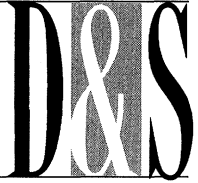


Voices of homeless people in street newspapers: a cross-cultural exploration



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ABSTRACT. This study is a discourse analysis of four street newspapers from Europe and the United States. Street newspapers (SNPs), which are sold on the street by homeless people, usually claim to make society aware of homelessness and related issues, to be a platform for homeless people and to help them regain independence and self-respect. This analysis will question this claim. It describes the framing of homeless people's voices and homelessness issues in these newspapers by looking at their objectives, topics and text genres, and at the (self-)representation of homeless people in texts written by them, or about them. The European SNPs give a limited platform to homeless people's voices, and tend to limit these to personal narratives and poetry. In contrast the American street newspaper, written by (former) homeless people gives a wide and diversified platform to the issues surrounding homelessness and to the individuals concerned. However, it is not completely free of a certain emphasis on feelings and pathos, which is also observed, with variations, in the European SNPs, and in many ways evokes traditional political and media discourse on poor and marginal people, reinforcing the negative social ethos of the homeless.

KEY WORDS: *framing, homeless people, (self-)representation, street newspapers, voicing*

Introduction

Street newspapers (SNPs) are newspapers or magazines sold on the streets by homeless people. World-wide, SNPs have been emerging over the past 10 years and an individual, man or woman, standing in the vicinity of a train or metro station or at the entrance of a supermarket offering a newspaper to the public has become a common sight. Whatever the location, the country or the language used in the brief transaction that takes place, there is a special quality in the thanks and the smile that the buyer gets from the seller, that is inherently

different from what can be observed when buying a regular newspaper. Some buyers can express some ambivalence during this interaction, a mixture of desire and the refusal of involvement with the seller that transpires from a fleeting look at him or her or the denial of a look. It is not unusual to see a buyer pay for the newspaper and not take it, or buy it and then throw it away into the first garbage can he/she can find. If the circumstances and the objectives of the transaction are basically the same in Paris, Amsterdam, San Francisco or London, the contents of SNPs can be extremely different. At the root of this article lies the desire to reflect on the ambivalence of this transaction, and on the various approaches to the homelessness issue as presented by these newspapers.

SNPs are said to come from the grassroots and to put a human face on the problem of homelessness, as opposed to the mass media that cover the problem as something that affects 'other people' (Dodge, 1999). Written by journalists and/or (formerly) homeless persons, SNPs present themselves as foregrounding homeless people's issues and their viewpoints and as being a platform for their voices. SNPs also involve a quite unique interactional frame. As opposed to regular newspapers, for most buyers (and for most SNPs) the primary motivation for buying such a street newspaper does not lie in the canonical contract between a journalist-writer (giving information, providing entertainment) and a reader, but is related to an economic act and a manifestation of solidarity: to provide the person who is selling the newspaper with a source of income and self-respect.

Hence, SNPs offer two interesting aspects for the discourse analyst. In the first place, SNPs constitute an a priori privileged domain in which to approach the discourse and (self-)representation of homeless persons (HPs). Second, an analysis of the (journalistic) frame and of the participation frame (Goffman, 1981), that is, the production format (who writes, who talks?) and the reception format (who is the addressee?), can provide insight into the way the canonical journalistic contract between writer and reader is eventually re-routed into an economic and solidarity contract.

The data I draw upon consist of street newspapers originating from four countries, as follows:

France (Paris/Ile-de-France/North and East of France): *L'Itinérant* (*L'Iti*)

The Netherlands (Amsterdam): *Z-magazine* (*Z*)

The United Kingdom (Bristol edition): *The Big Issue* (*BI*)

The United States (San Francisco): *Street Sheet* (*SS*)

The choice of these four SNPs is in the first place based on a certain familiarity with the situation of HPs and of SNPs in these countries. Second, it allows two perspectives: one local, as it involves two SNPs from two cities that have some points in common (Amsterdam and San Francisco),¹ and another, more global and national, with two SNPs that are either the sole representative of SNPs in the country (UK)² or at the moment the dominant one in its capital and the surroundings (France).

Analysing data from different countries sharpens the analyst's view of the

SNPs' characteristics and idiosyncrasies. Though the study will stay within the borders of a discourse analysis, it will lead to some questions on cultural and sociological issues. The analysis will first address the explicit objectives of these SNPs, then describe the topics and genres found in the data. Insight into the participation frame will be gained through a study of pronouns of address in editorials and some articles. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of texts by HPs and about HPs will then question the claimed function of these SNPs and confront the image and the discourse of HPs in SNPs with those given in ordinary press or other media and those that are part of the shared beliefs of the public.

I will first present some brief facts about homelessness and the media coverage of homelessness issues.

I. Homelessness and street newspapers

During the late 1980s homelessness had become a hot issue in most western countries. There was wide media coverage of the problem³ and street newspapers were blossoming and organizing themselves.⁴ Experiences of (ex-)homeless persons later found their way into literary publications (memoirs).⁵ Some academic studies were devoted to the analysis of the homeless newspapers and writing (see, for instance, Barats (1996), Damon (1996) concerning French SNPs).

Most SNPs went through a successful period in the first half of the 1990s. Partly for their novelty, they were welcomed with a certain enthusiasm. In some countries their situation has currently stabilized into a quantitative and qualitative diversity (USA has about 70 SNPs, The Netherlands, 11) or into a position of monopoly (the UK has one major SNP). In other countries, in France for instance, their position is rather precarious. Most of the titles created there at the beginning of the 1990s have disappeared or are fighting for survival. In none of these countries can it be said that the homelessness issue has been resolved or is close to being resolved, in spite of widespread voluntarism and government programmes.

The end of the 1990s saw a diminution of media interest in homeless persons, in spite of the fact that homelessness persisted or in some places was even getting worse.⁶ This diminishing interest is related to different factors: in the big cities of the United States anti-vagrancy laws and pressure from middle-class Americans, eager to see this attack on their 'quality of life' disappear, have led to a decreased public presence of homeless persons on the streets and have resulted in less public consciousness regarding the issue. Simultaneously, a growth of violence towards homeless persons can be seen, encouraged by a dominant official position that represents homeless persons as bums, drunks or drug addicts too lazy to work and not worthy of the public's respect. In Europe, critical discourse has been heard on the ineffectiveness of political programmes against homelessness and some journalists and politicians advocate a fundamental shift of emphasis, from short-term solutions (special lodgings as shelters, a culture of charity and kindness, the important role played by the voluntary sector) to long-term action (boosting the supply of affordable housing, rehabilitation towards self-aid and empowerment of

HPs).⁷ Until the appearance of SNPs, political and media discourse on homelessness dominated the stage, conveying mainstream society's messages of power, influence and authority: 'By exercising our power to name, we construct a social phenomenon, homelessness, the criteria used to define it, and a stereotype of the people to whom it refers' says Daly in his study of homelessness (1996: 9), and adds 'Homeless individuals may be silenced by such power relationships, control mechanisms, and by messages contained in popular media.' Homeless people lack a collective voice and are not organized, they are represented by 'proxies' Daly says, whose interests may be self-serving. These proxies include government agencies and bureaucrats, non-profit and voluntary organizations, professional caregivers and shelter operators. 'These relationships may constitute a control system based on a charity model and on naive assumptions about the need to dictate terms to the recipient population.' (1996: 9).⁸ Furthermore, in social, economic and political discourse the life stories of homeless people are typically devalued, shunted aside, or unconsciously limited. 'Spurious forms of domination, which prejudice the prevailing view of this "alien" culture, raise issues with respect to the social location of knowledge. Whose stories are valued or not valued?' (1996: 10). The analysis will show that the place given to HPs' discourse varies extremely in the four SNPs considered, and that, with the possible exception of the American example, the voices of HPs are mostly limited to some writing genres that pen them into a specific kind of discourse, dominated by pathos. This could be seen at first glance as a welcome shift of emphasis, the life stories of homeless people having been shoved out of the way until the appearance of SNPs. However, this emphasis on feelings and emotions tends to reinforce the marginality of HPs.

II. Frame, journalistic framing and participation frame in and around SNPs

The uniqueness of SNPs, as a type of publication with special goals, can be partially captured through the notion of *frame*. Tannen (1993) in 'What's in a frame?' states that at the root of the different meanings given to the term 'frame' in various fields there is a notion of *structure of expectation*: 'on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures) one organises knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events and experiences' (Tannen, 1993: 16). Following Tannen, a distinction can be made between an interactive frame of interpretation which characterizes the work of anthropologists and sociologists (Bateson, 1973; Goffman, 1974; Hymes, 1974) and a knowledge structure (which Tannen refers to as 'schemas') found in artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology and linguistic semantics (Chafe, 1977; Schank and Abelson, 1977). The former notion refers to what is going on in an interaction and the processes used by speakers and listeners (writers and readers) to make sense of events. The latter notion, a 'knowledge schema', refers to participants'

expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world. All structures of expectations are dynamic: they are continually checked against experience and revised.

Applied to SNPs, and from the perspective of the buyers of such newspapers, the interactive frame involves two settings (Hymes, 1972): a buying setting and a reading setting, of which only the first is compulsory. It can be assumed that the buyer of a SNP is aware of the special character of his/her transaction and of the added economic and social contract that comes on top of the canonical buying and reading contract of any press product.⁹ Taking into consideration the objectives of the street newspapers (see section III.2), readers are led to believe that the SNP makes common cause with the HPs, their discourse and their problems. Readers consequently might look for the voices of the HPs among other possible voices and check them against what they know of these people.

In the media and journalistic sciences, framing is defined as a process of 'selection' and 'salience': 'To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicative text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, more evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman, 1993: 52). The journalistic framing in SNPs will depend partially on who the writers are, and on what stance or editorial politics the SNP adopts. Journalistic framing is also a way to reinforce dominant ideologies through the interaction between the text and cultural or social beliefs. In this case, the space and the form given to discourses about/of HPs could be illustrative of a prioris about HPs and the images or social ethos of HPs (see sections III.4 and 5).

I will briefly consider the interactional dimension of the two settings mentioned earlier. The buying setting involves an interaction between vendor and buyer. One common point (though differently addressed and referred to) for the four SNPs analysed is the relationship between vendor and buyer: 'On ne cherche pas son journal, on cherche son vendeur' says for instance the chief-editor of *L'Iti*.¹⁰ This setting is (indirectly and partially) expressed in some texts about SNPs: portraits or interviews of vendors, letters or testimonies from buyers.

The reading setting involves writer(s) in the production format and reader(s), in the reception format. In order to cover the complexity of roles in a conversational encounter, and the various and dynamic 'footings' that are taken by the speakers/recipients,¹¹ Goffman (1981) distinguishes the speaker-animator from the author (the agent that scripts the lines), the principal (the party), and the figure, which refers to any character created by the discourse, staging the speaker himself or someone else. One objective of this study is to look at the space given to HPs' voices (are they represented in the role of author?), to HPs' issues (HPs as principals, or characters?) and to consider the form given to their discourse.

At the reception end, readers could be HPs, but most of them will not be. The variety of readers addressed (explicitly or implicitly) will give insight into the impact of the SNP on the community, the role it intends to play in making the public aware of the problem and eventually, in suggesting solutions to homelessness.

Following a rhetorical tradition, we can link the notion of 'ethos' to the author. (Self-)representation is a discursive construction. This discourse ethos can come into conflict with a pre-existent social ethos (clichés, stereotypes) (see Amossy, 1999). The social ethos of HPs can be approached in SNPs in articles about HPs (portraits and edited interviews); the discourse ethos can only be analysed through unedited interviews, testimonies or texts written by HPs. The interesting point is that a narrative, 'literary' or journalistic screen then almost always filters the voice of HPs.

III. Content analysis

The data consists of 12 issues of each SNP, with a spread related to the distribution frequency, and covering between about 4 months and a year. Additional data comes from the Internet sites of some SNPs (*BI*), interviews with editorial members (*L'Iti*, *Z*), conversations with HPs (in the US and UK) and publications on homelessness and SNPs.

A first analysis will give some general information about the SNPs, their structure and content. Then, I will successively consider the explicit objectives of the SNPs and the characteristics of editorials and leading articles, with a special emphasis for the expression of the participation frame; then I will concentrate on the voices of HPs and the (self-)presentation of HPs in texts that are written about or by HPs.

III.1 GLOBAL APPROACH TO THE SNPS: STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The data in Table 1 is mostly based on the situation at the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000.

The covers are very different. *BI* favours photos of celebrities, especially from the domain of global culture (on 12 issues, only one cover concerns a politician).

TABLE 1.

	<i>The BI</i>	<i>L'Iti</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Z</i>
creation	1991	1995	1989	1995
distribution	UK	France/Paris	San Francisco	Amsterdam
weekly	✓	✓		
biweekly				✓
monthly			✓	
circulation	270,000	45,000	36,000	37,500
vendor buys SNP	yes	yes	no	yes
vendor gets % sale revenue	60%	70%	100%	50%
vendor wears a badge	yes	yes	no ^a	yes

^a Other street newspapers in the USA have different policies. For instance, vendors of *The Street Spirit* from San Francisco and the Bay Area wear a badge.

TABLE 2.

	<i>The BI</i>	<i>L'Iti</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Z</i>
total pages	56	32	8	32
ads (average per issue)	12 pages	4 pages	–	–
Texts for HPs	news	guide ^a	news ^b	guide
texts from HPs				
articles	?	–	5	–
texts (lit. ^c)	1	–	1.5	0.5
poems	1	1	1	1
texts about H'ness				
interviews/portraits	1	–	0.5	2
news/feature	yes	no	yes	yes
culture				
from HPs	–	art	art	art
other	global	local national.	local national.	local
letters				
total	56	34	2	7
about HPs/H'ness	8	12	2	6
from HPs	0	2	0	1
editorial				
European edit.		yes		yes
Leading article	status writer unclear		No name/ (Former)HPs	
interaction				
SNP/reader	appeals	letters appeals ^d	article appeals	article appeals

^a *L'Iti* has a *Guide anti-galère* (guide to help in case of great financial and personal difficulties); *Z* has a *Daklozen opvang en werk* (shelter and work for homeless people).

^b Each issue of *SS* has one page of news in Spanish (Edición popular en español).

^c Narratives, essays or a mixture of features and narratives.

^d *L'Iti* has published appeals against the death penalty in the US.

L'Iti has drawings on social/political issues. *SS*, the format of which is that of a newspaper, has, on its first page, art by HPs or news photos related to HPs or local politics. *Z* shows drawings on social or political issues, and is the only one to sometimes publish photos of HPs on its cover. The content of each SNP is shown in Table 2.

This global description of the content of these SNPs shows clear structural and topical differences between them. The following analysis will confirm these differences.

III.2 FROM OBJECTIVES TO CONTRACTS

Several sources have been used to uncover the SNPs' objectives. In the first place, the cover (subtitle) or the colophon; in the second place, annual reports or Internet sites of the foundations behind them (in the case of three SNPs, *BI*, *SS* and *Z*; *L'Iti* is a privately owned business); and finally references to objectives in editorials, letters or answers to letters and messages from the editor-in-chief on special occasions.

A first aspect is the explicit mention of homelessness or HPs in the objectives (*BI*, *SS*) as opposed to a more general issue (*L'Iti*, 'the weekly that fights against poverty and exclusion', *Z*, 'The Amsterdam newspaper that is committed to helping people from the margin [of society]'). Most SNPs mention different objectives, in a special order. That allows us to measure the relation between the canonical contract and the added contract (see introduction).

BI gives as its objectives: '1. to entertain, provide excellent value for money and serve the interest of our unique and discerning readership; 2. to campaign and raise awareness on the key issues at the heart of the magazine – homelessness and its causes but it does so without resorting to sentiment; 3. to provide a source of information, news and knowledge of what is really going on at the grass roots and on the streets'. On the Internet *BI* is said to 'aim to help these people (HPs) regain the dignity of independence, self-help, self-esteem'.

L'Iti is less explicit about its objectives. The role of the magazine is described as 'being more an intellectual itching powder than a 'journal de référence' (editorial, personal communication). As opposed to *BI*, the editor-in-chief says, the objective is not to make money, or to contribute to the social reintegration of the vendor, but to be the journal of homeless people.¹²

SS in its colophon presents itself as the *Journal of the Coalition on Homelessness* (COH) whose goal is the 'dissemination of pertinent and otherwise inaccessible information'. It is 'one of the oldest homeless papers in the country and one of the few that consistently features the voices of homeless people speaking out on the issues that affect their lives' (Jan. 1999).

Z mentions in the Annual report of the *Z*-foundation, three objectives: 1. To give homeless people in Amsterdam an opportunity to earn a modest income, a structure in life and some work experience; 2. To make society aware of the existence of homeless people and work towards mutual acceptance, understanding and contact between people; 3. To give homeless people the means to assume responsibility for their own lives. The seller of the magazine is his own boss, invests his own money in the sales process and is free to use his money as he wishes. In an answer to a letter (25 May 1999), *Z* was said to be the voice of the homeless, and to allow them to express their grievances.

To summarize, the objectives found in the corpus are partly identical with the explicit objectives of the canonical press (information and entertainment), and partly evocative of the added economic and solidarity contract. Only *SS* mentions systematically in its colophon that it is the voice of HPs. Similar mentions have been found, but in an unsystematic manner in *Z* and in a slightly ambiguous

manner in *L'Iti* ('nous n'avons pas vocation à faire partager *nos opinions, notre lecture du monde, sinon de les "dire", les dire au nom de ceux qui ne parlent pas, ceux-là même le plus souvent qui ont besoin de nous vendre*' (editorial, 265; emphasis added)).¹³ *BI* puts in first position the objective of entertainment, before information and awareness. There is no mention in *SS* of the potential impact of the sale of *SS* on the vendor, as *Z* does (modest income, structure in life and work experience). *L'Iti* (in an answer to a letter from a reader) mentions some difficulties in finding sellers ('qui préfèrent à présent la mendicité' [who currently prefer panhandling]) and recognizes that, for most sellers, selling *L'Iti* is not real work but 'à peine une bouée de sauvetage social' [hardly more than a social life-line].

III. 3 PARTICIPATION FRAMES IN EDITORIALS AND LEADING ARTICLES

In the European tradition an editorial is an article that gives the opinion of the editor or publisher on a news topic or item. *L'Iti* and *Z* have traditional editorials written by the editor-in-chief. In both cases these editorials show a clear social and political involvement with national and international topics for *L'Iti*,¹⁴ and almost exclusively with homelessness issues for *Z* (10 out of 12 issues). The dominant key is critical and *engagé* for both SNPs, with an added marked 'protest' style for *L'Iti*.

The chief-editor of *BI*, with the exception of one small 'message' in the Millennium issue, does not write. One column, *On the Edge* (11 out of 12 written by Chris McLaughlin whose function in *BI* is not clear, as his name does not appear in the colophon), is dedicated to British political topics, with special attention being given to politicians. The feature article(s) have social, political or cultural topics. Four out of 51 articles found were on HPs or homelessness-related problems (for example, poverty).

SS San Francisco has no editorial. The front page almost always has two articles, the one with a bigger or boldface headline being in general anonymous.¹⁵ Topics are about local politics, referring to the situation in San Francisco and to the daily problems of HPs (the condition of shelters, encounters with the SF police, insecurity and violence directed towards HPs); extensive and critical attention is given to politicians (favourite targets being San Francisco's Mayor and Supervisor). The key is confrontational, critical, argumentative, often provocative and caustic.

An exploration of the participation frames in editorials (*L'Iti*, *Z*), leading articles (*SS*) or feature articles (*BI*), as expressed by pronouns of address shows many differences. The richest system of pronouns is found in the Dutch SNP (editorials) and the American one (leading article), the poorest in the British SNP. The uses of pronouns and the referents these have in both production and reception formats are listed in Table 3.

BI favours the undetermined 'you'. The use of 'we' is often exclusive in *L'Iti*, and inclusive in *SS* and *Z*. In these SNPs, it contributes to creating common grounds with the reader. Passive and impersonal constructions are frequent in

TABLE 3.

	<i>Production format</i> (Who is speaking/writing?)	<i>Reception format</i> (Who is recipient?)
BI	–	you = reader
<i>L'Iti</i>	nous [we]=editorial team	vous [you]=general (=on) reader(s); HPs or other minority groups
SS	I-form (frequent) ^a we = members of COH San Franciscans ^b a community National Coalition on H we vs. they/ us vs. them vs. you (potential HP)	you = HPs, San Franciscans citizens, local politicians representatives of HPs
Z	Ik (I-form) = editor-in-chief we = Z-editorial team everybody (in the name of) HPs	je/jij (you) = HP, vendor, aid groups readers Amsterdammers

^a There is some ambiguity as to the referent. This could be related to the genre of some articles and the narrative dimension that is often given to the text. Articles by Hoops McCann, for instance, often stage an *I*-writer that could refer to the author or to a (fictional) character.

^b 'What we value in our city' (Jan. 99); 'we as citizens' (Feb. 99); 'this city is ours' (Aug. 99).

L'Iti (editorials), and can also appear in *Z* depending on the topic. For instance, when the topic is the refusal of a small town in Holland to host a new refugee centre there is no personal form of address; but when the topic is winter and the difficulties of life for homeless people, the writer uses the form 'je' (you/one) referring to HPs). An exceptional editorial and appeal (260 and 265) in *L'Iti* provides a unique description and categorization of its buyers/readers, in a flowery and pathetic style:

VOUS, hommes et femmes de bonne volonté . . . laïcs convaincus ou sortie de messe tous unis par un commun dégoût de notre société qui a cessé de lutter pour que les petits comme les gros, les faibles comme les forts, aient leurs petits coins dans la cité . . .

Vous, femmes de trente ans, courant de l'appartement au boulot, crèche, mari au chômage et désespéré . . .

Vous, déjà grand-mère, dont le petit-fils 'bac + 6' n'a trouvé qu'un emploi CES à 80 francs par jour . . .¹⁶

Looking at pronouns of address in editorials and leading articles gives a first insight into the participation frame of the SNPs, into the voicing in the texts.

What has been said about the objectives also applies to the expression of the participation frame. When the objectives stress the non-canonical function of SNPs, – providing an economic and social, discursive platform for HPs – so does the participation frame. The voicing becomes richer and more explicit. This is clearly the case with the SNPs on the right-hand side of the scale (Z and SS). Indetermination of the addressee or target and a neutralization of the personal voice of the journalist, at least on the pronoun level, are more evocative of the canonical press (Van Dijk, 1988: 75). However this is not exactly matched by the source of writing. *L'Iti* and Z have a professional team of journalists. *BI* is not very clear about it: names of writers are often not mentioned in the colophon. In SS most articles, with or without by-lines, can be attributed to (former) HPs.

III.4 TEXTS BY HOMELESS PEOPLE

There are three text genres: poetry, journalistic writing and literary writing (short narratives or essays). With the exception of the French SNP, there are explicit references to writing courses and poetry workshops in all the SNPs, and to courses in investigative journalism in SS (*Raising our Voices*). The four SNPs have a poetry page. Writers are (former) HPs and the main topic is life on the streets. Selection is made on the basis of participation of the HP in a poetry/writing course or of 'quality' (*L'Iti*, personal communication). *BI* (editorial politics) keeps the selection process ambiguous ('We are not responsible for unsolicited artwork, articles or photos. . . . We never accept unsolicited poems or short stories' [*sic*]).

In a section called *Street Lights*, *BI* provides some space for HPs' writing: 'These pages are given over exclusively to homeless, ex-homeless and vulnerably housed people to air their opinions and views. The material on these pages is unedited.' Each text is short (an average of one third or one fourth of a page); they are mostly narratives or 'essays'.

L'Iti and SS publish a few special appeals by HPs (a mother that needs help, an individual burnt out of a shelter).

I will not propose an analysis of poetry and narratives. They deserve their own approach, which is outside the scope of this article.¹⁷

III.5 TEXTS ABOUT HPS

Portraits and edited interviews Both *BI* and Z have edited interviews with HPs (Street diary, *Met Z de straat op*) that cover between one third of a page and two pages. *BI* also has a small section titled 'Portrait of a vendor' that shows the picture of a vendor and a brief text in which a buyer gives his/her motivation for singling out that particular vendor.

Portraits and interviews of HPs are usually integrated into articles in SS, in relation to a special issue or cause. They can also be found in feature articles in all the SNPs, with the exception of *L'Iti*: in the 12 issues analysed, only one portrayal of HPs could be found. In a special appeal to readers to support the magazine, the writer summed up some descriptions of HPs in a clear pathos/ad misericordiam

style: 'les laissés sur le bord de la route, ceux qui ne suivent pas, les meilleurs bien souvent' [the ones left on the side of the road, those that cannot follow, those often are the best]; 'Vendre *l'Iti* c'est noble, ce n'est pas faire semblant de mendier' [To sell *l'Iti* is a noble task, it is not like panhandling] (260 and 265). In the same issue, in an answer to a letter from a vendor who wrote that he was using his mountain bike to get to his selling pitches, the journalist adopts a condescending, almost insulting formulation that evokes one common stereotype about HPs: 'Vous au lieu d'un p't blanc le matin, c'est un coup de pédale' [you instead of a white wine in the morning, you jump on your bike] (265).

In the world of homeless people, on the streets, first names are the rule. The use of family names is seen as a breach of privacy.¹⁸ This custom seems to apply also to articles about or by HPs in SNPs, in a similar fashion to what can be observed in the media in reference to unemployed or poor people. There are no differences between the analysed SNPs in that respect. The use of family names (full names) in the US, the UK and the Netherlands is usually limited to former HPs or HPs that have passed away (in *BI*, of 12 portraits of star vendors, the only two with full names are mentioned in memoriam) or HPs that are, apparently, considered as having partially reintegrated into society through some kind of work or deed (HP writers in *SS*, HPs fighting in court, families as HPs). Pictures of the HP/the vendor appear in almost every issue of the British and the Dutch SNP, but usually with only the first name. Complete anonymity is also frequent in *SS*, as is the use of pseudonyms.

So, interestingly, while a common objective of this press is to help HPs regain a sense of dignity and self-respect, they maintain a custom that refuses them the instrument that allows an individual to assert himself as a subject.

Edited interviews of HPs, most of them vendors, appear in *BI* and *Z*. In both cases they are signed by a journalist or a member of the editorial team. In *BI* the interview takes the form of a diary (about one third of a page), describing, after a brief presentation of the person (first name, age, origin and current situation),¹⁹ a day in his/her life. The textual form is thus narrative and there is little space for anything more than impressionistic ideas or opinions. In each issue of *Z*, three or four HP-vendors are interviewed on a special topic (money, family, food, books, music). Opinions are given, sometimes a critical note is heard, mostly from Dutch individuals (of 32 interviewed HP vendors, 18 were foreigners or Dutch individuals who had spent a long time outside the Netherlands, 3 were former HPs and 2 were said to have chosen a life on the streets). The interview usually concerns modern life and society: yuppies showing off their money and complaining about nuisance HPs, the cattle-like attitude of the average Dutch aid organizations,²⁰ the decision of the municipality of Amsterdam to play classical music in the Central Station in order to send away HPs, etc. The portraits in *BI* and *Z* are almost free of political or social protest (but no such topics were proposed to the HPs in Amsterdam!), and most of them tend to present a carefully optimistic vision of the future or end on a relatively positive note.

Portraits of star vendors of *BI* consist of a picture, a first name (with a few

exceptions), an indication of the vendor's pitch and a brief description of the reasons for nomination by a buyer (referred to by a first or full name). The reasons for nomination were cheerful (5), smiling, polite, friendly, helpful, pleasant, interesting chats (2). Some buyers expressed respect and admiration for the HP's courage and cheerfulness.

The stress put on the cheerfulness of the vendor generates certain awkwardness. In the first place it evokes the often 'overdone' thanks and smiles the buyer gets from the seller; it is also a (slightly embarrassing) reminder of one's own feeling of contentment when doing a good deed to a unprivileged member of society, and of what charity is often about: granting help to people that fit a certain image. On top of the usual stereotypes concerning physical appearance and personality²¹ (the bag lady, the long-bearded, bad-smelling, dirty middle-aged or old man, the alcoholic or substance-addicted person, the psychotic, etc.),²² there seems also to be an implicit distinction between good and bad HPs, a distinction that takes different forms and exists in different degrees depending on the country. The selling-setting stresses the 'unnatural' character of the commercial transaction between seller and buyer of a SNP. If friendliness and politeness are qualities we as customers expect in general in our interactions with shopkeepers and other commercial agents, we are usually more interested in the quality of the product we buy than in the personality of the seller.

In the second place one may wonder about the editorial choices made about topics and about the possible selection of testimonies and speakers. And wonder why we do not read more about angry, protesting HPs. *SS* is the only one of the four SNPs to give a wide platform to HPs protests and criticism. It is also the only one that, within the limits of my data, explicitly and repeatedly lists stereotypes about HPs (Feb. 1999), names that are used to refer to HPs (May 1999) or analyses how (local) politics and public look at HPs.²³

Features/articles about HPs The articles about HPs in the analysed SNPs contain descriptions and designations of HPs that are representative of their social ethos. As said before, homelessness is directly or indirectly the topic of all the articles in *SS*. These articles can be classified into three global categories: special reports or overviews, (local) news, and testimonies of HPs that often have a narrative dimension. They go from a neutral to a very involved style as illustrated by the examples below:

- (1) The loss of affordable housing in the United States, and the subsequent rise in homelessness, is directly linked to the decline in federal support for low income housing. (January 2000)
- (2) E. Rynerson, former member of the Human Services Commission, is this rich guy who is trying to get a nasty proposal on the ballot that would reduce cash assistance for single adults to about \$50 a month. Rynerson has written a "primer" on the proposal, an idiotic set of statements and made-up "data-points" ending with this so called solution. The primer states – and try not to laugh – "The homeless problem in San Francisco is NOT about homelessness. It is NOT about the economy, nor jobs, nor

lack of housing nor the cost of housing in San Francisco". He says that homelessness is caused by substance abuse.

Of course, every major study shows that is untrue' (June 1999)

(3) [Breakfast with Maria]

Me, I ate my breakfast sorta slow, so as to enjoy this day's one guaranteed shining moment, before running off to work, dodging raindrops, and coming home around 11-ish to The Seedy Mission Flat with soggy socks.(. . .) Maria was staying at the women's shelter over off Howard Street. "Yeah, someone fucked up this past weekend, so we all had to be in lockdown. It's not that bad, though, except for we can't have men in there. It sure beats staying in those rat-trap hotels." (January 1999)

Of 51 feature articles in *BI*, two had homelessness as the topic (Street Shots, a vendors' photo competition, and wishes of HPs around the Millennium) and two were on poverty (Breadline Britain).²⁴ The series on poverty consisted of four portraits²⁵ of persons, with full names, living on the edge of poverty, presented as follows in the headings of the articles: a poetry-loving teenager, a mother in fear of local gunmen (title: Anywhere but Here), a single dad struggling to look after his son and a pensioner caring for her blind husband (title: The Price of Love). The portraits are rich in concrete descriptions and crude details (the smell of fresh urine by the lift, having a commode in the sitting room and using two or three room sprays a week). Each portrait seems to focus on a certain type of person and the problems that go with that type. For each of them there is a positive quality or talent described. Sean, for instance, is a 15-year-old from a poor part of Newcastle. His friends and he have 'old men's faces atop skinny boys' bodies, they are 'children with angry eyes and no dreams'. His dad is on the dole and his mother is not working. He has a feeling for poetry and the journalist writes: 'A boy with Sean's talents could, and should be, anything he wants'. But most actions described as being illustrative of his life, and presented in quotes, have to do with illegality: driving without a licence, stealing, drugs, asking for cigarettes on the street (a habit of 20 a day since the age of 11). Melissa, the single mother of two children, is described around the topics of fear, feeling unsafe, and social and personal loneliness. Melissa goes to school three days a week but fears that she will not be able to finish her degree for financial reasons; she goes to church every Sunday and hopes to see 'her dreams come true'. The portrait of a man 'who has 1 pound 50 a week to keep his son happy' stresses the father's love and the child's pleasant nature ('S. is bright and one of the most pleasant children you could wish to meet', 'S. is such a happy little soul'). In the portrait of a 70-year-old woman, the stress is on cleanliness and charity ('staying clean thanks to the generosity of a pop singer', TV donated by a local doctor) vs. the welfare state ('Filling out 40-page forms for every last thing is so humiliating. You feel like a beggar').²⁶

In this series on poverty, the portraits consist predominantly of expressions of feelings, in apparent contradiction with one of the objectives (see III.2).

In the articles about homelessness appearing in the Dutch SNP, the recurrent topic is the situation on the streets for various groups of HPs (psychiatric patients, illegal aliens, immigrants) and how to deal with life on the street.²⁷ A second topic

is about HPs gaining independence and participating in projects. The general key is at best described as pragmatic and 'matter-of-fact'.

Both *BI* and *Z* published a photo reportage on homelessness. *BI*'s photos were made by vendors and were chosen for their dynamic composition (an old man that comes every Friday with biscuits for the vendor's dog – 'I worry about him if I don't see him'), their poignancy (a comfortable bed in a shop window) or their violence and expression (a portrait of dog). The photos published by *Z* were made by a professional photographer, depicted no individuals but were 'still lifes' of HPs' sleeping pitches (a thin mattress on a pavement, a pair of boots left on a piece of cardboard).

In both cases we find a similar framing to the one found in the feature articles.

III.6 LETTERS

The last genre is letters from readers. I will look briefly at the number of letters and at the percentage of letters written by a (former) HP and the topic of which is HPs or homelessness.

The Big Issue data has 56 letters, 8 about HPs or homelessness, none from HPs. *L'Itinérant's* data amounts to 34 letters, 12 about HPs, homelessness or the Journal; two were from (ex-)HPs. In *SS* only 2 letters were found in a corpus of 13 issues. One was from a young girl (13 years old) who writes 'I love to give money to homeless people because it makes me happy to see them smiling and saying thank you. I know how they feel, when they don't have a home. I think I am thankful for having a home and clothes and a loving family' (Jan. 1999). The second one was about a deceased *SS* vendor. *Z-Magazine* only published 7 letters, but all were related to HPs or homelessness. One was from a young woman who had chosen to live on the streets ('We are not crazy, we just want to be free in a different way. Do not patronise us, humiliate or judge us').

The analysis of the letter section of the SNPs leads to some remarks and questions. HPs do not appear to write letters to newspapers or magazines that supposedly represent them and speak for them. Many obvious reasons can be given to explain this quasi-absence (material reasons, lack of writing fluency, feeling of shame, etc.). Another possibility is that their letters are not selected for publication.²⁸ But letters to a newspaper are usually reactions to published material or current public issues; they are often expressions of (dis) agreement with a position taken by the publication or by a public person, and consequently have an argumentative content. Reasoning and argumentation are extremely rare in texts by HPs (with the exception of journalistic writing by some (former) HPs in *SS*). In the pages that are exclusively about HPs or given to HPs' personal expression, there is a clear dominance of personal narratives and expression of feelings. Narratives about homelessness (How did I get into that situation? How do I experience that situation?) and expression of feelings is of course expected and legitimate. However it does correspond with the public's expectations, and is evocative of the social ethos that traditions, politics and media have created around poor and homeless people.

Previous research on French mass media representation of unemployed and poor people (Torck, 1998) shows, for instance, a clear tendency, common to both tabloids and quality press, to select characteristics and quotes that stress the pathos approach to the issues and speakers, reinforcing the distance that can be observed in social life between the haves and the have-nots, between the people who fit into society and the ones we decide do not, people who control discourse tools and rational thinking and people who do not.

Discussion

The juxtaposition of these four SNPs has drawn attention to a few common features and many differences. Apart from the selling procedure (on the streets and by a HP), the publication of HPs' poetry and a generalized use of incomplete names when referring to HPs, there are few other features shared by the four of them. The different frames result from different objectives and approaches, which confirm the position of the SNP on the scale canonical-non-canonical press.

BI has a wide audience: according to the Internet site, 71 percent of readers are under the age of 44, and it is the third most popular magazine for 15–24-year-olds. Its goals are, in the first place, to spread a commercial culture. *L'Iti* puts forward socio-political involvement – (inter)national and local – with local and national readers. *Z* shares this socio-political involvement, with a local audience, and is the only one to mention the economic and social reintegration of some HPs. The socio-political involvement is the greatest in *SS*, but with a very local audience. Its writing is almost entirely done by (former) HPs. But *SS*-vendors do not take part in the economic process (they are given the newspapers, and work in anonymity), and the limited reach of the SNP (as a consequence of the topical uniformity – *SS* is almost entirely about HPs and HPs' discourse) could be a drawback for its impact on public opinion.

A common conclusion reached by sociological studies, some political viewpoints, and probably most HPs, is that HPs need to reconquer empowerment, as a general term for a sense of responsibility, dynamism and self-decision. This can be achieved with self-initiatives and projects, and a process of empowerment through discourse.

Contrary to expectations, in my data, SNPs are not always giving a real platform to HPs' voices, reflections and opinions. With the exception of the San Francisco SNP, the other three I have looked at allow limited space for HPs' voices and, with variations, tend to constrain them to special genres. Writing about HPs, either by HPs themselves or by professional journalists, takes different forms in the three European SNPs. It hardly exists in the French one, it seems to be done in a dominant pathos style in the British one, favouring individuals' stories and feelings, and it favours daily concrete issues for HPs in the Dutch SNP.

In other words, if HPs in *SS* could be said to be speakers, authors and principals (Goffman's terms) in all kinds of discourse (factual, argumentative, narrative), in *L'Iti*, their speaking platform is limited to poetry; in *BI*, and to a lesser degree in *Z*,

there is a preference for narratives and expression of feelings. This could be analysed as a legitimate and canonical first step towards empowerment through discourse, which is often seen with minorities: feelings, art, poetry first; then, eventually, rational and argumentative discourse. However, none of the European SNPs gives the impression that an evolution is going to take place.

The following question will now be addressed: how can we relate the journalistic contract and the resulting participation frame to the political, social and cultural situation in which these SNPs are produced and sold? I will only sketch some possible answers.

Let us first take the SNPs of the two cities. One common point is the local dimension and the proximity, expressed for instance in the system of pronouns of address and the topical choices made. But their differences reflect the fact that the homelessness problem is much greater in the American city. The gap between rich and poor is much deeper there, the social structures less far reaching. The hardness of life for the unprivileged in San Francisco and the United States is very far from the 'coziness' of life in the Netherlands, the Dutch pragmatic way of dealing with sensitive social questions and the tolerance and social-mindedness that is, at least on the surface, generally characteristic of Amsterdam.

BI is one of the oldest SNPs in the world, after the *Street Sheet* of New York. Its commercial success is a fact, and the work done by the foundation behind it is not to be doubted, at least as far as its results are concerned. But *BI's* view on the HPs illustrates an interpersonal relationship that is dominantly evocative of traditional beneficiaries of charity. Any explanation of this characteristic, or of the monopoly position taken by the British SNP, will have to involve economic and political motivations, and should probably address the issue of the structure of British society.²⁹

L'Iti gives the most limited space and attention to HPs. This leads at least to two trails of questioning. Contrary to what the editor-in-chief said, SDFs/HPs are not to be compared to computer scientists (see note 18). Homelessness affects a heterogeneous assortment of people who have little in common except their lack of shelter.³⁰ The only thing these people share is their situation. One would then expect more interest in that situation. But, taken as a symptom of a general situation that results from political or economic decisions and evolutions, one explanation for the silence of the French HPs in *L'Iti* might be an editorial decision to approach that (general) situation through external discourses, journalistic and politics, not to ostracize more HPs by attracting attention to them and their lives. That in *L'Iti* HPs' expression is limited to poetry could be related to the second research trail. This would consist of a communicative and cultural investigation. The power of writing, and its elite dimension, the intellectual role of the journalist as a 'maître à penser' and as a privileged addressee of political power (see Mouillaud and Tétu, 1989), could also play a role in the absence of HPs' voices in *L'Iti*.

On the other side of the participation frame, the non-HP reader and the analyst are confronted with the social ethos that they have constructed of the HPs,

within the framework of their own culture, their media, their politics and their aid organizations. Previous to the four reading experiences, though again with variations, there was a feeling that can be described with the sociological notion of 'dissociation':

These individuals are consigned to the periphery of public consciousness because by failing to conform they violate social norms and offend public sensibilities. We deal with them by dissociation, distancing ourselves to minimize or displace feelings of resentment, fear, contempt, guilt, shame, or conflict. In doing so a cycle of disinterest and disaffection is generated, allowing us to shun collective responsibility. We compartmentalize and place barriers between 'us' and 'them'. Dissociation is a dehumanizing process that manifests itself in the terminology used to describe homeless individuals. (Daly, 1996: 8–9)

At the end of this exploration into SNPs, the feeling of 'dissociation' has paradoxically not been overcome. Even SS sometimes, by its formulation, contributes to maintaining HPs in a stereotypical role, in their otherness:

Real street newspapers benefit everyone. They debate homeless and poverty issues with a depth that cannot be found in the mainstream press or even the alternative press. *Poor people have an opportunity to express themselves through writing, artwork and poetry. The vendors can panhandle with their dignity intact.* Members of the general public benefit most of all: they get to learn the truth about an issue that is tearing this country apart. (July 1999: 5; emphasis added)

The feeling of ambivalence mentioned at the beginning of this article remains. The SNPs I have looked at fail to give a real platform to homeless people and, more importantly in my opinion, also fail to assure them a new self-respect. This failure is possibly inherent to the SNP itself, as it is unable, for either economic or cultural reasons, to choose explicitly to become a canonical press product, with a specific awareness of social issues, and to make of its sellers ordinary sellers.

This conclusion is currently based on the SNPs analysed here. According to Dodge (1999), some American SNPs, as for instance *The Street Spirit*, can be considered as a model for social-change journalism. But most of them are, as put by Wright (1997; quoted in Dodge, 1999: 61) – and this could apply to the European SNPs – 'just another small business to help a few people, solve the conscience of the privileged, and maintain conditions as they currently exist'.

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NOTES

1. Both have less than one million inhabitants and are known as cosmopolitan, and supposedly tolerant to alternative ways of life.
2. *The Big Issue* will be approached through the Brighton edition. The main contrast with the London edition is mostly related to the quantity of cultural information.

3. *Time Magazine* reports (8 Feb. 1999) that in 1987 there were 847 articles on the subject in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune* and in the *Los Angeles Times*. In 1996 the same newspapers ran about 200 articles on the subject.
4. There is an International Network of Street Papers (according to *The Big Issue* Internet site it has 19 European members). The American SNPs are organized as NASNA (North-American Street Newspapers Association).
5. For instance, in the USA, Lee Stringer (1998); in France, Yves Le Roux and Daniel Lederman (1998).
6. In San Francisco, the Coalition against Homelessness estimates that, at the end of 1999, 16,000 people were homeless each night, twice as many as 10 years before.
7. This shift was described by the *Guardian* (December 1999) as the new 'Please don't feed the pigeons' policy.
8. There is one problem, explains Van Kampen, the editor-in-chief of *Z-Magazine* (Amsterdam) in a book about the magazine (1997: 21–2): people who want to help. They identify with the group they want to help and idealize it. They also think that they are better at defending the HPs interests than the HPs themselves. They know better. For HPs they are a dangerous kind of friend.
9. Generally speaking, the basic motivation for buying a newspaper or magazine is the need or desire to be informed ('news' being defined as new information about recent events, Van Dijk, 1988) and/or entertained. The economic motivation also exists for some other types of publication, like, for instance, scouting magazines ('Buy this magazine to support your local scouts!'), which are also sold by scouts on the streets. But then the economic or social survival of the individual seller is not at issue.
10. 'One does not look for one's newspaper but looks for one's vendor' (personal communication, February 2000). The editor-in-chief also stressed that an SNP is not about charity but about solidarity in the form of a 'prise en charge des vendeurs par les acheteurs' [buyers taking responsibility for the sellers] and that involves proximity. It is for this reason that *L'Itinérant* refuses subscriptions. All translations from Dutch or French are mine.
11. The 'alignment of an individual to a particular utterance whether involving a production format, as in the case of a speaker, or solely a participation status, as in the case of a hearer, can be referred to as his footing' (Goffman, 1981: 227).
12. 'Les informaticiens ont bien leur journal. Pourquoi pas les SDF?' (SDF: sans domicile fixe) [Informaticians have their own publication, why not homeless people?]
13. It is not our goal to impose our opinions and our reading of the world, only to 'tell' about them in the name of the people who do not speak, those particular people who most often need to sell our magazine.
14. The weak and the poor, children, old people, victims of political unrest or of natural catastrophes, universal medical care (CMU) in France.
15. On 24 articles found on the first page, 15 had no bylines. According to the colophon, articles without a byline are written by the Coalition staff/editorial team, half of whom are or have been homeless. The choice for anonymity is pushed quite far: even an article originally published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and reprinted in the November issue does not get a byline.
16. You, men and women of good will . . . convinced atheists or church-goers, all united by a common disgust for our society that has stopped fighting to give a little place in the city to small people as much as to important people, to weak people as much as to strong people; you, women of thirty, running from house to work, to day care, with a unemployed and desperate husband; you, already a grandmother, whose highly educated grandson has only found a temporary job at 80 francs a day.

17. Writing workshops with HPs or other unprivileged people have been the topic of articles and even literature. In France for instance, this has been the case in the journal *Mots* (1996), and with the author François Bon (1996, 1997).
18. According to some calculations, more than three thousand first names are populating the streets, the shopping centers and the parks of Rotterdam, writes the NRC-Handelsblad 13 Aug. 1999). 'Dans la zone on prend un pseudonyme. . . [Les zonards] ont rompu avec leurs racines, leur famille, leurs amis. Ils sont coupés de ceux qui, autrefois, les appelaient par leur nom. Ils sont en perte d'identité totale, ils ne sont plus personne. Ils sont hors société.' [In the zone people have a pseudonym. They have broken their roots, taken distance from family and friends. They are cut from the people who in the past called them by their name. They are in a state of lost identity, they are nobody anymore, they are outside of society.] (Le Roux and Lederman, 1998: 160); (Zonard = de la zone).
19. For example, *BI*, 372: Christina, 24, from Scotland. Became homeless a month ago after her relationship ended; *BI*, 378: Dominic, 26, lives in various squats around London. He is training to be a body-piercer and has recently started to sell the *BI*.
20. As put by a Dutch HP: 'In the world of homeless people it is a prerequisite to be dumb. A little mentally retarded is even better. . . . If you think that you are better or you can do more than the 'average' homeless individual, keep your mouth shut. . . . Act dumbly, then you have a little chance to be accepted. Not only by other homeless individuals but also by the care-takers' (HP Winston, *Z-Magazine*, 27 April 1998 in Galesloot and Harrewijn, 1999: 165).
21. Van Kampen (1997: 52) writes about a request from a local TV programme to have a Z-vendor on its show. 'We decided that A. was at the moment the most presentable vendor to appear on the 5-o'clock show.
 – 'What should I look like, how should I go' asks A. 'As a vagabond or clean cut?'
 – 'Something in between', I say, having learned from experience. Not so long ago a book written by the members of a writing club for HPs was presented to the press. All the members of the club had suits on. The journalists thought that was strange. It is not what you expect from homeless people, is it?'
22. Desjarais (1997) criticizes the image of the homeless person carried by mass media journalists and politicians, the image of a grotesque body, primitive behaviour and a broken command of language.
23. 'To the "quality of life" society, poor and homeless people are a nuisance, an eyesore, a blight, a cancer, and lately a danger to be driven from whatever neighborhood they land in after they've been swept from the last park or doorway. As in ancient societies, the "quality of life" society has identified and named its scapegoats: "bum, deadbeat, loony, crackhead, felon, druggie, hustler, drunk, ex-con, psycho, toss-up, junkie, loser". These labels sanction casual derision, disregard, dread, and ultimately, provide the rationale for intolerance and violence.' (SS, May 1999)
24. 27 feature articles were about culture (music, film).
25. There were 6 in total, but I had only 4 in my data.
26. A well-known woman politician, Mo Mowlam, at that time charged with implementing Government policy on drugs and poverty, was asked to reflect on this series in *BI*. She stressed the need for these people to have a chance for self-respect: 'What you don't do when people are homeless, or addicts, or living in poverty, is tell them what to do'.
27. A 'street doctor' writes a column and gives advice on food, sleep and giving first aid on the street. A couple of years ago, a *Z* issue provided the HP-reader with a few ways to prepare a pigeon for a special Christmas meal. It did stay quite discrete about how to catch the pigeon.

28. Very few HPs read *L'Iti* and *Z* (personal communication).
29. The three SNPs are openly critical of *BI*. Van Kampen (1997) narrates in vitriolic terms a meeting in London between representatives of *The Big Issue* and representatives of other European SNPs. An American edition of *BI* brings up the following reactions: '*The Big Issue* is about big bucks. It is exploiting homelessness to sell advertising, and exploiting homeless people as a cheap labor source' (SS, July 1999); '... filled with celebrity interviews and ads for jeans and cosmetics, a Los Angeles edition of *The Big Issue* (...) does not even pretend to be a voice for homeless people: it is simply a tabloid designed to be sold by homeless people to middle-class youth, according to its former managing publisher' (Dodge, 1999).
30. The substance abuse or the drinking which are often associated with HPs are more often a remedy to the situation than a cause, and as such, are not even specific to HPs.

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Appendix

SNP issues analysed:

The Big Issue: 334 (May 1999); 366 (Dec. 1999/Jan. 2000); 367, 370 (Jan. 2000) 371, 372 (Feb. 2000); 375 (Feb./March 2000); 376, 377, 378 (March 2000); 379 (March/April 2000); 380 (April 2000).

L'Itinérant: 215, 216 (Nov. 1998); 260 (Nov. 1999); 263, 265, 269, 271 (Dec. 1999); 275, 277 (Jan. 2000); 278, 279, 281 (Feb. 2000).

Street Sheet: January 1999–January 2000.

Z-magazine: (1999) 17 May, 19 May, 22 May, 24 May, 25 May, 26 May, (2000) 1 June, 2 June, 3 June, 4 June, 6 June.



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