022).

This is why some argue in favour of permanent rehousing for people living in the street:

'The current government is repeating old mistakes by increasing subsidies for emergency accommodation, but the [lack of stability] is exhausting,' analyses Édouard Gardella, a sociologist at the CNRS who specializes in exclusion and social policy for the homeless. (...) 'The homeless are exactly like us, they don't necessarily want to tell all their problems to the first person they meet,' explains Éric Constantin of the Foundation Abbé Pierre. 'We need to keep people connected... [but] most people without decent housing are invisible and go to great lengths to hide their situation.' (...) 'Most people

stop and ask if we need anything. But with the presidential election and the Olympics [in Paris in 2024] coming up, we don't fit the image that Paris is looking for, so they try to get rid of us,' Bruno testifies (Courrier International March 15, 2022).

From a different perspective, some people also find the existing solutions expensive in the face of the new increase of people whose basic needs are not covered:

The numbers are alarming. While in 2015, 35,000 homeless people were accommodated in hotels in the Paris region, the daily number of overnight stays stood at over 53,000 last October. As revealed by *Le Parisien*, of the 130,000 places intended to accommodate people in need, nearly 40% are now hotel rooms due to the saturation of the social park and shelters. 'The demand for hotel nights reserved by the Paris Social SAMU is so high that it is forced to take up the places available. This situation therefore does not allow for the selection of places with satisfactory and suitable reception conditions, for example for the accommodation of families,' senators point out in the columns of *Le Parisien* (Valeurs Actuelles December 2, 2021)

On December 5, in the capital alone, 5,000 people did not get an emergency bed. Among them, 2,800 families, including 1,300 children. (...) Camille Joubert agrees: 'They become invisible on their own, so they cannot be taken care of by street patrols. The decrease in places allocated to the 115 is also at issue. This year we are facing a very particular situation,' says Vanessa Benoit, director general of the Samu social de Paris, which manages the emergency number in the capital. During the Covid, hotels offered many emergency accommodation places, as tourists had deserted. However, since the beginning of the year, these same establishments have been filling up with clients. Families are very affected because they were more easily sent to this type of structure. (Aujourd'hui en France December 17, 2022).

On August 22, 3331 families, including 658 children on the street, were unable to obtain emergency accommodation from the 115. This is nearly 86% more than on January 31, when 890 children were counted by representatives of a collective of solidarity associations (Le Nouvel Obs August 31, 2022).

The debate after the 'new normal' period with extra means is whether to maintain or to cancel the exceptional means provided during the period of transition. As hotels

go back to their initial vocation and tourists' demands increases, many temporary housing solutions disappear as they had doubled since March 2020 (*Ouest-France* December 22, 2021). For many, it is impossible to go back to the pre-Covid period as needs have exploded:

To suppress means when we witness an explosion of poverty cannot be understood says Pascal Brice, the president of the Federation of charitable associations. It is back to the 'thermometer management' abandoned during the first term of the President Macron (...) the 'Housing first' plan will never make for the cancelled housing solutions (*Le Monde* September 29, 2022).

For others, the extra means of the confinement were the right solution to homelessness:

There was a real decrease in homelessness during the sanitary crisis. This proves we can do it with the proper means,' pleads Maud Bigot, vice-president of the national federation of social Samus (urgency services). 'We must close down structures whereas 9400 people are on the waiting list only in the Rhône region. They fit in for social housing but there is none (ibidem).

Although the government decided not to cancel some of the extra means provided during the Covid crisis first two periods, the State effort was still more on urgent, temporary, extraordinary means than on more sustainable solutions such as more social housing. The extra means are always an occasion to communicate on the caring dimension of the Welfare State:

After considerable work at government and parliamentary level, we decided to reinscribe 40 million on the budget 2023 for emergency housing, thereby cancelling the announcement decrease from 200 000 places. In the current situation, our wish is not to let one single child in the street and maintain the level of care contrary to the 'thermometer management' of 2019 after the winter truce (*Le Monde* October 28, 2021)

Although the choice to maintain 'urgency solutions' is presented as a victory for associations and NGOs who demanded such extra means, it also points at the failure to provide stable solutions and steer people out of the street for good. In the case of students and Ukrainians, their good fortune is associated with new efforts to anticipate their exclusion by providing immediate shelter.

The post-pandemic period is remarkable by the steep increase of refugees and migrants after asylum seekers had been less numerous during the pandemic. The media keep transmitting the numbers of newcomers:

More than 130,000 applications were filed in 2022. The country is resuming an upward trend that began a decade ago and concerns all of Europe. Leading the way are applications filed by nationals from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Turkey (*Le Monde* January 17, 2023).

They insist on the sharp increase in these numbers of people:

This is a historic level. In 2022, France issued more than 320,000 first residence permits, an increase of more than 17% compared to 2021. These figures, published Thursday, Jan. 26, by the Ministry of the Interior, show an upward migration dynamic. 'We are resuming a long-term trend. The effects of the health crisis, which marked the migration flows in 2020 and 2021, are partially erased,' said the Ministry of the Interior, during a press briefing (*Le Monde* January 27, 2023).

Because tourists have also returned to their favourite city, hotels have reconverted and no longer offer shelter. Housing services lack capacity, and it causes conflicts between the city, the State, and other institutions. For instance, the European Court of Human Rights recently condemned France for failing to shelter a family of asylum seekers: 'The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on Thursday (Dec. 8) condemned France for failing to shelter asylum seekers, despite court rulings in their favour, in 2018 in Toulouse' (ECHR December 8, 2022).

The argument of a change of organization in dealing with people living in the street is heard again. Why not decide to provide permanent housing solutions?

Many argue that people in the street go back and forth for lack of proper solutions. Social housing and shelters should be more numerous. However, in some district where shelters could open, neighbours tend to have preventions against the new arrivals:

Many fear that the homeless will hang out in the neighbourhood at night and bring with them the excesses of the street: alcohol, drugs, insecurity. A couple of shopkeepers even fear losing their customers. 'We don't want to become the Porte de la Chapelle. This is a neighbourhood with a lot of elderly people and children,' says Fabienne, a 50-year-old co-owner of the building just above the future centre. Many point to the children's square, recently installed by the city council, on the opposite sidewalk: 'It's obvious that these people will end up in the park to spend the night' (*Le Parisien* December 21, 2021)

However, many experts argue that urgency solutions for the homeless are temporary and adapt better to

evolutive needs. They are also less visible for neighbours who might complain. Yet there seems to be only an increasing number of people in need of housing, when other people still have to find a more permanent residency. This causes a form of competition for the use of space that is increasing with the presence of tourists. The media keep the numbers on this issue:

As for rehousing the 300,000 homeless people in emergency accommodation, the challenge is more difficult, but it is also achievable, especially since hotel accommodation is more expensive for the state than offering real housing (*Ouest France* April 29, 2022).

In total, more than 200,000 homeless people are currently housed in shelters or hotels, still in need of tourists. Maintaining the places created since March 2020 will cost 700 million euros, which should bring the annual budget for emergency accommodation to 2.9 billion, according to the ministry (*Les Echos* May 21, 2021).

However, one of the reasons for the difficulties to deal with an increasing demand for housing and other resources is the new needs caused by new circumstances. Non urgency means compete with increased urgency needs needed for more people.

New Priorities, New People in Need, the Consequences of War in Ukraine and the Preparation for the 2024 Olympic Games

Because of the competition to get access to housing, food, and services, new debates arise as to who should provide for the people who may be in the street or may not find housing solutions. This is a source of many conflicts as, depending on actors' different perspectives, a list of priorities emerges. Students, Ukrainian families (mothers and children), and migrant workers are presented in the media as priority for urgency.

New categories of poor have appeared caused by a rising inflation, for instance the young. Many institutions like universities decided to extend their services and provide more support. A form of immediate solidarity with large public and private means was also deployed at the occasion of the Ukrainian war. Some comment in the media that such support had been lacking for other refugees from war before: 'Until now, Ukrainians have fled war by hundreds of thousands and have been welcome in Europe. But Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans also fled local conflicts and European leaders called it a "migrant crisis"' (*Le Monde*, March 2, 2022).

On Tuesday morning, a few dozen people were sitting on benches with their meagre luggage in a corner of the Gare de l'Est station in Paris. These

Ukrainian refugees, who arrived by train from Berlin, Frankfurt or Vienna, were welcomed by a Red Cross team. Half a dozen volunteers, Ukrainian and Russian nationals, are also there. They have formed support groups on social networks and are offering their services as interpreters (*France Bleu Paris* March 8, 2022)

By alluding to what social services are able to do, in specific cases such as that of students or Ukrainians refugees, some keen observers of the life of people in the street insist on the toll this life takes on people's physical and mental health:

Little by little, these exiles lose all hope of rebuilding their lives and integrating into a new society when faced with the administrative machinery of asylum procedures that last for months or even years and that prevent them from having control over their lives. Access to the right to stay and work is the condition for a dignified life and the possibility to move forward. The reception given to Ukrainian exiles shows that French authorities know how to take care of vulnerable people fleeing a civil war – asylum seekers and refugees from other countries than Ukraine should benefit from equivalent conditions. In other words, Europe has the power to prevent the worsening of the mental health of this population, which has already been badly affected by life. (*Le Monde* April 4, 2022).

The good fortune of specific groups who were sheltered and helped for specific reasons during the confinement and afterwards gives hope that more people could benefit from better care and increased chances to get out of the street.

The Covid pandemic caused more precariousness among poor people. It also made Parisians more aware of the poverty around them, especially during the first confinement during which they volunteered. The focus on specific needs of vulnerable populations shows that many efforts are now deployed to keep people out of the street, as in the case of young students and Ukrainian refugees for whom a complete set of new support services have been deployed in a very rapid way: '56% of students admit they do not have enough to eat (...) since reopening, many have no housing and call us from the street, regrets Emmanuelle Jourdan-Chatier, the vice-president of the Lille university, our university has no urgency housing to offer and we feel useless' (*La Tribune* October 6, 2022).

Finally, after documentaries on migrants working for Uber or the workers on the construction sites for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games show their life as even harder than that of working poor, as they are being ousted by the new urban planning, migrants become associated with other areas than camps. They are heard denouncing this situation as unfair.

(...) migrant workers dislodged from their homes have been occupying prefabricated housing for more than a year, while awaiting the construction of new residences, collateral victims of the work of the future Olympic Village of the Olympic Games-2024 (AFP July 25, 2022).

At the end of 2019, a rehousing had been considered in modular housing, on a site adjacent to the future athletes' village. In a press release, the migrants had denounced an "unworthy and inhumane temporary proposal (*Le Parisien* January 12, 2023).

Rehousing solutions remain insufficient and maladapted, also pointing at a form of injustice as some onlookers insist many workers are also living in camps because they still have no papers.

Toxic and Taboo: What Is Made Visible and Invisible

Invisible workers who were at the frontline during the confinement, and praised, were then blamed for the poor state of the streets of Paris. Now these workers are on the forefront as they go on strike, denouncing their difficult work conditions and the toxicity of waste. Yet another source of tension and conflict is the need to take care of the waste in the city. A large movement of strike as a result of a reform of the pensions caused garbage to accumulate and their collectors to become visible again in the media.

On Sunday, according to according to the city hall, there were only 650 tons of uncollected garbage on the sidewalks, against 3200 on Friday and a record of 10,500 on March 24. But despite the CGT lifted the strike on Wednesday the incinerators, sporadic blockades of the sites of Ivry-sur-Seine and Issy-les-Moulineaux by people outside the sector occur regularly since (*Le Bulletin Quotidien* April 4, 2023).

In a letter sent Monday to the mayor Anne Hidalgo, the CGTFTDNEEA (the waste treatment, cleaning and water, sewage and sanitation) of Paris also calls on the sector's personnel to 'participate actively and massively in the days of and interprofessional actions, and in particular that of April 6' (*Le Parisien* April 5, 2023).

Invisible workers doing the 'dirty jobs' are also confronted with difficult situations in some areas of Paris where problems seem to be regrouped. Invisible workers are also the few who may approach such secluded areas as the 'crack square' to clean the place.

Once people in the streets have been oriented to such a camp by NGOs, this transforms their image for

good. The mental health problems mentioned before, and the fact that migrants are not allowed to work, may cause them to become visible as a threat as they become associated with dirt and toxicity. They cause public problems and policing State and City refuse to take charge of: 'In Paris, the prefect and the mayor's office are arguing about "crack land". Didier Lallement announced that he wanted to move the drug camp to the south of the city, much to the displeasure of Anne Hidalgo's teams' (*Le Figaro* January 27, 2022).

They are regrouped in specific places in the North of Paris making the neighbours nervous and angry the 'temporary solution' remains. This gathering of people is alluded to practices used for toxic waste, and the taboo attached to toxicity is made very visible in the public eye, especially via the pictures made of the 'crack square' in Paris:

The 'crack square' is a curious idea: the prefecture gathered several dozens of consumers in the same place, which instantly became a place for dealing and living in the open air. All this, under the permanent eye of the police, who witnessed the traffic without really intervening. Tents have also been installed, they are used for those who have no home, but must be folded every morning so that no installation lasts (*Libération* November 27, 2021).

It is interesting to note that whereas at the early age of the pandemic, all camps had been dismantled by the police for sanitary reasons, in more recent episodes, the solution of concentrating people suffering from addictions and mental illnesses is favoured. The common feature is that the most difficult cases of 'homelessness' are maintained in the streets but out of sight, in squares and enclosures.

4.3.3. WHAT THE PICTURES SHOW AND WHAT WE LEARN FROM THEM

In this last period, a new source of information appeared, that of machine learning. It is an occasion to compare what machines learn from online pictures and what I learn from my pictures in contrast with these new representations of the situations that interest me here, of people between home and waste. Pictures created by artificial intelligence help better illustrate key categories, as they correspond to clusters of pictures that correspond to key words. Even more than the media images they synthesize, they tend to reinforce the trend to isolate each category from the rest of the world. In the following part, I contrast the pictures of each of the categories I used with my own pictures, where people in the street are never isolated from the streets where all sorts of different encounters and interactions take place.

Artificial intelligence software like ‘stable diffusion web’ offer a simplified version of what one can find on search engines and the written press about the streets of Paris, isolating the homeless, the refugees, the Roma families, and the waste as if they were located in different streets, away from the rest of the population and everyday activities. These pictures contrast even more with the pictures I took that show how situations impose a coexistence of all in the same urban space. That causes a much more changing situation.

The figure of the homeless is typically lonely, sitting or lying down in the street surrounded by bags, containing all their possessions. The cliché that homelessness corresponds to a downfall, isolating them from others, and that homeless people no longer mind waste and dirt is very present. Here, the people in the streets seem dirty, and one of the four pictures also presents a man eating from a wrinkled paper bag. Most of them curl up in duvet as if their home was a form of bed and their life a form of semi-lucid dream.



Picture 10 Artificial intelligence pictures of the homeless via <https://stablediffusionweb.com/#demo> retrieved on April 11, 2023.



Picture 11 Artificial intelligence pictures of the migrants in the streets of Paris via <https://stablediffusionweb.com/#demo> retrieved on April 11, 2023.

Migrants in the streets of Paris are presented as men seen from the back walking in large streets sometimes between small stores or trees. They all wear the same coats and jeans, and they are quite unremarkable apart from the emptiness of the streets where they advance. Many of them carry backpacks and they head in the same direction in a group. In one picture, one sees a bicycle (maybe an allusion to Uber workers) and on another, small silhouettes may represent children, yet it is difficult to identify people as they all wear hoods.

In the quadrant of pictures, waste is presented as an endless heap of rubbish, mostly plastic containers, lying as on a shore. Two pictures present waste as a tag, a graffiti on concrete walls or on the floor. The name, painted in white, in bold letters and misspelled, seems to allude to the notion of waste as a form of proclamation as urban graffities.

Artificial intelligence can also combine two terms. When waste and the streets of Paris are combined, waste is nearly invisible in three out of four pictures, as if echoing the silence of public authorities on this vexed issue. The city seems pleasant, quite empty with large Haussmanian avenues, the large terrace of a café, lines of plane trees, and a view of the Eiffel tower. Only in one

picture does the waste appear; bags of rubbish seem to have been scattered all over the street or they may have been left there by a gust of wind. A vast amount of waste spreads out before a small silhouette, a person who seems hesitant to cross the street.

Various fortunes for the people in the street depend on so many circumstances that it is difficult to determine what affects them more. Contrary to the cycles impressed by home rules and waste rules, the people in the street need to change their habits depending on the constant transformation of their environment where all their anchors may disappear.

Often interventions are very visible in the media (social workers speak on behalf of people in the street) whereas most of the time the people in the street need to find resources on their own by going about. People in the street and poor people often prefer to get what they need by their own means, using available goods, sorting it from waste.

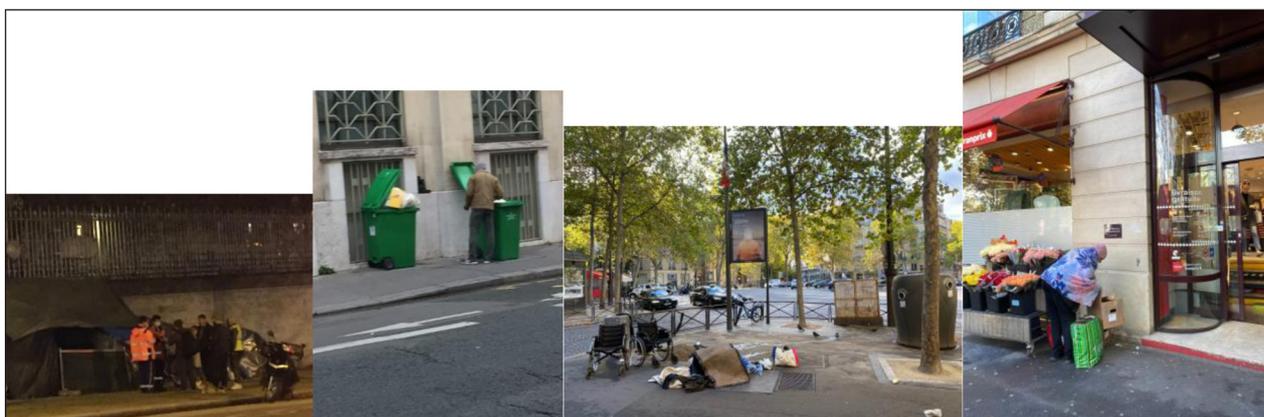
Many people in the street were exposed to onlookers, so they chose to harbour a choice of their own. This setting may also prove a harbinger for further exchanges down the road. Sometimes people only accept help from people they know and trust and whose company they



Picture 12 Artificial intelligence pictures of the waste in the streets of Paris via <https://stablediffusionweb.com/#demo> retrieved on April 11, 2023.



Picture 13 Artificial intelligence pictures of the waste streets Paris via <https://stablediffusionweb.com/#demo> retrieved on April 11, 2023.



Picture 14 My pictures of the Boulevard Saint-Jacques November 2 and 3, 2021 and Paris, 16th district, Place Victor Hugo, November 5, 2022.

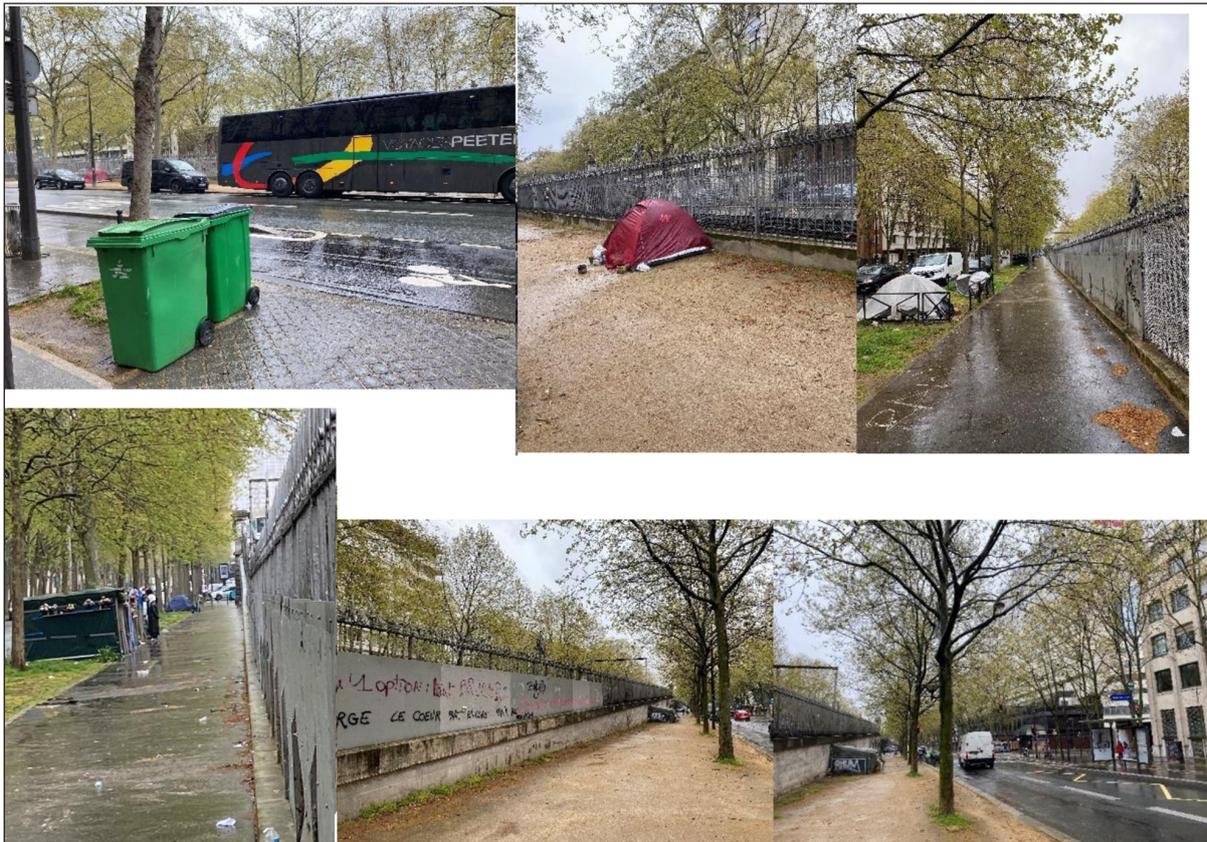
appreciate. Sleeping on the porch of the Saint-Jacques church, on the road of the famous pilgrimage, makes one think of perennial traditions from the Middle Ages. In the third picture, it is difficult to know the status and situation of the young man who spent his day painting a large cloth in the Luxemburg Garden in the Spring of 2021. In the last picture, we can see how migrants sleep near graffiti and posters on the walls, such as that

portrait of Wonder Woman in front of the large Cochin hospital.

Tourists and urban camps are back and co-exist in dense zones such as large train stations. Most of the new arrivals are less noticeable for passers-by. Many camps are created and dismantled where people in the street are no longer in the street before our eyes. Still, many people live there.



Picture 15 My pictures of my street and streets nearby.



Picture 16 April 18, 2023, My pictures of Boulevard Saint-Jacques. People with bags, in tents and cabins, are still here.

From my window, I can see three times more cabins, Roma families settled there on both sides of the metro line with the same style of homes. A process of settlement and habitation is ongoing. There could even be more people. There are also many more tourist buses on the sideways. Buses for Ukraine gather parcels on the sideways here too. During March and April, garbage collectors were on strike and during the protests (12 of them in the four first months of 2023), garbage bins were put on fire and tags and graffiti appeared on the walls, even on cabins. It often rained so the streets were damp and cold. An intensifying competition for space is visible in the street and in other streets of the City of Lights.

These two pictures show many arrivals that are never mentioned in this area where only Ukrainian refugees are officially met by the Croix Rouge teams in the media. In fact, one of my pictures shows a homeless person

sleeping near garbage bins where a tourist bus arrives in front of a large hotel. That echoes the official numbers of refugees' new arrivals in Paris in the last few months. Contrary to the well-ordered, focused views produced by the media and artificial intelligence, my pictures fail to illustrate the different situations of people in the street independently from the rest of the urban life around us. It is often impossible to understand who is and what is happening at the same time in my pictures.

5. DISCUSSION

As a result of my investigation, I find the situation of people living in the street is both exposed before our eyes and difficult to see for what it is and make sense of. Although many more points could be debated, I



Picture 17 My pictures of Paris, 10–19th district, near Gare de l'Est, a homeless and the Friday night migrants' groups (Friday, October 28, 2022) nearby the kiosk France Terre d'Asile/Emmaüs solidarité rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin.

insist on three dimensions I find especially important to discuss as a result of the contrasting views offered by my fieldwork and the media. First, I find categories such as 'homelessness' and 'wasted lives' are essentializations that tend to hide the everyday realities of people in the street away from us. Second, the rules imposed by home and waste administration tend to be flexible depending on circumstances and priorities set by public authorities, that supports Douglas's insistence on the role of context to understand the full story. The changing rules require a form of collective adaptiveness. Finally, pictures and their different uses can teach us to see in a more discriminating way, a way that make us capable of observing situations rather than categorizing first.

5.1. 'HOMELESSNESS' AND 'WASTED LIVES': WHAT DO THEY MAKE US SEE AND UNSEE?

In the beginning of my paper, I first presented Mary Douglas's work on home as 'micro-community', a frame with rigid common rules and her analysis of waste as 'matter out of place'. In her view, home is both rigid and adaptable, and matter changes place, following social rules. I then showed how Bauman associates poverty, homelessness, and migration with waste with his concept of 'wasted lives'. To him, 'wasted lives' correspond to people who have the same social status as waste compared to other type of objects that are good for use. Waste is presented as the unwanted surplus society wants to get rid of or hide.

Whether people in the streets comply or resist social order, their fate is doomed as they have to bear, through their individual history, the contradictions of political systemic choices:

Superfluous people are in a no-win situation. If they attempt to fall in line with currently lauded ways of life, they are immediately accused of sinful arrogance, false pretences and the cheek of claiming unearned bonuses – if not of criminal intent. If they openly resent and refuse to honour those ways which may be savoured by the haves but are more like poison for themselves, the have-nots, this is promptly taken as proof of what 'public opinion' (more correctly, its elected or self-appointed spokespersons) 'told you all along' – that the superfluous are not just an alien body, but a cancerous growth gnawing at the healthy tissues of society and sworn enemies of 'our way of life' and 'what we stand for' (Bauman 2013: 41).

While I find this description of 'wasted lives' interesting by the indignation it manifests, I cannot imagine telling the people in my street that they are 'wasted lives'. They might even resent being called 'homeless', as the two categories tend to downplay all the other dimensions of their life, replacing them by shadows of a persona. Besides, the term makes us forget two dimensions essential to understanding people in the street. First, the loss of a home is generally something they try to hide or stage when it is impossible to hide. To Perry, in some places like cafés, squares, or gardens, the homeless are no longer identifiable as homeless:

the 'master status' of homelessness is attenuated and the unhoused may lay claim to the subjectivity, autonomy, and dignity afforded housed individuals. In such contexts, the homeless

are empowered to reinforce a patron identity that in the interim overshadows the ascribed and often ill-fitting identities associated with their adverse physical circumstances (2012: 447).

If these techniques are only temporary avoidance that does not change poor people's situation, it includes them into the local dynamics where they are familiar, if discrete, figures as we all deal with inside and outside abodes.

Second, people living in the street are the ones who are the most waste averse I know. Because the street is their home, people in the street often are the first ones to avoid toxicity by limiting their contacts with the world. Many people in the street limit their needs and they can neither take nor keep any form of waste from the consumption society. They learnt to lose their possessions and survive without them: '(...) loss of home, loss of possessions, loss of children, loss of friends and family, loss of health. This tumult of dispossession leaves the homeless with little intact but the body. Without a safe place to leave things, one's possessions must be reduced to whatever one can carry' (Kawash 1998: 330).

All surpluses represent a danger for the exposed body of the people living in the street who have little privacy: 'The scanty provision of food to such a body ensures that its possibilities of consumption are dwindled to an absolute minimum' (Kawash 1998: 331) as 'The homeless body is (...) trapped by a circular logic whereby its initial exclusion further marks it as that which must be excluded: Unable to take responsibility for its bodily functions as a result of the city's disavowal of them, the homeless body is then shunned for its failure to adapt to the standards of social responsibility' (Kawash 1998: 332).

Some of the goods provided to poor populations, like the homeless and other, and used by them can cause concern because of their possible toxicity. Therefore, the notion of 'waste' is associated with sorting operations. Waste remains, for all of us, 'matter (temporarily) out of space, in need of ordering', making it awkward to qualify people in reference to it.

5.2. CHANGES IN TIME: HOW WE ADAPT THE RULES

Stories from people in the streets are many in the media, and they are difficult to interpret especially as the figure of the 'homeless', the 'migrant', or the 'Roma' tends to be anonymous. They remain part of the picture but in a distance. Critical discourse analysis is especially useful here to depart from the clichés conveyed by life stories or countdowns present in the media that make it difficult to appreciate what rules exist and how they change in time.

Honneth (2021) points out how the pandemic affected everyday interactions, and I observed how the electoral campaign and the Olympic Games influenced public

priorities, urban planning, and life in the streets. Knowing the context is key to better understanding the people we encounter in the streets: 'Without knowing the context of action and institutions, there is no way to interpret the stories, and when the context is given, they are not so much stories as verbal rites' (Douglas 1995: 6).

However, contrary to what the media or NGOs insist on, people in the streets are not eager to tell us their story. They are aware they are associated with such notions as 'wasted lives'. It is possible that people in the street seek a form of distance that would protect them from infringement and interferences. The urban space is dense, and it causes a form of competition to occupy it. Moving with bags or camping with tents and cabins are three ways to avoid direct contact. In so doing, people who are forced to live in the streets avoid both the contact with waste and the contact with other people, in theory their neighbours, in fact possible sources of embarrassment if they cannot escape from their gaze or their contact as they would in a home. For, as pointed out by Douglas, closeness causes a form of forced familiarity in the relation and it may be intrusive:

Every community discriminates in its references to bodily behaviour between spiritual and gross, respectful and disrespectful, regular and grotesque, gentle and violent. This goes on for as many dimensions as interest the community in question. We cannot expect to notice all the dimensions, but in any one case we could establish the gradient between vulgar and refined. You can call this the distance, or the dignity or the spirituality index makes reference to bodily functions and bodily part that would not be acceptable in polite company. What is and is not acceptable can only be determined by the mythologist's reading in the other genres. We expect the scale of bodily reference to vary according to an unspoken scale of honour or dishonour. The gradients in the scale point to the meaning of the stories (Douglas 1995: 4).

Acknowledging our presence, people in the street and people who do the 'dirty jobs' mostly prefer to keep a distance, as closeness may affect their dignity as they have no choice but to be exposed to our gaze. This distance may explain why there was no such notable change in people's interactions during the confinement (when they were dangerous because of the contagious effects) and in the post-pandemic period.

Douglas argues that pollution and contagion are

used in two senses. There is a strict technical sense, as when we speak of river or air pollution, when the physical adulteration of an earlier state can be measured. [...] The technical sense

of pollution is not morally loaded but depends upon measures of change. The other sense of pollution is a contagious state, harmful, caused by outside intervention, but mysterious in its origins. [...] Usually, the dangerous impurity is attributed to moral transgression of one kind or another: it is presented as a penalty, plagues or famines descending to punish perjury, incest, adultery, or breach of ritual (Douglas 2013: 36).

These categories make it necessary to introduce sorting and separations.

Toxicity is an issue that affects life, so the sorting processes involves a form of analysis of the levels and degrees present in the common space in the streets of large cities.

(...) toxicity is produced by and reproductive of different orders of life. [W]e articulate harm as that which disrupts order and existing relations, while also showing that toxic harm also maintains systems, including those that produce inequity and sacrifice... More than just the contravention of an established order within a system, toxic harm can be understood as the contravention of order at one scale and the reproduction of order at another (Liboiron, Tironi & Calvillo 2018: 335).

In a sense, the many debates about waste and the dirtiness of the streets of Paris point at a difficulty to find a collective order that would make sense for all people in the street who live there in different ways because of competing presences and competing priorities.

5.3. ON PICTURES, ILLUSTRATIONS AND VISIBILITY

Documentary photography and social sciences share a concern about what images and words tell us about the real (Lugon 2002). Among people who chose to bear witness, many find it important to establish a critique in act of the way specific groups of people are treated when they bear a stigma that make them invisible (Cunha de Souza & Cardoso Cardoso 2021; de Melo Rosende 2016; Herzog 2020) or even undesirable (Voldman 2009). I found it especially useful to reflect on the representations in pictures as they are not just illustrations of ready-made realities (Piette 2020; 1992). Another important source of inspiration came from authors' testimonies on the duration of their fieldwork, either moving across space (Harper 2016; 2012; 2002) or remaining in the same space, with a consistent perspective on interactions (Conord 2008; 2007; Raulin et al., 2016). As Castel (2013) points out, social insecurity for individuals creates a series of permanent changes that make it necessary to capture both individual and collective trajectories in detail. That is especially true as I insist, following Douglas, on the

mutability of rules regarding home and life in the streets. It is especially true as I can see the competitive pressure on the use of the streets intensify.

My images never correspond to one specific category as what I see in my street, and the streets of Paris are full of life and messy; that was true even during the confinement, as many activities were still ongoing. What they show is quite different from what the media and online sources with illustrative images. As reflexive approaches on journalism point out, this difference stems from the fact that the media tend to filter information: 'A focus on new content curation in the online media environment' shows 'filtering (as a) process that occurs alongside story selection and availability' (Gaffey 2021: 131). This process operates at different levels, especially with the role of online content and social media, and I was a witness of this transforming approach to the streets of Paris, a shared space for everyday life: 'Perhaps the more interesting type of filtering that social media encourages is the sharing of news within a social network via "user-driven content filtering"' (ibidem: 136).

It is interesting to note how the written press and social media echo each other with different political orientations that tend to replace everyday relations in public, as the ones I had with all my neighbours. If such concepts as 'homelessness' and 'wasted lives' tend to generalize and associate anonymous groups people with loss and waste, it is also because of the constant countdown of people and goods and because of an out-of-context approach to the life in the streets as if our neighbours were no longer those near us but people with the same social status:

"Status has been identified as a driver of news and information sharing among social media groups. Sharing them becomes a technology of surveillance, albeit a socially driven use, which is reinforced by the idea of risk, defined by Dean (1998) as a type of rationality and as a way of thinking about and representing events" (2021: 142)

Although the more acute period of the Covid-19 pandemic and the confinement are over, the association of waste with risk and the obsession with hygiene, in reference to purity and danger (Douglas, 1966) seems to be expanding the sphere of "matter out of place" making it more difficult to see people in the open space of the street.

CONCLUSION

During the last two years of the pandemic, the life of people in the street changed: new rules were introduced insisting on hygiene and norms for public health. After a period of discovery and trial, the new ways of life were installed with people living in the street in isolated

tents everywhere in Paris. From their windows, people wondered why they were so many, as they could hear the media announce more housing solutions and the continuance of the winter truce (housing protection) for two years. What is more striking in this phenomenon from the standpoint of an onlooker, a neighbour, is how the ordinary life of people in the street did not change during the confinement despite all these institutional measures. The encampment remained, although its overall shape took a lining, scattered form. The street tent and bags habitat and people's habituation to rough sleeping were also a constant. What could be visible of the homeless was also very little as they are a population constantly on the move. Mostly, they do not want to be seen. Only some of them determined to send a message and make their body, their home and their creation visible to the onlookers in empty streets during the early confinement (the most drastic one) in a period when vegetation growth and quietness transformed Paris in a form of green wilderness.

This short transformative and creative period, caused by changes and new settlement, soon yielded to new routines, and did not hide the daily difficulties for the homeless. Their survival mode remained during the pandemic partly because the solutions provided by shelter and care were inadequate to many who preferred to deal with their situation outside institution, partly because poverty causes people to live in and out the street on a regular basis. As visible in the long lines for food and services such as sanitation facilities, people change, and a countdown is not enough to identify their number and the amount of surplus needed to support them. In the media, the focus on locating and identifying people in the street, assessing the number of resources needed for homelessness makes it difficult to actually see people in the street and understand their lives.

This paper is a preliminary investigation that lacks the voice of the main participants. It is mostly based on participant observation and mostly failed attempts to investigate within the institutional system. This semi-failure, however, offers interesting material based on daily notes and pictures that tend to create a compendium memory. Participant observation in the same place, during the confinement from home, looking out in the street, and walking the streets of Paris, offers an important contrast with the pictures dominant in the media under the influence of public institutions and private NGOs. Their expertise tends to present the homeless problem as a case of urgency, the pandemic being a case of extreme urgency, and ways to deal with supplies and surpluses reaching the homeless (the poorest of the poor). This population in the street is not as homogeneous as it seems, whereas the population of the poor seems very large. This group of people uses supplies and surpluses that they can find in the streets, and there is competition for these resources.

Pictures are also quite important to contrast with impressions and complement, sometimes contradict, interpretations. They help us realize the discriminations operated in dealing with the homeless as they are sorted out in terms of needs and rights in relation to available goods managed in flows of 'wasted goods'. They help us go beyond dominant categories, for instance question the use of this expression 'wasted lives' that tends to create a form of equivalence between matter and people whereas no such logic exists in reality. Yet the poor do not absorb the surplus of an affluent society in the form of a logistic redistributive system, like the equivalent of nutriment flows in a natural ecosystem. Close descriptions also reveal different forms of poverty and different uses of the street as a habitat, with or without encampment and habituation.

In future reflections, this investigation could benefit from comparisons with other times and spaces when both the homeless and the reporters, as Hugo, London, and Orwell, were able to capture a true picture of the live and fortune of poor people as individuals with a story, a personality, and tastes of their own. They did have a past and a future although they owned few possessions and seldom had a room to stay in. Living near people in such situations during moments when my own situation was unstable too, I became more concerned with what may become of them than about the amount of resources available for homelessness in general.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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