

AALBORG UNIVERSITY

CiSU4 MASTER'S THESIS

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# Homelessness strategies in France: the case study of Nantes

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Figure 1: Homeless migrants in square Daviais during summer 2018, in the city centre of Nantes. Courtesy of 20 Minutes [2018]

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**Abstract:**

This Master's thesis aims to deliver a strong case study analysis of the strategy to fight homelessness in Nantes. To do so, the thesis gives an understanding of what is homelessness, with peculiar attention to its causes, to then observe the mechanics used by numerous homelessness strategy to prevent homelessness, reduce its numbers or relieve partially its effects. The Housing First method and the Finnish strategy in particular are considered. This overview of strategies allows then to build a framework to analyse the various actions and existing plans in Nantes, and give critical feedback on these.

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## Main abbreviations

The following list summarise the main abbreviations used in the project.

**HLM:** "Habitat à Loyer modéré" - social accommodation at reduced cost

**PLAI:** "Prêt Locatif Aidé d'Intégration" - integrated subsidised rental loan (cheaper form of social housing)

**PLUS:** "Prêt Locatif à Usage Social" - social usage rental loan (a more expensive form of social housing)

**PLS:** "Prêt Locatif Social" - social rental loan (the most expensive form of social housing, generally designed for the middle class)

**DALO:** "Droit Au Logement Opposable" - enforceable right to housing

**ELAN:** "Evolution du Logement de l'Aménagement et du Numérique" - evolution of lodging, planning and digital

**SRU:** "Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain" - Solidarity and Urban Renewal

**DIHAL:** "Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement" - inter-ministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing

**PLH:** "Programme Local de l'Habitat" - Local Plan for Housing

**PDALHPD:** "Plan Départemental d'Actions pour le Logement et l'Hébergement des personnes Défavorisées" - departmental plan of actions for housing and accommodation for vulnerable people

**ETHOS:** the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

**SIAO:** "Service Intégré d'Accueil et d'Orientation" - integrated service of reception and orientation

**PUMA:** "Protection Universelle Maladie" - universal health protection

**RSA:** "Revenu de Solidarité Active" - active social income

**AME:** "Aide médicale de l'État" - state medical assistance

**ANAH:** "Agence Nationale de l'Habitat" - National Agency of Habitat

**PARSA:** "Plan d'Action Renforcé en Direction des Personnes Sans Abri" - reinforced action plan for homeless people (outdated)

**HMSA:** "enquête pour les Habitations Mobiles et les personnes Sans Abri" - census for mobile homes and homeless people

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the end of the 1980s, homelessness has been growing worldwide, with rising figures in the majority of industrialised countries, and is expected to keep on rising in a context of growing economic inequalities and rising housing costs [OECD, 2020a; Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA, 2021; FEANTSA, 2019]. It is now estimated that up to 150 million people are homeless worldwide, with 4.1 million homeless people in the European Union alone [UN-HABITAT, 2018]. Figure 1.1 emphasises this growth of homelessness in Europe by showing how every European country but Finland is having worrying trends such as a rising percentage of young homeless people, or of people living in shelters.

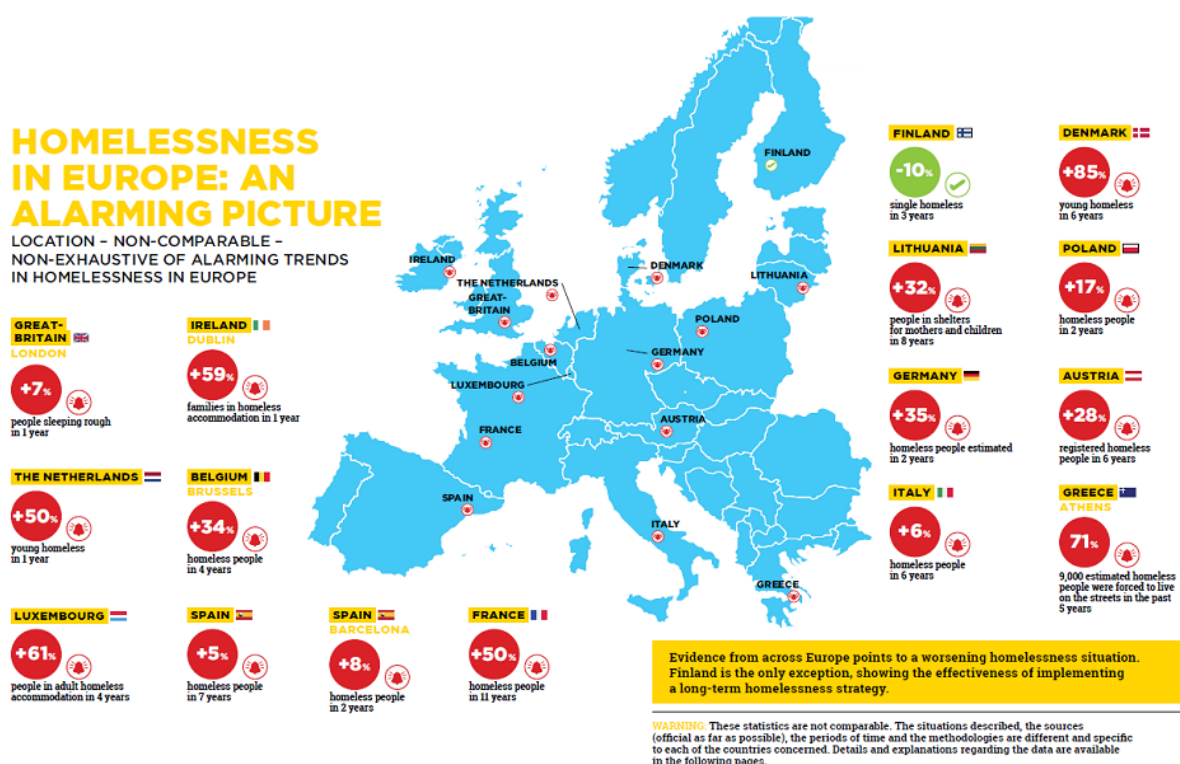


Figure 1.1: Homelessness trends in Europe, taken from International Network of Street Papers [2017]

Zooming in, at French level, there are an estimated 300.000 homeless people in 2022. This is only considering rooflessness, as a much bigger estimation of 4.1 million people are living in inadequate housing conditions in France [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022c]. Other inadequate conditions (than rooflessness) mentioned by *Fondation Abbé Pierre* includes different categories of homelessness such as sleeping in a hotel room, living in a temporary shelter, living at a relative's place. It also includes poor housing conditions, such as overcrowding or deprivation of minimal comfort (electricity, running water).

Homelessness comes with a high cost to the homeless person: the average life expectancy in Europe of a homeless person is 30 years less than the average person, with a significant worse quality of life, limited access to public services, lack of access to fundamental rights and increased mortality from all causes [Fowler et al., 2019; UN-HABITAT, 2018]. Not only has homelessness a negative impact on the given individual, but it also has costs for society on a larger

scale, as the precarious living conditions of homelessness often come with additional spending on shelters, emergency department services, other specific services or higher rates of crimes in the homeless population [Pleace et al., 2013; OECD, 2020a].

Two contradictory trends have then been observed in the last decades: the right to housing is more developed now than ever before, as it is more and more recognised in several countries' constitutions within the European Union [Taylor et al., 2020; Farha, 2018], yet at the same time increased hostility towards homeless persons have been observed in some European countries, with criminalisation of rough sleeping, anti-begging measures or use of dark design, which could be defined as a deliberate shaping of urban spaces to exclude specific activities or social group, in that case homeless people [FEANTSA, 2020; Jensen, 2019].

However, the situation is not completely hopeless. Indeed, it has been observed that homelessness figures were decreasing or at least stabilising in some areas, or countries, notably in Finland which is stated to be the only European country with consistently declining homelessness figures thanks to its national strategy [Taylor et al., 2020]. Those decreases are however *"systematically connected to the adoption of ambitious and ongoing strategies that implement access to decent and affordable housing"*, according to Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA [2021]. This leads to question what makes a strategy such as the Finnish one works in reducing its homelessness numbers, why other European does not manage to do so, and if there was good practices to be learned and adapted when building a homelessness strategy.

## Chapter 2: Problem Analysis

As stated in the introduction (see Chapter 1), homelessness is a long-time global issue which has been on the rise for the last decades, with heavy consequences at individual and societal level. This has been reflected by the emergence of numerous studies on homelessness since the early 1990s [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. A short look at previous developments in term of homelessness strategies, and what they achieved, as well as the French developments is done here to show the need of improving homelessness strategies.

### Homelessness developments: Right to Housing, past strategies

#### The emergence of a "Right to Housing"

Housing has been declared a right by the United Nations (UN) in the 1948's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 25, United Nations [1948]), and a dedicated UN programme aims for access to adequate housing for all since 1978 [UN-HABITAT, 2022b,a]. More recently, target 11.1 from the Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs - United Nations goals defined for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) mentioned the need to *"ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing"* [United Nations, 2015, see Target 11.1], while some Human Rights associations aim for the promotion of those rights, seeing them as needed for exercising other fundamental rights [Housing Rights Watch, 2022b]. Another Right to Housing legal developments worth mentioning is the Revised European Social Charter (RESC), which article 31 states the aim to prevent and reduce homelessness while making adequate housing accessible [Council of Europe, 1996].

Yet, these developments and obligations alone have proven to not be enough to reduce homelessness or refrain evictions [Taylor et al., 2020].

#### A quick overview of past strategies

Indeed, fighting homelessness is not only done with legal developments. Prevention to ensure access to housing through Right to Housing legislation is challenging, and failing to address societal determinants of homelessness. In Europe, common welfare policies, formal and informal partnerships, delivery of housing or support network agencies (governmental and non-governmental) have worked to try to reduce homelessness, or at least help homeless people to access basic needs. [Fowler et al., 2019]. Emergency shelters have been used to provide temporary roof to those in need, yet don't act as a long-term solution, as they often don't have outreach program, are offering only precarious conditions, and it has been observed that staying for a long time in shelters often means a harder integration into regular life [Sasová, 2018].

A considered solution used by several cities is a linear model called the "staircase model", which implies a step-by-step reinsertion of the homeless person through a program of rehabilitation giving access to different types of accommodation according to specific behavioural changes, and a permanent house can be rewarded only through compliance to the previous steps [Sahlin, 2012]. Yet, the very notion of "housing readiness" implied by the staircase model has been criticised, and while having shown some successes in reducing homelessness, it tends not to succeed



in integrating every homeless people in the housing market. On the contrary, permanent housing is considered more and more as the base requirement for any hope of reinsertion or self-fulfilment of long-term homeless person [Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009; Tsemberis et al., 2004b].

This led to the progressive apparition of the Housing First model, a strategy based on the provision of a permanent, rented accommodation as a starting point to reintegrate long-term homeless person, without asking for any prior conditions [Pleace, 2017b]. Figure 2.1 underlines the difference in design of the staircase model and the Housing First model.

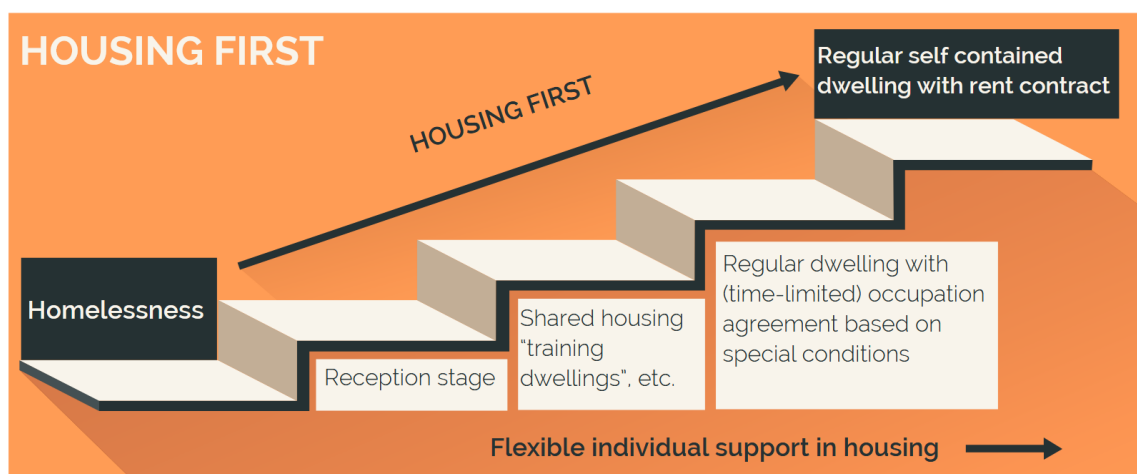


Figure 2.1: Staircase model vs Housing First model (taken from [Pleace, 2017b])

This strategy started as a niche with a program called **"Pathways to Housing"** in the 1990s in New York, and has been implemented since into national strategies for addressing homelessness in several countries, among which Belgium, France, Germany, Finland, Denmark, or the United States [Pleace, 2017b; Buxant, 2018; Fowler et al., 2019].

Although not a miracle strategy by any means, it has proven to work effectively in the Finnish case [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020]. In fact, Finland has been the only European country with receding numbers of homelessness in the last decades. The country has been using a staircase approach from 1987 to 2008, with a decrease of homelessness numbers at first, then a stagnation, before adopting a Housing First approach since 2008 with the programs Paavo 1 and Paavo 2, that replaced the vast majority of emergency shelter with supported housing units, and aimed for the delivery of considerable affordable, adequate housing in a limited time [Pleace, 2017a]. In addition, Finland have kept precise, annual point-in-time count of national homelessness figures since 1987, with a consistent methodology done by a governmental agency, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) [ara, 2022].

As observed previously, homelessness has been acknowledged as a problem that needs to be tackled, which led to the development of legal rights and strategies aiming at facing the problem, yet with mitigated results as only Finland managed to effectively reduce its homelessness figures consistently for the last decades.

## French case

Looking now at the French case, as mentioned in the introduction (see Chapter 1), there is a higher number of homeless people than ever in France. Homelessness is not a new phenomenon, though, and the fight against homelessness comes with a history in France. In 1954 already, Abbé Pierre, a prominent French actor in the fight against homelessness, led the "*uprising of kindness*" to gather money which helped building emergency shelters and led the creation of thousands of HLM ("*Habitat à Loyer Modéré*" - social accommodation at reduced cost) [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022a].

Following Abbé Pierre's death in 2007, the PARSA ("*Plan d'Action Renforcé en Direction des Personnes Sans Abri*" - reinforced action plan for homeless people) was introduced by the government to strengthen the legal right to housing in France, and increase the number of new *Maisons-Relais* (permanent supportive housing facilities) to reach a total of 12.000 places. Yet, the goal was only reached in 2013, by when a new higher target was already set. In parallel to PARSA, the law DALO ("*Droit Au Logement Opposable*" - enforceable right to housing) refined already existing French law mentions of the Right to Housing by making it applicable and easing the possibility of French citizen to ask for an accommodation. Yet, high levels of housing shortage resulted in a failure to enforce DALO, despite the need to pay fines when not enforced, thus resulting in an estimated 77.000 persons having priority with DALO that were still not housed in 2020 (the official statistics are available through "*Haut Comité pour le Logement des Personnes Défavorisées*") [Taylor et al., 2020; Haut Comité pour le Logement des Personnes Défavorisées et le Suivi du Droit au Logement Opposable, 2020; Légifrance, 2007].

Another law worth mentioning is the SRU ("*Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain*" - Solidarity and Urban Renewal), which imposed with article 55 every French cities of more than 3,500 inhabitants (with the exception of cities exempted by a national commission) to produce a minimum of 20% (or 25% depending on the city context) affordable housing [Légifrance, 2000; Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021a].

Some noticeable trends have appeared in France during last decade: the first experiment of Housing First model in France, called "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", has been carried out from 2011 to 2016 in four major French cities (Lille, Paris, Toulouse, Marseille), led by DIHAL ("*Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement*" - inter-ministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing), the main public actor for Housing in France, with promising results (80% of the Housing First service users sustained housing, and a reduction of hospital use and imprisonment rates was noted compared to the control group) [Pleace, 2017b; Gouvernement français, 2021e; Tinland et al., 2016; Un Chez-Soi d'Abord, 2016].

Following those experiments, stressing a shift in strategy for fighting homelessness in France since 2017 and President Macron election, DIHAL is responsible for the elaboration and the execution of the French "*plan quinquennal pour le Logement d'Abord et la lutte contre le sans-abrisme (2018-2022)*" (five-year plan for housing first and fight against homelessness), mentioned a housing-led strategy for the first time in France [Gouvernement français, 2021c,d].

Yet, despite this declared intention, the number of homelessness in France has reached an all-time high. Despite some success obtained with the national plan, reports show that the public spending for housing has been reduced since 2017, and that the creation of social housing fell drastically, far from reaching the aims [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 02-2022, 2022b].

Within that national context, the strategies and involvement to fight homelessness vary from one department to

another, from one city to another. For this matter, a zoom on the city of Nantes is done to give an overview of the homelessness situation at a city's level.

## **Nantes case**

In all regards, Nantes seems to have a proactive approach for the fight against homelessness: its is one of the 24 pilot-territory inscribed in the national plan "Logement d'Abord" [Gouvernement français, 2021a; Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021b]. In addition to this, the PLH 2019-2025 (Programme Local de l'Habitat - local plan for accommodation) aims for the annual creation of social housing at an above-national-level rate of a third of the total number of created housing [Nantes Métropole, 2018a]. More unique in France, a recent municipal decision voted in April 2021 acted the creation of "fonds métropolitain de lutte contre le sans-abrisme" (municipal funds for the fight against homelessness), which aims for the funding of communal projects, up to one percent of the annual municipal budget (10 million euros) [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021c].

Yet, for the moment being, like other main cities of France, homeless numbers of Nantes are on the rise: an estimated 7.441 households lived or were living homeless in 2019, and 2.500 people were living in shanty town. Among other matters, from 2001 to 2017, the yearly demand for social housing kept increasing while the yearly answer stagnated [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021c; Nantes Métropole, 2018a].

## Chapter 3: Research design

This chapter presents an overview of how the research was done. As emphasised by Creswell [2014], a research design is intended to help shape the plan of the thesis by setting the framework, and ensures the transparency of the thesis by showing its structure and methods.

This research design starts by questioning the reasons and ways of researching homelessness in Section 3.1, by presenting the theories and motivations behind this thesis, as well as personal and research ethics. Then, in Section 3.2, the way the thesis is structured is explained, and the corresponding research questions are presented. Section 3.3 presents the intended research methods for collecting data and answering each Sub-Questions. Then, structure of the thesis are shown. A discussion on the ethics and limitations of the thesis are presented in this chapter as well. Finally, limitations of the thesis are mentioned in Section 3.4.

Figure 3.2 summarises the main steps, research methods and data aimed for per Sub-Question.

### 3.1 Why and how to research homelessness

#### Theories of science used

Because homelessness is a sensitive ethical issue, cautiousness is required when studying it. Farthing [2016] emphasises the importance of thinking about the ethical implications of the research, especially when engaging with ethical issues.

In this regard, this thesis does not aim to be neutral about homelessness, as it is considered a humanitarian problem which should be accounted for and the homeless person should be proposed help if asked for. It aims to engage actively with a problem recurrent at different scale worldwide, among which the local community of Nantes in which I live. In that regard, Flyvbjerg [2004] mentions how critical research in the planning field is not value-neutral, engaged within policy debate of the field dealing with "real world problems".

Indeed, Flyvbjerg [2004] mentions how assumptions are made about the world when doing research, about the composition of the social world (the ontology), the knowledge that can be reached (the epistemology), and the way this social world can be investigated (methodology). Accordingly, critical research has its own ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions when studying homelessness. Suzanne Fitzpatrick and the critical realist theory she uses tries to accommodate for the complexity of homelessness in her research. To do so, she mentions the need to describe social relations (methodological implication) and conceptual coherence when categorising homelessness (ontological implication). With these, the epistemological assumptions are that the causes of homelessness can be divided in-between four causal mechanisms (economic structures, housing structures, interpersonal structures, individual attributes) [Fitzpatrick, 2005].

This way of research allows for considering personal factors as well as structural factors triggering (but also protecting from) homelessness, thus actively engages in questioning the role of policies (which can aggravate or limit homelessness). It considers the complexity of homelessness, the non-universal aspect of it by trying to present how various factors can work together. This is emphasised in her 2018's paper Bramley and Fitzpatrick [2018], which is engaged in a structural analysis of homelessness suggesting policy action to prevent homelessness.

This critical approach, with considerations of non-neutrality, and of complexity of the phenomenon of homelessness (with feedback loops, multiple causal factors and possible limiting factors), as well as the need of a clear categorisation of homelessness in order to successfully indicate the causes and actively aims to deal with what is considered a humanitarian concern, is used in this thesis.

### **Personal motivations and ethics**

As observed in the Problem Analysis (see Chapter 2), the actual situation for homelessness is dire and nowhere close to be solved around Europe, with Finland as the only European country to have a decreasing homeless population. While the Finnish case indicates that the fight against homelessness is far from being a lost cause, one can wonder what makes its strategy effective compared to other countries. In France, the ambitious "Logement d'Abord" plan has not fulfilled its promises for now neither obtained the expected results despite stressing a change in strategy. This same strategy has been mentioned as a leading objective in Nantes municipality, alongside other voluntarist policies and programs. Although it might be too soon to observe long-term results, these changes have yet to produce a clear effect on homelessness rates in Nantes.

The consequences of homelessness have been mentioned already in the problem analysis (Chapter 2), and is mentioned again in Section 4.3. Yet, what can be told is that, because of these consequences, it is a humanitarian concern of first importance to search for, find and set up effective homelessness strategies which can prevent and limit homelessness with in mind that the homeless population is before all a humane population.

In that regard, a short presentation of the personal ethics I used for the thesis is done here to clarify the intentions and directions of the researches done. These could be summarised shortly, by saying that this thesis advocates for better quality of life for homeless people, and that this better quality of life should be guaranteed by national and local policies.

### **Housing as a human right**

The main ethical consideration of this thesis is the consideration that housing as a Human Right. Based on the "*right to adequate housing*" definition used by United Nations [2022] the right to housing includes several key elements:

- Security of tenure
- Availability of services (access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting...)
- Affordability
- Habitability (guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, and protection against weather hazards and other threats to health)
- Accessibility (needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups must be taken into account)
- Location (should not cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools...)
- Cultural adequacy (should respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity)

Additionally, this right contains several entitlements, notably an equal and non-discriminatory access to adequate housing.

This expression of right to housing is the one supported by the thesis, although reaching the legal, physical and social domains of housing of ETHOS should be prioritised, in emergency cases, it is acceptable that not all parts of this definition of Right to Housing are achieved (such as the choice of where to live for example - the goal would still be to make it able for everyone to achieve every part of this right to housing though).

In addition to this base right to housing, this thesis considers the eight core principles of Housing First as an ethic for helping homeless people. These principles are represented in figure 3.1:



Figure 3.1: The eight core principles of Housing First [Pleace, 2017b, page 28].

The first principle, housing as a human right, is already covered by the United Nations definition mentioned earlier. The seven others core principles are defined as follows:

- **Choice and control for service users:** it should not be assumed that every homeless person with high support needs will share behaviours and other characteristics; treatments and services should when possible allow room for adaption for the individual
- **Separation of housing and treatment:** the right to housing should never be compromised by requiring homeless service users to follow a treatment to access or remain in housing
- **Recovery orientation:** services with recovery orientation must focus on the well-being of an individual
- **Harm reduction:** services linked to drug and/or alcohol reduction should offer support, help and treatment but not require abstinence from drugs and alcohol (consider that stopping drug and alcohol abuse is a complex

process)

- **Active engagement without coercion:** linked with the previous principles, homeless people using services should never be threatened with sanctions for not behaving expected ways, but should be engaged with their recovery in a positive way
- **Person-centred planning:** support and treatment should be organised around the individual and its needs
- **Flexible support for as long as required:** services should provide support for as long as necessary.

These principles are considered to be desirable in the context of this thesis.

### **Humanitarian concerns first, costs of homelessness comes only after**

It has been seen that homelessness comes with a financial cost to society: additional costs for health or justice systems associated or loss of economic productivity for example [OECD, 2020a, page 3], thus homelessness services and other policies can sometimes have positive SROI (Social Return on Investment), by helping to reduce the induced costs of homelessness [Pleace et al., 2013, pages 11–26].

Yet, even if pointing out eventual positive SROI could push policymakers to consider better homelessness services, this thesis consider that financial concerns should not be the first argument used. Not only this could de-humanise the issue, but also by emphasising financial concerns over humanitarian ones, this could lead to "cost-effective" approaches potentially jeopardising homelessness services that would been less "cost effective" than other approaches, whatever the actual human results are, and in a similar way, if a service does not brought the expected return on investment, it could be at risk of closing [Pleace et al., 2013, pages 73–75].

Therefore, this thesis considers that the aim of services should be to prevent and reduce homelessness before any financial concerns, and that *"while homelessness has a financial and economic cost for society, the humanitarian concern, correcting the societal failure that is represented by not being able to adequately house citizens in their own homes, should always be primary"* [Pleace et al., 2013, page 76].

With that in mind, even if, as may be expected, homelessness services and other policies to prevent or reduce homelessness does allow to save public funds, it is suggested that these savings should be reinvested in further homelessness policies, in a similar way to 2016-2019 Finland's Action Plan [Pleace, 2017a, page 9].

### **Against the criminalisation of homelessness**

This thesis consider that no criminalisation nor voluntary exclusion of homeless and homelessness behaviours should be accepted. This includes every coercive approach framing homelessness as a public order and nuisance issue, thus shifting "responsibility away from public policy and over to the individuals experiencing homelessness" [FEANTSA, 2020, page 3]. Such criminalisation measures are believed to reinforce poverty and social exclusion of homeless people, thus worsening their living conditions [Housing Rights Watch, 2022a; Martin and Bertho, 2020]. Besozzi [2021] has shown that social measures targeted to help homeless people were not always exclusive to criminalisation and exclusionary measures. If coming across such strategies mixing supportive and aggressive measures, the active and passive measures aimed at keeping homeless people away from the public space or making them outlaws (vagrancy

arrest, loitering fines, specifically-designed street furniture, such as narrow benches, or grid around esplanades) are not be considered as solutions in this thesis, but part of the problem and the dehumanisation of homeless people.

Instead, given previous concerns, this thesis shares the views from the **Homeless Bill of Rights** of **Housing Rights Watch** [Housing Rights Watch, 2018], with notable rights going against aforementioned criminalisation:

- the right to use public space and to move freely in it
- the need of "providing an effective postal address"
- the right to access basic sanitary facilities
- the right to vote
- the right to carry out practices necessary to survival

These homeless rights should be considered to fight against criminalisation of homelessness, and are used on top of previous ethical considerations mentioned earlier.

### Why researching homelessness in Nantes

The choice of the city of Nantes for this research project stems from multiple factors. Strong, personal factors for the choice of Nantes are my personal knowledge of the wider context of France and the local context of Nantes, as a French person having lived for now more than six years in Nantes, which I knew would help to build my problematic and analysis, as well as help to have interviews and more generally gather data about the city. Another personal factor was the will to engage with this issue in Nantes, in a non-neutral way, with hopes to keep engaged with homelessness strategies in Nantes after the end of the thesis.

Otherwise, Nantes has a lot to offer as a city engaged with tackling homelessness in France. It has a large network of homelessness actors coming from varied backgrounds (municipality, associations, social landlords), giving various types of support (shelters, day-care or advisor for example) for various homeless populations ("normal" middle-age homeless type, but also women victim of violence, young and old people, migrants, Roma people). It is a city engaged within the French Housing First program, and Nantes even have its own "municipal funds for the fight against homelessness" as seen in the problem analysis (Chapter 2), which is a unique initiative in France. However, it is also facing a dire housing market pressure, and is facing consequent homelessness challenges due to its attractiveness, for which answers are usually temporary housing which does not always end up with any permanent housing solution [Nantes Métropole, 2018a; Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021; Ouest France, 2018; Roy et al., 2021]. In a nutshell, at first glance, Nantes is heavily engaged with the limitation of homelessness, yet a complicated context seems to hinder the acquisition of truly positive results. Exploring the influences of various factors and possible ways of improving the situation appears as a valuable subject of research for me.

### Research Ethics

For the data generation, the ethical considerations are inspired by the ones mentioned by Farthing [Farthing, 2016, chapter 9]. The relevant ethical considerations used for the interviews done in the thesis are the following:



- Participants must be fully informed about the purpose, methods and intended use of the research
- The confidentiality of information supplied must be respected.
- The anonymity of participants must be respected.
- Harm to participants must be avoided (physical and psychological harm, discomfort or stress).
- Those who participate in the research must do so voluntarily.

To do so, the interviewees were able to withdraw from the research at any time. Their names are not used in the thesis, to preserve anonymity. The recordings and notes acquired from the interviews are only stored on the researcher personal computer, locked and secured with a password. Only relevant information from the interviews are used in this thesis. Additionally, as suggested by Clifford et al. [2016], the interviewees were able to have a copy of the report when it was completed.

No research ethics were used for other methods, with the exception of already mentioned personal ethics.

## 3.2 Structure of the thesis

The final goal of the thesis is to give a clear analysis of the existing strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness in Nantes, show its strengths and weaknesses, and question what could be changes and additions to the strategy to improve it.

To do so, the thesis begins by introducing how the complex phenomenon of homelessness is understood in Chapter 4, using knowledge on the theories behind homelessness, existing typologies of the phenomenon, underlining causes and consequences of it. The understanding of the multifaceted forms of homelessness helps to understand general rules about pathways into homelessness, frequent triggers or restraining factors, as well as impacts of homelessness, and seek for variations or contextual specificity of homelessness on the one hand, while on the other hand this complexity serves as a base to underline the needs for a variety of strategy accommodating these variations, in other words, how different forms of homelessness require different interventions.

This fundamental knowledge about homelessness helps to analyse strategies that have been used and understand how they address (or do not) determinants of homelessness and impacts of homelessness. Chapter 5 thus moves on to have a look at strategies that have been used or are in use to prevent and limit homelessness. In particular, recurrent methods, similarities in different strategies, or general evolution of strategies over time are analysed. A large panel of strategies and recommendations, from different levels (local, national, associations) and time, are considered. This leads to observe how the complexity of homelessness seen in Chapter 4 is eventually reflected and integrated in strategies, and how lacking an understanding of the various natures of homelessness in a specific context can hinder the results of a strategy (for specific homeless population for example). Notably, a focus is done on Housing First as an emerging strategy and its potential to accommodate for long-term homelessness, as it is being more and more used across Europe [Pleace, 2017b]. Finally, as Finland has the specificity of being the only European country to consistently reduce its numbers of homeless people, an analysis of the Finland strategy is done to understand the reasons behind this success. These analysis help creating a framework of general rules for homelessness strategies, taking account of the complexity of homelessness.

Finally, with the comprehension of influencing factors of homelessness from Chapter 4, and the understanding of key points for strategies to succeed from Chapter 5, Chapter 6 thoroughly analyses the current strategy plan and additional actions of Nantes to limit and prevent homelessness. To do so, the local context of Nantes is detailed in regards to what was done in Chapter 4. Then, information on the strategy and actions taking place is obtained through a mix of document analysis, literature review and interviews of local actors. Based on these, using the analysis done in Chapter 5, the proximity and differences with other strategies is observed to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of Nantes' strategy, and possible improvements.

A discussion (Chapter 7) then questions the limitations of the analysis, and if similar reflections can be replicated in other cities with adaption to their proper context.

The conclusion (Chapter 8) summarises the various interrogations and results obtained through the thesis, with a short notice for further researches to compensate for eventual lack of this study and possible points that can be dig deeper.

### 3.2.1 Research questions

The aim of the thesis is summarised as follows, with the main question of this thesis:

#### MAIN QUESTION:

**How can Nantes' homelessness strategy be analysed to draw conclusions on its success and limitations?**

This main question is answered using the structure mentioned previously (Section 3.2).

In that regard, Chapter 4 aims to obtain an understanding of homelessness, its causes and consequences. It answers following Sub-Question:

*How can the complexity of homelessness be analysed?*

Chapter 5 aims to underline key factors needed to have a working homelessness strategy. It answers following Sub-Question:

*What are the key requirements to manage a successful homelessness strategy?*

Chapter 6 aims to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of Nantes' homelessness strategy. It answers following Sub-Question:

*What main influencing factors from homelessness practices emerges from Nantes' case study analysis?*

## 3.3 Methodology

### 3.3.1 Short overview of methods used

The methods for answering the questions are the following.

For Sub-Question 1 (*How can the complexity of homelessness be analysed?*), an extensive literature review is done to underline what makes homelessness a complex phenomenon, with a specific attention for the causes, consequences of homelessness, the populations affected, and what can be understood as "ending homelessness". A document analysis was also used to obtain knowledge on how homelessness is viewed by associations, and official numbers about homelessness.

For Sub-Question 2 (*What are the key requirements to manage a successful homelessness strategy?*), a mix of document analysis and literature review is done, to achieve a state of the art of homelessness strategies, with a special focus on Finland, the goal being the making of a framework based on the variety of answers (housing, services, prevention) and the key rules based on the different situations (structural, individual factors).

Finally, Sub-Question 3 (*What main influencing factors for homelessness emerges from Nantes' case study analysis?*) is answered by doing a case study analysis of Nantes, which uses contextual information, document analysis as well as interviews to obtain the data to analyse using the framework obtain from Sub-Question 2.

### 3.3.2 Literature review

Literature review has been used for every Sub-Questions, with different focus depending on the topic though. This section presents the goals of the literature review, the type of papers and data searched for, and the searching terms used for each Sub-Question.

#### Research tools

The main library used to find scientific papers was Aalborg University library [Aalborg University, 2022]. Others libraries used were Google Scholar [Google, 2022b], the Social Atlas of Nantes municipality (French website specialised in social cartography of Nantes, linked to the CNRS - the National Centre of Scientific Research in France) [Atlas Social de la métropole nantaise, 2022], CAIRN (French website specialised in social sciences) [CAIRN, 2022] and the National Architecture Nantes School library [Ecole nationale supérieure d'architecture de Nantes, 2022]. Additional papers were also found by taking a look at the citations from the scientific papers used, whenever a source document seemed pertinent enough to dig up. If the paper was not available in any of the aforementioned libraries, Google search [Google, 2022a] was then used to find if available the cited paper, by research-quoting the title of the cited paper and its/their author(s).

#### Main research terms

The following list presents the main research terms used in junction with aforementioned research tools. Additional research terms used in addition to a main topic are indicated as well. These terms have been used together when there was need to sharpen the results obtained.

Main terms	Additional / Replacement terms
homelessness	cause, factor, consequence, effect, policy, typology, solution, need, statistics, data, strategy, tactic, action, limitation, prevention, diminish, theory, paradigm, end, ending
unconditional housing	housing for all
sustainable housing	adequate shelter/housing
affordable housing	social housing
housing first	housing-led
emergency shelter	supportive housing, permanent housing
pathways	housing / homelessness
housing crisis	/
long-term homelessness	/
right to housing	/
Europe	France / Finland / Finnish / Paavo / Nantes (specific cases)
FEANTSA country profile	name of the country

In addition, the main French terms used were the following:

Main French terms	English translation
sans-abri, sans-abrisme, sdf, sans domicile fixe	homeless
logement, hébergement	housing
HLM / Habitat à Loyer Modéré	social housing
refuge, abri, hébergement d'urgence	shelter
Chez-soi d'Abord, Logement d'Abord	Housing First experiment and affiliated
hébergement inconditionnel	unconditional housing
réinsertion	reinsertion
plan d'action	action / strategy plan

Other specific words found from the reading of previous literature can have been used as well when searching for specific topics (the typology for example). Because their names appeared frequently during this research, and their used articles have been useful to the making of this paper, a couple of authors' name have been used as well: **Nicholas Pleace** when searching for certain topics on Housing First, and **Suzanne Fitzpatrick** when searching for literature about the "new paradigm" and theories on homelessness.

The searching terms used for Sub-Question 1 (Chapter 4) were the most general ones. They did not aimed to gather information on solutions to homelessness, neither strategies, or specific cases of certain countries or cities. They did however aimed to obtain knowledge on profiles of homelessness, typologies, causes and consequences: related terms were used.

The searching terms used for Sub-Question 2 (Chapter 5) were more restrictive than for the first Sub-Question. They used terms for known strategies (such as Housing First, staircase model), or terms such as "homelessness" + "strategy/tactic/reduction" with the name of a country. Of course, the terms "Finland" or "Finnish" were largely used for the last part of the related chapter.

## **Goals of the literature review**

### **Sub-Question 1**

The goal of the extensive literature review done for Sub-Question 1 is an understanding of the complex phenomenon of homelessness by catching the most important traits of homelessness. The literature review aimed for obtaining information on the reasons causing homelessness: a brief look at the evolution of the explanation of causes, frequently mentioned factors causing homelessness, and how they do cause homelessness, as well as their preponderance to do so. In addition, knowledge about the consequences was researched as well, both for the consequences on the individual and on society. A focus was also given to try and apprehend the various forms of homelessness: variety of the homeless population, typology of the homeless situation, and categorisation of the housing and level of support for the homeless person.

### **Sub-Question 2**

Sub-Question 2 aims to obtain global knowledge on previously used strategies to fight homelessness, and their main key learning, with a focus on Housing First and Finland and aim to try and explain why the Finnish strategy is working.

### **Sub-Question 3**

Sub-Question 3 aimed to get information on the local context of France and on the even more local context of Nantes, with information on the different actors, the overview of already-existing actions, the local plans toward homelessness. Thus, literature review was not the main tool to get these information, as they were mostly obtainable by doing document analysis. Yet, it was useful to get knowledge from some scientific papers analysing the tendencies on the local housing market notably.

## **Knowledge acquired**

### **Sub-Question 1**

Papers collected helped to obtain knowledge on theories of homelessness, possible causes behind it (from structural and individual perspectives), consequences of homelessness (both individual, in term of social, medical, economic consequences, and consequences on society, with consideration for the perception of homelessness in modern societies, or the associated costs), the variety of different type of homelessness, the various homeless profiles, the variety of help that can be offered, and consideration on the actual end of homelessness.

### **Sub-Question 2**

The main knowledge obtained from the literature review done for sub-question 2 were analysis of trends in homelessness strategies, effects that could be achieved through the use of strategies (notably Housing First), as well as numerous papers reviewing the success of the Finnish strategy and its evolution.

### **Sub-Question 3**

Most of the knowledge acquired for Sub-Question 3 was obtained through document analysis. Yet, some scientific papers were used too for knowledge of the national context (about the "Housing First" experiment in France for example) as well as knowledge of the local context (about refugee's journey and opportunity to be housed, or the mutation of the housing market of Nantes for example).

### 3.3.3 Document analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative research method, based on the analysis of non-scientific documents, ranging from strategic plans and policies to official data obtained through annual reports [Bowen, 2009]. Documents used can be technical or non-technical, can be public records as well as personal documents such as e-mails, or physical evidences.

It is helpful to obtain data on the context of the study, to generate supplementary research data and corroborate evidences from literature review for example.

For this thesis, document analysis was greatly helpful to gather data on homelessness strategies around the world, typologies used for certain topics about homelessness (the ETHOS typology for example), or figures on homelessness in different countries. It was specially useful when looking at the Housing First strategy, the Finnish strategy, as well as the specific case of Nantes.

### Research tools

The document analysis used mainly Google search as main research tool, with the exception of few articles that were obtained directly from the people interviewed. Priority was given to official websites from the associations, governmental authorities, foundations, or official online book of laws depending on the researched topic. For example, for French legal matters, Légifrance is the official website used. The main goal was to find official documents of strategic homelessness plans, but additional data such as guides and recommendations were gathered too. Some knowledge was obtained through e-mails as well. When so, the information obtained from the e-mail as well as the position of the person who sent the e-mail are mentioned.

### Research terms

The research terms were similar to the one from the literature review 3.3.2, with the exception that the research tools differed and the focus were mostly on data, plans and guides rather than theories and analysis.

### Papers and data obtained

#### Sub-Question 1:

Only few non-scientific papers were used for Sub-Question 1. Yet, some papers from specialised associations, such as **FEANTSA** and **Housing First Europe** were used, to comfort the knowledge about causes and consequences of homelessness notably.

#### Sub-Question 2:

Non-scientific papers used were notably recommendations from NGOs (notably FEANTSA), official documents

for national homelessness strategies, as well as the *Housing First guide* from Housing First Europe, or official data and strategy for the Finnish case. It allowed for a better vision of the principles and methods of the Housing First strategy. Evaluations of its effectiveness, and what novelty the strategy brought, were mentioned. Additional researches aimed for other strategies used, such as staircase models or aggressive strategies criminalising homelessness. Analysis of national homelessness strategies or their effects were used too. For Finland, official statistics and documents on the official strategies were used, allowing for a clear overview of the evolution of the strategy, and its effects.

### **Sub-Question 3:**

The document analysis of Sub-Question 3 aimed to get information on the local context of France (national plans, housing legal rights, numbers and typologies of homelessness) and on the even more local context of Nantes, with information on the different actors, the overview of already-existing actions, the local plans toward homelessness. This was done through analysis of official plans or official website, activity reports from associations and housing companies as well as information obtained by e-mail. This document analysis helped to have a solid knowledge on the different local actors actions (who they are helping, how and to which extent), what the homelessness strategy is in Nantes, and what the limitations of the strategy can be.

Legal papers were searched for, such as local rules concerning housing construction, or priority for housing subsidies, or projected numbers of housing to be built for the incoming years. The main data source for numbers of homelessness at a national level was from Fondation Abbé Pierre's website. Legal papers were found on official websites from state and communal services, notably the official French government's website, Légifrance as mentioned in subsection 3.3.2 and Nantes Métropole's website. Association's websites were used to obtain basic knowledge on the actions and role of each interviewed association.

### **3.3.4 Case study**

Case study research is a useful method for investigating into social science subjects. Indeed, for those cases, the context in which a study takes place is central to analyse the data acquired, and the use of case study can allow for gathering specific data and useful information that helps building richer contextual analysis; in other words, it helps to develop great insights of the context in which the thesis takes place [Johnson, 2011].

As mentioned by Johnson [2011], as a case study will look intensively into one singular object (in my case, the city of Nantes), the selection of the case is of great importance to generate useful data. A well-chosen case study can compensate for eventual shortcomings of other research methods used. This is emphasised by Flyvbjerg [2005], which suggests that a well-chosen case can maximise the utility of the information obtained and help testing and building hypotheses.

### **Goals of Nantes' case study**

In the case of this thesis, the case study of Nantes allowed to gather helpful knowledge about the actors involved with the local homelessness strategy, as well as it helped to understand better the multiple factors shaping homelessness in Nantes. It helped to re-contextualise Nantes in France, and what it means for Nantes' homelessness strategy, as well as helped with a more contextualised analysis of the effects of certain practices and actions on homelessness.

### 3.3.5 Interviews

Interviews have only been done for Sub-Question 3, in order to strengthen and update the knowledge of Nantes specific context on homelessness following the literature review.

The interviews served multiple purposes. One purpose of the interviews was to get an overview of the existing actors in Nantes, and how they were related to one another. A more general purpose of the interviews was, for each interviewed actor, to get a deeper understanding of its role (or the associated association, municipality sector, or foundation) in fighting homelessness.

The main themes of the interviews were about the extent of help provided to homelessness by the related actors, and the strategies used, to help to understand which type of homeless population the actor could address, the services provided (help with administrative papers? with social relation? with learning French?), the type of housing provided (night shelter? temporary housing? permanent housing?), the extent of support provided, the numbers of homelessness the actor could take care of, the relations with other homelessness actors.

The interviews were done in an explorative way. Some questions were prepared beforehand but would not be used, and some unprepared questions would come out occasionally. Freedom was left to the interviewed person to give any additional non-asked information. The prepared questions would be a mix of main (or basis) questions, asked to every interviewed actor, and more specific questions related to the specificity of the interviewed actor's association, as some interviewed actors were more specialised for certain tasks than others. Except for the first three interviews, all interviews were recorded and transcribed to be able to come back to them and take out the most of them. Notes were still taken from the non-recorded interviews. Clifford et al. [2016] mentions how explorative, semi-structured interviews have several benefits as a research method: it helps to get a more open answer from the participants, as well as allows the interviewee to elaborate on specific points perceived as important. Not only that, but it also allowed to add follow-up questions when the main questions were all asked, if supplementary information was needed, thus maximising the knowledge acquired from the interview.

#### Main questions

The following list shows the main questions used during the interviews. Sometimes, some questions were not asked because the actor's answer to a previous question answered already the following questions, or the question was not useful for that specific actor. When no information was known on the answered topic though, these questions were systematically asked.

- Broadly speaking, what actions are done for homelessness by [actor name], and with which principles?
- What is the extent of the provided help? (numbers of people in the associations, general roles, funds ; number of room provided and for how much time)
- Is the service/association addressing everyone unconditionally? Or with conditions? Or only addresses specific homeless populations?
- What is [the actor] vision on homelessness in Nantes? (changes in the previous years, what would need to be addressed, hopes)



- Do you have any data on homelessness in Nantes?
- Any specific difficulties, or things working well (according to the actor) within the actions of [the actor]?
- Is there any possibility of adaption of offered services / help directly for one individual / case-by-case? or is the approach used general?
- What are the collaborations done from [the actor] with other actors of homelessness? Is there knowledge of what the other actors are doing for homelessness, and knowledge of the needs for the city or department?
- What are recommendations you would make for efficient, working homeless services?

Some other, more specific, questions were only asked based on the specificity of certain actors. For example, "Do you consider the actions from [the association] to follow Housing First principles?" was asked to associations that mentioned the "Logement d'Abord" plan.

### People interviewed

The focus of the interviews changed during the thesis. At first, the aim was to interview as many stakeholders active in fighting homelessness in Nantes as possible, but it soon appeared to be difficult because of the short period of time of the thesis and the slow answer from some actors. Accordingly, it was chosen to only focus on a limited number of actors, yet with considerations for their variety of activities and backgrounds.

A total of 5 interviews have been done for this thesis:

1. With a municipal councillor of Nantes, with a delegation of Right to Housing and Social Housing, who was the leader of the "homelessness funds" initiative.
2. With two members of the Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality, in charge of the Local Habitat Programme.
3. With the Head of the Housing Branch of *Association Saint Benoit Labre 44*, a relatively old (since 1953) shelter and housing association managing a whole range of housing services and accommodations
4. With the development manager of association *Les Eaux Vives*, taking part in the recent (since 2021) all-inclusive housing project "Les 5 Ponts".
5. With two employees (a land developer and a Director of Customer Relations) of a major departmental social landlord, *Atlantique Habitations*.

### Summary of the research design

The research design of this thesis is summarised in Figure 3.2:

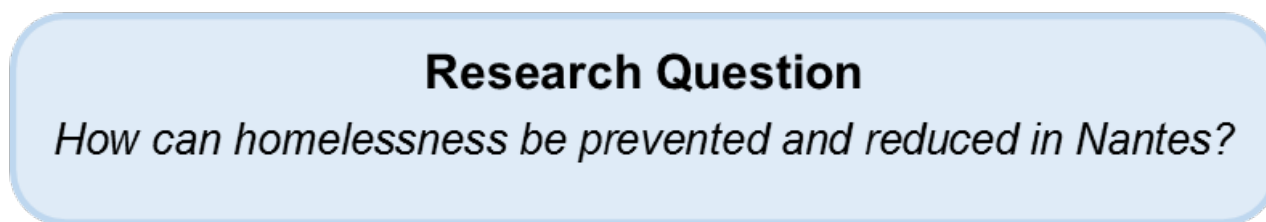


Figure 3.2: Research Design

### 3.4 Limitations

This thesis is written in limited time, and from a planning perspective. Because of that, numerous aspects of homelessness may not be considered. Notably, no plans for taking into consideration the homeless person point of view were made, no interviews of homeless people for example were done. While it was considered, the short time-length of the thesis made it complicated to frame tools to gather and analyse this point of view, thus it was preferred to aim for a simpler analysis.

Additionally, it has been said that homelessness is a complex phenomenon. Because of that, numerous generalisations are made in order to try and analyse this phenomenon. Individual, singular experiences of homelessness are not presented, but only types of homeless population. Even if not everybody from a given homeless population does go through the same pathway into and out of homelessness, general cases are considered.

Similarly, emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing are not all the same, and does not all come with similar living conditions, services and support. Some shelters can have or not have WiFi, for example. Only variations relevant to exiting homelessness are noticed for the different types of housing (for example: a shelter can have or have not a reach-out program or the allowed time to stay will differ between different housings, or a housing can be dedicated to only a type of homeless population). Differences like the implementation of the housing in a specific neighbourhood, the accessibility of neighbouring services or transports will rarely, if ever, be mentioned.

Important limitations were found while doing the interviews: as mentioned in the Interviews subsection, not all intended interviews were done in the end. Notably, an important actor of homelessness strategy in Nantes, the government agencies of Loire-Atlantique (in particular the Departmental Employment and Labour Authority), in part responsible for the PDALHPD (Departmental Action Plan for Accommodation and Housing of Precarious People), have been contacted multiple time, but they mentioned being too busy with the Ukrainian Refugee crisis to be able to help when they were contacted. Many other actors, such as one or more mayors from the 24 communes of Nantes, association Aurore, Action Logement, tenants' associations, or the person of the municipality responsible for the observatory on homelessness, were not interviewed as well. Their interviews would have allowed for better insights of the Action Plan, better understanding of how was build the coordination between actors, and possible knowledge on the actual numbers of homelessness in the department and Nantes.

Also, only a limited time was used on the recent Pays de la Loire SRADAR ("Schéma Régional d'Accueil des

Demandeurs d'Asile et des Réfugiés" - Regional Scheme of reception of asylum seekers and refugees), which is a relevant document for measures concerning part of the homeless population of Nantes. Another important document, the PDH (departmental plan for habitat), was not used because it was not issued at the time of the thesis, yet the PDALHPD mentioned how the PDH is supposed to complement it.

Another point of interest not analysed thoroughly is the criminalisation of homelessness in France or in Nantes, though it was not entirely relevant to the thesis.

## Chapter 4: Understanding homelessness

This chapter aims to answer the first Sub-Question of the thesis: *How can the complexity of homelessness be analysed?*.

Indeed, homelessness is a complex topic, with causes and answers that depends of numerous interrelated factors [Fowler et al., 2019, page 3]. For the main theme of this thesis is homelessness, a solid definition of homelessness is decisive to help the analysis of causes, consequences and potential solutions to homelessness. To do so, this chapter presents typologies of the homelessness situation, of the homeless population as well as categorise potential helps for the homeless person, then talks about usual causes of homelessness, expected consequences, and attempts to give a definition of what is "ending homelessness".

This understanding of what is homelessness is used in the following chapters to help analysing homelessness strategies as well as the specificity of Nantes' homelessness.

### 4.1 Typology of the homelessness situation

#### Categorisation of housing access and support

##### Housing access

While homelessness as a whole is often defined as the lack of safe accommodation, various distinctions of homelessness situations, in regards to access to housing, can be made: a homeless person not always lacks access to a roof [Fowler et al., 2019]. Finland homelessness reports, for example, use 4 types of homelessness situation ("temporarily living with friends and relatives", "Outside, in stairwells, in temporary shelters, etc.", "In dormitories or hostels", "In institutions") [ara, 2021b, pages 6-7]. With this typology, people are not considered homeless anymore when obtaining permanent accommodation (rented, or owned).

Another existing typology is ETHOS (the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion). According to ETHOS, three domains are constituting the "home": **the physical domain, the social domain and the legal domain**. Having a home is then understood as *"having an adequate dwelling with exclusive possession, being able to maintain privacy, and having a legal title to occupation"* [FEANTSA, 2005]. Based on these domains, ETHOS identifies 4 "Conceptual categories" of homelessness: rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing, each subdivided into "Operational categories".

Table 4.1 show these categories, showing that different categories of housing dedicated to homeless people exists, with different levels of support, or comfort allowed.

	OPERATIONAL CATEGORY	LIVING SITUATION	GENERIC DEFINITION
Conceptual Category	ROOFLESS	1 People Living Rough	1.1 Public space or external space Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
		2 People in emergency accommodation	2.1 Night shelter People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
	HOUSELESS	3 People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 Homeless hostel 3.2 Temporary accommodation 3.3 Transitional supported accommodation Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
		4 People in Women's Shelter	4.1 Women's shelter accommodation Women accommodated to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term
		5 People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1 Temporary accommodation/reception centres 5.2 Migrant workers accommodation Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status
		6 People due to be released from institutions	6.1 Penal institutions 6.2 Medical institutions (*) 6.3 Children's institutions/homes No housing available prior to release Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing identified (e.g. by 18th birthday)
		7 People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	7.1 Residential care for older homeless people 7.2 Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
		8 People living in insecure accommodation	8.1 Temporarily with family/friends 8.2 No legal (sub)tenancy 8.3 Illegal occupation of land Living in conventional housing but not the usual place of residence due to lack of housing Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling Occupation of land with no legal rights
	INSECURE	9 People living under threat of eviction	9.1 Legal orders enforced (rented) 9.2 Re-possession orders (owned) Where orders for eviction are operative Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess
		10 People living under threat of violence	10.1 Police recorded incidents Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
	INADEQUATE	11 People living in temporary/non-conventional structures	11.1 Mobile homes 11.2 Non-conventional building 11.3 Temporary structure Not intended as place of usual residence Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin
		12 People living in unfit housing	12.1 Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
		13 People living in extreme over-crowding	13.1 Highest national norm of overcrowding Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay is defined as more than one year.

(\*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.

Figure 4.1: ETHOS typology, taken from FEANTSA [2017]

## Housing support

Another possible categorisation of housing is done by considering housing support rather than housing access. Three different types are usually used (emergency shelter, transitional or supportive housing, permanent housing), as it allows to show the progression from an emergency shelter (often view as a precarious solution) to a permanent housing, sometimes through a step of supportive housing [Hart-Shegos, 1999].

Considering the utility of having a clear definition of categories when discussing policies and general knowledge, this thesis defines as follows these three aforementioned types (the definitions come from Sasová [2018]):

- **Emergency shelter** is a type of housing that only offers temporary roof to a person, with no stability, and low standards of living. They should be only used for their primary purpose: providing temporary roof in emergency, and should not serve as a substitute for a long-term solution.
- **Transitional/temporary/supportive housing** is a more stable type of housing, usually offering housing for several months, additional homelessness services and better standards of living than shelters. Tsemberis, the investigator of "Pathways to Housing", states that the perceived main role of such housing is to improve the person's "housing readiness" (with compliance to programs such as drug treatment for example), yet also states that this claim can be problematic ("housing readiness" could be better achieved in permanent housing) [Tsemberis et al., 2004a, page 2].
- **Permanent (supportive) housing** is an accommodation legally owned (rented or bought) by the homeless person. It can be supportive if support is still needed by the individual, as it is the case in a traditional Housing First program for example [Pleace, 2017b].

Of course, a last possible type of housing support not mentioned would be the absence of any support.

As seen before, ETHOS considers that three domains constitute the "home" (the physical domain, the social domain and the legal domain) [FEANTSA, 2005]. In that regard, the **emergency shelter** often does not secure any domain of ETHOS. A **temporary housing** secures the physical domain, and might secure the social domain. Finally, a **permanent housing** would secure all three domain that constitutes "the home".

### Categorising housing situation in the thesis

As seen above, both access to housing or housing support can be used to categorise the housing situation of a homeless person. These categorisations are not antagonists, as connections can be made between the two (the "houseless" category of ETHOS is usually a temporary housing kind-of support for example, and the "roofless" category can either be a total lack of support or an emergency shelter, according to Figure 4.1).

This thesis uses preferably the housing support categorisation, as it is simpler than the ETHOS one while accommodating for nuances between situations. The ETHOS categorisation of access to housing is still used when detail is needed concerning the actual living situation.

Again, specific categories can be used in a local context if their use is considered pertinent and not encapsulated in the ETHOS typology. Eventual adaptations are noticed and their pertinence explained.

### Categorisation of homelessness length

In addition to the physical situation of homelessness, the length of being homeless is another dimension of the homelessness situation worth mentioning, as it has been observed that the shorter homelessness is, the easier it gets for the homeless person to integrate "normal" life again - on the contrary, a longer homelessness usually means poorer physical and mental health conditions, additional needs for services [Pleace, 2017b, page 16]. For that reason, preventing long-term homelessness was a main objective of the Finnish homelessness strategy of Paavo I [Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009; Pleace, 2017a].

Long-term homelessness is defined as follow by ara:

***Long-term homelessness** refers to a homeless person who has a significant social or a health problem, such as debt, substance abuse or mental health problems, and whose homelessness has been prolonged or is in danger of being prolonged due to a lack of conventional housing solutions and appropriate support services. Homelessness is considered long-term if it has lasted for at least one year or if the individual has repeatedly experienced homelessness over the last three years.* [ara, 2021b, page 4]

The same definition of long-term homelessness is used in this thesis when pertinent. By default, short-term homelessness is used for homeless person who has not experienced repeated homelessness, and whose homelessness has not lasted for at least a year. Homelessness then encompasses both long-term and short-term homelessness when no distinction of the length is needed.

In a similar fashion, Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] identifies three subgroups of homeless people based on these dynamics of exiting homelessness quickly or not, **transitional homeless**, **episodic homeless** and **chronic homeless**. However, despite mentioning three subgroups, Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] considers similar needs and exits for episodic and chronic homeless people.

Thus, only two lengths (or dynamics) of homelessness are considered for this thesis:

- short-term, or transitional, homelessness: for people who rapidly exited and did not return to homelessness
- long-term, or episodic, or chronic homelessness: for people who have known repeated episodes of homelessness, or long periods of homelessness

## 4.2 Causes of homelessness

### 4.2.1 General paradigm

Taking a look at the analysis of causes for homelessness, it can be observed than the focus from the research field moved during the years: from what was considered first to be an individual pathology to a condition provoked by structural factors.

Indeed, prior to the 1970s, researches on homelessness (or "vagrancy") focused mainly on the characteristics of homeless people, as it was largely believed that their characteristics was the main reason for their homelessness [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. Some voices counteracted this point of view though, such as the critical review of homelessness literature from Archard in 1979, pointing out that *"the relationship between vagrancy, society's reaction to it, and the economic and social structure of contemporary capitalism, is absent in contemporary research."* (see Archard [1979] being cited page 13 of Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] ).

Structural explanations started to rise then. In 1995, Avramov gave an explanation of homelessness as *"associated with income insufficiency and lack of access to affordable housing"*, which grew more and more influential despite various views on the importance of individual or structural factors between diverse member states of the EU [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 14] [Avramov and Mandic, 1996].

A *"new orthodoxy"* tried to avoid theoretical flaws of only considering individual or structural factors, and rather stated that homelessness was due to *"the interaction of structural and individual factors"* [Pleace, 2016, page 2]. To complement this, Suzanne Fitzpatrick mentioned that while both factors had an impact on homelessness, the structural factors were a premise to the individual ones, *"creating conditions for homelessness to occur"*, and consider four causal mechanisms for homelessness: economic structures, housing structures, patriarchal or interpersonal structures and individual attributes [Fitzpatrick, 2005, page 15].

Based on this, this thesis considers that homelessness happens because of both structural and individual factors, yet that structural factors prevail on individual ones. The distinction between the four aforementioned causal mechanisms (economic, housing, interpersonal structures ; individual attributes) are used in addition when pertinent. This consideration can be accommodated if there is a pertinent need for a temporary adaption on specific examples or cases. Eventual adaptations are noticed and their pertinence explained.

#### 4.2.2 Pathways into homelessness

As said before, homelessness is now seen as an outcome of the interplay of structural (economic, housing and interpersonal) and individual mechanisms.

Table 4.2 gives an overview of possible causes for homelessness divided per risk factor, and the actual trigger that would supposedly cause homelessness.

It uses similar causes to the causal mechanisms from Fitzpatrick seen earlier, yet with some nuances and overlapping. The "Relationship" cause of the table correspond to the interpersonal structure, and the "Personal" cause correspond to the individual attributes from Fitzpatrick. Then, the "Structural" and "Institutional" causes of the table overlaps the economic and housing structures of Fitzpatrick, both causes from the table containing economic and housing access explanations [Fitzpatrick, 2005, page 15].

Otherwise, it can be observed that each cause from the table is divided in different "Factor of vulnerability" or risks, showing how they can be explained by a multiplicity of factors.

The "Trigger" column gives examples of how the risk factor is affecting the individual's situation and how it can aggravate the risk of becoming homeless. For example, the change of family status is a factor of vulnerability which is a relationship cause, and can be provoked by leaving family home.



Cause	Factor of vulnerability	Trigger
Structural	Economic processes (poverty, unemployment)	Rent or mortgage arrears Eviction from rented or owned home
	Housing market processes	Loss of tied accommodation Change of place for job search
	Social protection/welfare	New arrival Change of status
	Immigration, citizenship	Access to affordable housing and social protection blocked
Institutional	Shortage of adequate mainstream services and lack of coordination between existing services to meet demand or care needs	Support breakdown or no adequate support in case of emerging need
	Allocation mechanisms	
	Institutional living (foster and child care), prison, long-term hospital	Discharge Loss of home after admission
	Institutional procedures (admission, discharge)	
Relationship	Family status	Leaving family home
	Relationship situation (abusive partners or parents)	Domestic violence
	Relationship breakdown (death, divorce, separation)	Living alone
Personal	Disability, long-term illness, mental health problems	Illness episode Support breakdown or problems to get adequate support
	Low educational attainment	(Increased) substance misuse
	Addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling)	

Figure 4.2: Risk factors and triggers for homelessness, taken from [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 53]

Of course, these various factors and linked triggers (unemployment, housing shortages, relationship breakdown) can be listed individually as risks to cause homelessness [Fitzpatrick, 2005]. Yet, risk factors rarely come alone, and often they reinforce each-others, creating a vicious circle aggravating chances of getting homeless, or making it harder to leave homelessness. For example, Fowler et al. [2019] points out some existing risk factors (mental illness, addiction, personal struggles), and mentions the fact that relationship struggles erode both well-being and potential housing supports, thus losing eventual buffer to homelessness.

Poverty, which generally causes harder access to housing market, is known to be a risk factor of domestic violence [Fahmy et al., 2016], which itself is a trigger for homelessness for the victims of the violence, thus aggravating risks for homelessness [Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2018]. Marginalised population (poor people, minorities of ethnicity or sexual orientation) can face structural inequalities, in the likes of a constrained access to job and affordable housing

markets, or to welfare services [Fowler et al., 2019]. In opposition to that, protective factors to homelessness do exist, such as the availability of social support networks (family, partner, friends, or life in a shared household), which can alleviate temporary needs for a roof for example [Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2018]. Pleace mentions a "triad of support systems" (personal capacity: resilience or access to finance, informal support: partner or family, formal support: welfare or social housing systems), indicating that the less support one person have, the more likely a trigger would make him/her homeless [Pleace, 2016]. On the contrary, isolating factors such as an imprisonment can reduce the strength of those social support networks, as well as one's ability to access the job and/or housing market, thus losing support and aggravating greatly the risk of being homeless Dyb [2009].

These variety of factors and the way they interrelate underlines the existing heterogeneity of pathways into homelessness, but also can help to explain the variation of average pathways among different countries at different time. For example, the extent of welfare provided by a country is believed to impact the scale, causes and nature of homelessness: country with generous social security policies, and well-functioning housing and job markets, should expect few homeless, but a high percentage of person with complex personal problems in the homeless population, while the opposite would often verify in countries with poor welfare system [Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2018]. This was observed in Europe in the 1990s as well, with the "new homeless": reductions in welfare spending have been associated with rising homelessness [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 14].

*FEANTSA* and *Fondation Abbé Pierre's* 2021 report on housing has surveyed reasons behind housing difficulties, and has found that family and/or relationship problems were the main reason, after which come unemployment, insufficient resources or financial problems, then the end of a rental contract or unfitting living conditions [Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA, 2021, page 12]. Housing difficulties is not always homelessness, though. Other papers state that the main drivers of homelessness are poverty and housing markets [Taylor et al., 2020; Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2018].

Indeed, under pressured housing markets, the weight of rent on poor families usually causes housing insecurity, which is a risk factor for homelessness: in Europe, for example, poor families (referring to families earning less than 60% of the median national income) were spending more than 40% of their income on rent in 2016 [Fowler et al., 2019]. Actually, even when other causes are mentioned to be a main cause to homelessness, the final step before being homeless by definition is to not be able to maintain housing anymore. In that regard, whenever solutions to tackle homelessness are considered, housing is a central concern.

For example, housing in housing-led strategies is regularly mentioned as a stepping stone, a much-needed tool that helps to start new habits of life in a safe and stable environment, thus help achieving a definitive end of homelessness [Cassilde, 2021]. De Backer [2019-04] agrees in a similar way that, while not enough on its own, housing is the essential basis of care, because of the way it simplifies the access to social rights and the health system, and more generally improve the capacity of the housed homeless person to recover from homelessness. Another evidence is the "Right to Housing" limitations. Even if such rights exist in France, for example, it sometimes can not be enforced because of a lack of housing, thus driving people into homelessness [Taylor et al., 2020].

As observed in this section, causes for homelessness are various, and have different impacts on the homeless person, as well as different ways to be dealt with. However, whatever the solution is, the need for housing is persistent in any of them [Sasová, 2018].

### Typology of the homeless population

As mentioned earlier, pathways into homelessness are diverse, complex and can be affected by a whole range of reinforcing or mitigating risk factors. Among those factors, it was mentioned that marginalised population can face structural inequalities, thus *"disproportionately experience homelessness"* [Fowler et al., 2019, page 3]. And indeed, homelessness is not a singular phenomenon, and not every homeless population face the same type of struggles, at the same rate, which leads to consider a complexity of causes and responses, and a singular answer for all homeless population is thus far from ideal, even if the need for adequate, sustainable, affordable housing is a central concern for every homeless population [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 7].

In that regard, the predominant population of homeless people around Europe is categorised as "middle-aged single man". Yet the profile of homeless people is different across Europe, and is changing. There are now a growing proportion of women, families, young people, or people with a job and/or a higher level of education, as well as a growing proportion of immigrants, both from Eastern Europe and from outside the EU, among the homeless population [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, pages 54-56] [Sasová, 2018, page 21].

It so has been observed that pathways into and out of homelessness are at least partially structured by characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, physical or mental disabilities [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, pages 54-56]. In that regard, the belonging of an homeless person to a specific population is used when pertinent. While answers to homelessness aimed at the general homeless population are preferred, considering the heterogeneity of pathways into homelessness of various populations helps providing specific helps that can be needed in addition to traditional homelessness programs, as these various typologies also mean different access to housing and different triggers into homelessness [OECD, 2020c]. Again, no excessive generalisation should be done and room for adaption (out of the typology) should be allowed.

### 4.3 Consequences of homelessness

Homelessness is known to have considerable undesirable effects on the homeless individual. It has been observed that homelessness considerably worsen the health situation: a homeless person has a life expectancy reduced by 30 to 35 years when compared to the average person, as (s)he faces increased mortality causes from all causes [Fowler et al., 2019]. While no diseases are proper to the homeless person, homelessness causes a prevalence for any disease, in particular heart or lung illness, diabetes, or infectious and contagious diseases [De Backer, 2019-04]. This can be explained by the lack of housing, that contributes to the impossibility to maintain treatments, to a prioritisation of daily survival over sanitary needs, to the simple fact of living rough which prohibits from having the necessary conditions for healing, or to the apprehension to reach for medics often linked with the homelessness condition, with a lack of recognition or action to organise the healing [De Backer, 2019-04]. Other health problems linked to sustained homelessness are a poor physical or/and mental health in general, suicidal tendencies, a bigger prevalence to psychiatric troubles, with appearing or aggravating mental illness [Buxant, 2018], as well as worsening drug and/or alcohol use during homelessness [De Backer, 2019-04; Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

Other consequences are observed as well: the lack of proper housing lead to the lack of privacy, of security, the lack of safe place to keep possessions, as well as increased risks of theft, violence or sexual crimes [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. No proper housing also often means a reduced access to fundamental rights, such as justice [De Backer, 2019-04].

o4], the ability to secure a paid work, and can also prevent for having a bank account or a telephone. In a similar fashion, the lack of mailing address can make it hard to maintain relationships [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

Of course, the observed effects of homelessness depends on factors as well, such as the length of homelessness (transitional homelessness or chronic homelessness), or the support the homeless person can have (availability of a roof or not, of welfare services, homeless services) [OECD, 2020a; Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. In general, the longer the person is homeless, the dire the consequences are both for him/her, but also for the linked costs to society [OECD, 2020a].

Thus, the effects of homelessness can somehow be distinguished between those living rough or those without their proper house but having access to a roof (shelter, sleeping at a friend's place for example). The second category, while still having problems of lack of privacy, of stability, can usually more easily maintain basic hygiene or make food [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 gives an overview of potential negative effects of living rough.

Effects of living rough	Potential impacts on people living rough	Possible limits on effect
Lacking shelter	Increased risk of theft, physical danger and sexual abuse and violence Distress of having no settled home, no access to facilities Exposure to weather if sleeping outside Problems accessing services, seeking employment, maintaining social contacts or claiming welfare benefits with no address	Duration of living rough may be limited
Poor physical health	Well-being is undermined Increased risk of premature death	Health problems may arise prior to living rough and not be intensified by it Influenced by access to medical services and emergency accommodation Largely cross-sectional research may have exaggerated the true extent of health care needs among people living rough because it over-represents chronically homeless people Duration of living rough may be limited
Poor diet	Well-being is undermined May lead to involvement in begging, survival crime	May pre-date living rough and not be worsened by it Duration of living rough may be limited

Table 4.1: Summary of the potential effects of living rough, part 1 [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 63, table 6.1]

Effects of living rough	Potential impacts on people living rough	Possible limits on effect
Association with problematic drug and alcohol use	Life chances, including access to education and employment, may be limited by stigma Potential restriction of access to health care, social care, social housing and other welfare services, which could lead to deterioration May lead to involvement in begging, crime	May precede living rough or may not be intensified by the experience, particularly if short term Largely cross-sectional EU research base may exaggerate the true extent because it over-represents chronically homeless people
Associations with severe mental illness	Life chances, including access to education and employment, may be limited by stigma Potential restriction of access to health care, social care, social housing and other welfare services, which could lead to deterioration	May precede living rough or may not be intensified by the experience, particularly if short term Largely cross-sectional EU research base may exaggerate the true extent
Associations of living rough with alienation from cultural and societal norms	Negative impact on well-being and life chances Possible intensification of stigmatisation Possibility that alienation will worsen if living rough is prolonged	Evidence base is mainly from the US and has been questioned as largely cross-sectional research and researcher bias may have exaggerated the true extent Duration of living rough may be limited
Stigma	Negative impact on well-being and life chances, including employment and access to some services Some service responses may be inappropriately coercive, seeking to correct (presumed) 'deviant' behaviour Potential to have enduring effects on life chances if a record of having lived rough stays with an individual throughout their life course	Duration of living rough may be limited Records of experience of living rough may not be accessible to third parties

Table 4.2: Summary of the potential effects of living rough, part 2 [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 63, table 6.1]

These consequences for the individual also come with effects on society. Indeed, the dire conditions often lead the homeless person to begging, survival crime or other antisocial behaviour [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. This is only part of the social costs of homelessness: other mentioned costs are the increased health treatments (notably for the chronic homeless person with more needs), additional costs for criminal justice systems, financial costs due to the loss of economic productivity, and potential economic effects from rough sleeping [Pleace et al., 2013]. It is believed that in Europe, there is substantial spending linked to shelter and other services such as psychiatric care or jail for homelessness [Fowler et al., 2019]. On top of these costs, other public costs such as emergency services (for accommodation as well as health services), counselling services, and more generally other homelessness services, are to be accounted for [OECD, 2020a]. Pleace et al. [2013] emphasised though that these costs can be potentially offsets by homelessness services.

## 4.4 What is "ending homelessness"?

A question is: when does a homeless person cease to be homeless? Multiple answers could be given, depending on the definition used of an homeless person. In Finland, for example, according to ara reports, individuals are not homeless anymore when they have signed a rental agreement (thus, individuals in permanent supportive housing are not considered as homeless) [ara, 2021b]. Another definition could consider that even in permanent housing, while a certain level of support is still needed by the individual, (s)he could still be considered as homeless, as in some cases those services are helpful to maintain the individual in its housing [Bassuk and Geller, 2006, page 2]. There is at least one quasi-certitude, having access to permanent housing is a minimum requirement to exit homelessness. Multiple documents states that it considerably help social insertion, access to social rights, and every linked administrative procedures [Buxant, 2018; Chayata and Gueguen, 2016; Cassilde, 2021].

Yet, because of the difficulty to define social insertion, this thesis considers that the access to permanent housing is a sufficient requirement to exit homelessness, in a similar fashion as ara report. While it might not cover every living situation, it facilitates the overview of the current homelessness situation and trends in Nantes. Eventual support and services received by an ex-homeless person in permanent supportive housing are still be mentioned when pertinent, when considering Housing First-like experiments in Nantes for example.

## 4.5 Conclusion of the chapter

As seen in this chapter, homelessness is a complex problem, for which numerous variations of causes and consequences, and how they interfere, exist. As it touches a sensitive human situation, this complexity has to be considered when working with the issue to understand people's experience of homelessness, and how they can be help out of homelessness. Of course, generalisation are still helpful to have an overview of the homelessness situation (in term of numbers of homeless people), by categorising the length of homelessness (which has impacts on the consequences on the homeless person as well as on the needed support to exit homelessness) and the housing support a homeless person can access. The typology of support available for homeless people is stressed out, as eventually an ideal homelessness strategy would reduce its use of shelters to work towards permanent supportive housing and aim to avoid long-term homelessness, as it would allow to limit the consequences of homelessness.

In addition, even if it might not explain specific case-by-case causes, general structural and individual causes of homelessness and frequent pathways into homelessness have been observed and help to build knowledge on the triggers and risk factors of homelessness. Notably, it has been observed that structural causes for homelessness were predominant over individual causes, and especially housing, which plays a determinant role in pathways into and out of homelessness. Other factors, such as the welfare system of a country, the availability of supports, or the typology of the concerned person are all structuring the way (s)he becomes homeless, the time (s)he may stay homeless, and the effects of homelessness. Yet, only the need for housing is a logical constant among the structural causes for homelessness, as only the access to permanent housing means ending homelessness, according to the definition used in this thesis.

Similarities between pathways into and out of homelessness, recurrent key factors and triggers as well as knowledge about the homeless population each allows for a better comprehension of the phenomenon. These all helps the establishment of strategic guidelines, or rules of thumbs for homelessness strategies to follow, with in mind the

importance of allowing for adaption to the context and flexibility of the strategy to help accommodating both common and unusual homelessness profiles, which an excessive generalisation might miss. Therefore, strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness and its effects are explained with considerations for the multiple causes observed in this chapter.

## Chapter 5: Strategies to fight homelessness

Chapter 4 allowed us to observe recurrent pathways into homelessness by understanding the general causes of homelessness (economic structures, housing structures, interpersonal structures and individual attributes) and how they can interact to trigger homelessness. On another hand, it also showed the multiples form of homelessness, which was shaped by the length of homelessness, the support obtained, the homeless' own characteristics, thus emphasising the need for a variety of approaches in homelessness strategies.

Now, this chapter builds on previous chapter and aims to answer the second Sub-Question of the thesis: *What are the key requirements to manage a successful homelessness strategy?*

To do so, it was decided to have a look at strategies that have been used or are in use to prevent and limit homelessness and its impacts. A first introductory section gives a short overview of how the evolution of views on homelessness (as observed in previous subsection 4.2.1) has common patterns with the tools used to tackle homelessness. Then, recurrent methods and good practices from various homelessness strategies and scientific papers are looked upon. This leads to the observation of how the complexity of homelessness seen in chapter 4 is eventually reflected and integrated in strategies, and how lacking an understanding of the various natures of homelessness in a specific context can hinder the results of a strategy (for specific homeless population for example). Notably, a focus is done on Housing First as an emerging strategy and its potential to accommodate for long-term homelessness. Finally, an analysis of the homelessness strategy of Finland is done, as Finland is the only European country to consistently reduce its numbers of homeless people. These analysis help summing up known some best practices to fight homelessness in a framework of general rules for homelessness strategies, which helps to analyse Nantes' homelessness strategy in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

### 5.1 Patterns between homelessness paradigm and strategies

In relation to the perception of homelessness alternating between individual and structural explanations during the last decades, as presented in subsection 4.2.1, the responding strategies have been adapting to these paradigms.

When the dominant paradigm still considered homelessness to be caused by the homeless person's own characteristics (lack of adaptability to the labour market, alcoholism, violent behaviour), few to no plans were made to take care of homeless people. On the opposite, criminalisation of vagrancy as a "deviant" behaviour was usual in the beginning of the XXth century, and said-to-be "asocial lifestyles" were believed to be responsible for homelessness [Sahlin, 2001]. Few supports existed for what was viewed as its own responsibility, for example in Finland, in the 1960s, there were no national answers to homelessness, still associated with alcoholism and unemployment. Only charity, emergency answers such as night shelters, nursing and care homes were available [Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009].

Similarly, in the early 1980s in the United States, under the Reagan administration, policies aimed to diminish the importance of social welfare programs. Homelessness, considered as an individual issue, was seen as not requiring governmental intervention [Kyle, 2005]. Only with growing numbers of homeless people, views started to change, and see homelessness as a structural issue, and consider the need for strategic intervention. In this regard, in the United States, the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act* was signed in 1987 [Larkin et al., 2019], yet still with inadequate measures to address homelessness, by focusing mainly on emergency measures, thus responding to symptoms and



not causes of homelessness. Moreover, these inadequate measures were still accompanied with a criminalisation of homelessness [Duffield, 2001]. The same phenomenon was observable in Canada in the 1980s, where the erosion of the welfare state and the recession caused affordability of housing to be problematic [Fallis and Murray, 1990], and in the United Kingdom, under the neoliberal regime of Margaret Thatcher, reforms based on free market principles, reduction of the role of the welfare state and cuts in public expenditure contributed to a consequent decline of the supply of social housing [Anderson, 2007; Duffy, 2001]. Following these measures and subsequent rise in homelessness numbers, as seen sooner in section 4.2.1, structural explanations (considering for example the "lack of affordable housing") started to appear [Avramov and Mandic, 1996], and with them, national strategies such as the Housing Act in England [Duffy, 2001].

As summarised briefly, as researches has evolved, and homeless numbers has increased over the course of the 1980s to become a major concern, more integrated, wide strategies started to appear in western countries (European, US, Canada). From what was considered an individual problem that should not be the responsibility of the state and could be criminalised, it moved to be considered as a structural issue for which solutions such as guaranteeing sufficient supply of housing would be needed. Only later on, as homelessness was beginning to be viewed under the light of the "new paradigm" (not purely individual or structural), more integrated strategies started to appeared at city, regional or national levels.

This has not been a constant everywhere though, as some countries such as Hungary has kept viewing homelessness as an individual issue, with the lack of any strategy to accommodate homelessness but a continued and reinforced criminalisation of homelessness during the twenty-first century [Udvarhelyi, 2014].

The following section takes a look at recent non-criminalising strategies and how they address homelessness.

## 5.2 Overview of recent strategies

The aim of this section is to search for recurrent practices in homelessness strategies, and underline what are the frequent tools used to try to fight homelessness or at least limit its impact.

A focus was given in priority to recent homelessness strategies, mostly from after 2000, that uses either structural or a mix of individual and structural views. The observed strategies used originate from different levels and type of actors to reflect on the variety of views and considerations to consider about homelessness: some are national strategies, some are strategies from homelessness associations (FEANTSA, Fondation Abbé Pierre), or other organisations (OECD), some are from scientific literature and others from strategy documents.

### The role of housing

As it might seems obvious, the most common and basic step to any strategy to reduce homelessness and poor housing is the provision of enough convenient housing, as housing is needed to exit homelessness as mentioned in subsection 4.2.2 previously. Housing is for example the main point of a Right to Housing approach: governments are judiceable for not being able to deliver housing under certain circumstances, enhancing the need for providing this required housing [Taylor et al., 2020].

The lack of affordable housing construction worsen existing homelessness crisis, as it is linked to rising housing costs,

thus worsening cost burden for low-income renters. In that regard, Phillips [2020] acknowledge the need to provide affordable housing to reach an "affordable city", and recommend to aim for the "three S's" (supply, stability and subsidy) to fight increasing costs and secure housing when it is reached. Policies recommended range from specific planning policies (zoning, parking minimums, all aiming for a bigger house supply), a strong tenant protections against evictions, and government spending towards housing subsidy or rental assistance, or taxing on home sales or vacant and underutilised property.

In a similar way, Duffy [2001] mentions the "triple A" model of Duffy (adequacy, affordability, and accessibility of social provision), about three criteria linking housing and homelessness. It shows how increased inequality in England during the 1980s, along with the reduction of social housing under a "right to buy" policy, has led to harder routes for social housing: lengthening queues with harder criteria to meet, while in the same time, a rise of rough sleepers was observed during the 1990s. It concludes that the impoverished welfare conditions of the United Kingdom resulted in an increased housing marginalisation and subsequent homelessness: it has reduced affordability of market housing while adding restrictions on the adequacy and accessibility of social housing.

Sufficient affordable social housing are among the main recommendations from the homelessness association *Fondation Abbé Pierre*. Indeed, their last report analyses the causes for growing homelessness in France to be, among others, the slow-down of social housing build during the last years, while the demand is growing (in 2021, in 7 years, the demand for social housing has risen 5 time faster than the actual numbers of social housing, while the number of social housing created is the lowest since 15 years), which is also causing growing prices of housing (with a 154% rise of prices since 20 years), while housing subsidies have been reduced in the meantime. To counter that, *Fondation Abbé Pierre* advocates for sufficient affordable housing. Not only that, but it also advocates for proper tools to guarantee the access to housing: priority for the most excluded people, bigger state intervention to obtain more social housing and housing subsidies, possibility to regulate the rents, and eviction prevention [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

Part of the supply of affordable housing stock can indeed be reached through the use of social housing (which is defined as a rental accommodation at sub-market prices, allocated according to specific rules and waiting lists, thus with more targeting). The use of social housing as a strategy to ensure affordable housing provision has been emphasised, while the social housing sector has been shrinking in member countries of OECD [OECD, 2020b]. Indeed, targeting housing can help to guarantee reservation of social housing for those in greatest needs, despite risks such as insolvency, or creating social and economic ghettos if those vulnerable households are too much concentrated in one area. Of course, social housing itself is full of nuances: OECD [2020b] mentions various models, a universalist one (in which social housing is available to an important part of the population) and a targeted model which concentrates the allocation of social housing to vulnerable populations. Because of these nuances, the eligibility threshold of social housing can vary highly from one country to another: it is commonly based on a maximum income threshold, but can also take into account other criteria such as health or age.

OECD [2021a] similarly points up the increased housing instability, with increased rates of poverty, evictions and rising housing costs, as a strong homelessness driver. It thus recommend tools to make housing more affordable, such as boosting the aforementioned social housing, housing allowances, mortgage relief or forms of rent controls. In addition, a rapid rehousing is said in the article to be able to help the transitionally homeless. Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] also mentions how the availability of social housing helps to reduce the level of homelessness, yet Stephens and Fitzpatrick suggest that a correct targeting of this social housing might be of greater importance than the stock of it. Indeed, if the stock of social housing is badly targeted and does not reach more vulnerable populations, it does not help them to counteract housing instability.

This subsection has shown how an accessible, affordable housing system can serve as a buffer to homelessness, and that in a similar way, a lack of affordable housing is an aggravating factor of risk toward homelessness, as already mentioned in subsection 4.2.2, thus that while it is by no means enough to solve by itself every homelessness-related issue, a sufficient availability of housing is a stepping stone for any strategy.

### **Targeted social housing, subsidies**

As seen above, the provision of affordable housing is a recognised important tool for limiting precarious housing and homelessness. Some strategies have been employed to try to guarantee making housing affordable and adequate. Among them, a correct targeting of social housing is a first important point, that could even be more important than the actual stock of social housing if not distributed properly [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. In that regard, a review of the Swedish situation recommended a solution of public control of housing allocations (thus, better tenancy rights for homeless people) to counteract the lack of housing stability and the power of landlords [Sahlin, 2001].

In addition, tools helping to have affordable housing and living costs are frequently mentioned. Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] says how ensuring that those living costs can be a sufficient condition for people with low support needs to exit homelessness. A systematic review showed in this vein that *"income assistance interventions, particularly housing subsidies, improved housing stability"* [Aubry et al., 2020, page 15]. This improved housing stability was also an aim of the Greek national strategy, that aimed to reduce housing insecurity with rent subsidies and minimum income [Sapounakis, 2001]. This financial support serves both as a limitation to housing insecurity as it is one to eviction, in that regard it can be seen as a prevention tool [European Social Policy Network, 2019].

### **Prevention of homelessness**

Preventive actions are a non-negligible part of numerous homelessness national strategies in Europe [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. Indeed, as a logical starting point, limiting chances to become homeless at all often has a greater effect with fewer resources than using these resources after the individual was evicted (or, in other words, a small efficiency to keep people housed yield large reductions in homelessness) [Fowler et al., 2019]. Prevention policies can even help to reduce homelessness despite situations of poverty or unemployment, given the right strategies or context [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

This effectiveness might be also linked to the high risk of eviction as a leading factor to homelessness. Indeed, eviction is often referred as one of the most important event leading to homelessness, although it is usually linked to short-term homelessness and not long-term homelessness [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010], therefore, as one main contributing factor, it is also a main leverage tool if mitigated.

It is notably remarkable in the case of Sweden, for which during the 1990s, landlords gained more power and control over their tenants, and housing policies made it easier to evict their tenants, as *"As soon as tenants break the fundamental rules in the contract", they were evictable"* [Sahlin, 2001, page 47]. This weakening of housing safety came at the same time of rising housing prices, and a reduced opportunity for homeless people to access the normal housing market. This resulted in a light increase of long-term homelessness, as well as a more consequent increase of precarious people going through episodes of short-term homelessness; policies recommended to counter these effects include better right to housing, a reduction of the power of eviction from tenants and a renewed public control over housing

allocation [Sahlin, 2001].

Looking at other European countries, the Greek national strategy includes similarly an aim for homelessness prevention, which includes rent subsidies, minimum guarantee income or intervention before an eviction to try to negotiate [European Social Policy Network, 2019; Sapounakis, 2001]. In Germany, targeted prevention policies has helped to achieve to some extent a reduction of homelessness despite increasing poverty [Sasová, 2018]. Indeed, one of the main cause for homelessness in Germany was evictions, due to rent arrears, but the article 15a of the Federal Welfare Act for the prevention of homelessness allowed to an extent to assume these rent arrears with a social assistance [Busch-Geertsema, 2001]. Additionally, the UN committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights established in its right to housing definition a legal security of tenure from a forced eviction [Pleace, 2017b]. To some extent, the DALO law does that in France [Légifrance, 2007].

Of course, prevention of homelessness does not only concerns landlord's eviction, but also family breakdown which is a major cause of homelessness [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

As a summary, prevention measures are an important part of a homelessness strategy, as they help to avoid pathways into homelessness at first, thus limiting further costs and impacts of homelessness both for the supported individual and for society. Universal prevention measures such as legal right to housing, with housing support policies from governments, as well as indicated, targeted prevention measures aimed to more vulnerable households such as low-income families, can be used in that regard [Fowler et al., 2019].

### **Reinforced welfare system**

Other discussions considers the role of the welfare system on homelessness, and how better welfare protection usually diminished the risk of homelessness ; countries with stronger protection such as the Netherlands tending to do better than Mediterranean regime (such as Portugal) or transition regime (such as Hungary). More precisely, generous welfare coverage is seen as helpful for diminishing short-term homelessness [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010,chapter 3].

In Germany, in order to limit potential homelessness rise, preventive measures such as strengthened social care services and supports, as well as a secured access to housing for precarious people are recommended [Busch-Geertsema, 2001]. This is also mentioned in the Greek strategy, which recommend free public healthcare for non-insured people [European Social Policy Network, 2019]. A similar idea has been seen with the *United States Interagency Council on Homelessness*, which advised to leverage Medicaid and greater health system funding for homelessness supportive services [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016].

### **Knowledge of the homeless profiles**

Because of the complexity of homelessness and the variety of homeless people, as seen in chapter 4, section 4.2, there is a need to recognise the dynamism of homelessness, what one individual homeless need and make sure the homeless people know what they can access to [Fallis and Murray, 1990; United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016].

But more importantly, contextual, precise data of homeless population are needed in order to help shaping strategies accordingly to the needs. A good overview of an homelessness population helps political debate and policy

development, as it makes homelessness and specific cases harder to ignore [Fallis and Murray, 1990]. Following this idea, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness [2016] ask to be able to *"Identify and Be Accountable to All People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness"*. This is a reason for the creation of the ETHOS typology, which aimed to facilitate homelessness data collection [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010].

### Coordinating and integrating strategies

Despite having mentioned numerous types of measures aimed at dealing with homelessness to some extent, few to no effects are effectively achieved if no coordination of efforts and integrated plan of action is made. Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] mentions for example the lack of coordination as an institutional factor of homelessness. For example, even the provision of flexible support in regular housing can need *"affordable housing, well-functioning social security net, adequate crisis intervention, flexible support services"* for it to work [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, page 80].

A working strategy to solve homelessness often depends on multiplicity of actors, coordination, multiple measures working together. Fowler et al. [2019] mentions the need for formal and informal partnership (NGOs, governmental agencies, support networks, proper delivery of housing). The US strategic guide seemingly ask for a multi-level coordination to end chronic homelessness (combining access to affordable housing with income supports and employment opportunities, for example) [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016].

Avramov [2001] gives multiple examples of this need for coordinated actions: the effectiveness of antipoverty or social integration measures is boosted by a solid system of housing supply, as well as housing subsidies. It also mentions how ensuring affordable housing is impacted by measures at several different areas of public policy (such as the economy, the employment, or the social protection).

The multiplicity of approach was also a focus point of the Greek homelessness strategy plan: the five axis of the plan are all part of the global strategy, as they aim to do a large coverage of risk factors leading to homelessness. Measures not only aims for homelessness prevention (with subsidies or minimum income), but also for better work integration and homelessness data, as well as a consideration for evaluating the plan [European Social Policy Network, 2019].

On the verge of the COVID-19 outbreak as well, some emergency measures aimed to support homeless people were based on the cooperation of multiple actions, such as expanded shelters, better support for housing as well as partnerships to limit social isolation or funding to service providers OECD [2021b].

### First conclusions

Upon looking at recent strategies and reflections on tackling homelessness, multiple recurrences about what appears to be good practices stand out. As was already mentioned in subsection 4.2.2, a proper supply of affordable housing is a constant need for any strategy to work, not only for preventing homelessness but also for ending homelessness. Prevention schemes are regularly used tools as well, as it is usually easier to deal with homelessness before it actually happens, although the prevention efforts can vary greatly from a place to another. Prevention is often linked to the availability of solid welfare systems and subsidies, as specific housing subsidies or rent support can be used to avoid eviction, although services might be also needed. In general, even without considering prevention, the use of tools to make housing more affordable seems of importance. These global solutions of affordability and accessibility of housing make the bigger part of strategies. Yet, the importance of specific solutions for specific homelessness profiles

is now recognised, thus the acquisition of data on homelessness and specific homeless population also takes a part in modern homelessness strategies. Finally, the need of coordinating multiple actions and integrating strategies is recurrently found in documents too, as integrated actions boost the effects of homelessness strategies.

### **5.3 Housing First: a new strategy in line with the "new paradigm"**

#### **Before Housing First: the staircase model**

Staircase models have been universally applied throughout the Nordic countries, especially in Sweden [Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009]. As mentioned in chapter 2, the staircase model aimed at the homeless person reinsertion through going to multiple steps of rehabilitation. It has been shown to be able to work well with people who are able to live in shared housing and are ready to be intoxicant-free. Yet, for long-term homeless people, or other complex cases of homelessness, this model has proven to fail [Tainio and Fredriksson, 2009]. Indeed, it has been observed that the use of transitional housing, with rules to follow to obtain "housing readiness", could forbid homeless people to actually access housing [Sasová, 2018]. Some staircase service users would end up being stuck in those services, thus being effectively unable to access permanent housing because of strict rules of drug or alcohol use, these models having set unreachable requirements for some people [Pleace, 2017b], due to reliance on assumptions about the nature of homelessness [Pleace, 2017a].

In opposition to this staircase model, Housing First is based on making housing a starting point, with no requirements other than the traditional housing system. In that sense, by stopping with the idea of housing readiness and allowing choice for the homeless person (by being allowed to keep taking drugs, or drinking, or living with animals for example), this strategy is in-line with the new paradigm of homelessness, considering both the structural and individual factors [Pleace, 2017b].

#### **Quick history of Housing First**

The first occurrence of a Housing First strategy was made by Sam Tsemberis, with Pathways to Housing in New York, in the 1990s. The logic of providing housing first rather than after preliminary steps was already used, and the strategy was designed for long-term homeless people with a severe mental illness, as a research in the 1990s seemed to show that staircase services had difficulties to solve homelessness for long-term homelessness [Pleace, 2017b]. On top of that, better results for less spending seemed to be obtainable using this approach [Pleace and Bretherton, 2013].

Since Pathways to Housing, Housing First has been expanding to other cities and countries. In 2016, it was in use in 13 countries in Europe, at least as an experiment, including Finland, France, the United-Kingdom, Denmark among others [Pleace, 2017b, page 18].

#### **Core principles**

The eight core principles of Housing First in Europe (Housing as a human right, Choice and control for service users, Separation of housing and treatment, Recovery orientation, Harm reduction, Active engagement without coercion,

Person-centred planning, Flexible Support for as Long as Required) were already mentioned in Section 3.1 (see figure 3.1). They are evoked in more details here. This is done using the information from Pleace [2017b] as a reference.

As observed, Housing First is directly referring to the Right to Housing philosophy. Indeed, providing housing without expectation of compliance to any treatment is in-line with the right to housing, no need is for earning the right to housing within this strategy.

Otherwise, all the eight principles can be summarised quickly, as they all involve similar ideas: no assumptions should be made about the homeless person helped. (S)he must be able to access personalised service, not a standardised package, and self-determine its needs. Problematic drug, alcohol uses should not be solved through forced abstinence, but through persuasion of changing harmful habits : help, support, information, treatment is proposed in that direction through services. Even if the person does not comply with abstinence, treatments, etc, that's no reason to be refused housing, neither access to further services or support. In brief, housing should be provided without conditions, and the services provided should adapt to the person and its needs.

Shared objectives of these principles are the delivery of housing, the promotion of health and well-being, the promotion of social integration (with community integration, social support, and access to meaningful activity).

### **The role of support and services**

Housing First is not just about the housing. Indeed, as Pleace [2017b] mentions, numerous services are included with Housing First in order for it to work. Even if housing sustainment is essential as a starting point, with no support, chances are that part of the potential damaging things happening when the chronic homeless person had no access to permanent housing are still happening within the provided house, with a pursued or new phenomenon of social isolation and the lack of meaningful activity. To take this into account and help ending homelessness successfully, support services are a whole part of the Housing First strategy.

The general support provided are regular contacts with a Housing First staff member, reviewing the housing situation and ensuring no problems have occurred ; the frequency and type of contacts are determined by the needs of the user. According to those needs, additional supports can be provided: ensuring that the relationships are good with neighbours, help with budgeting, advises for independent living, or management of the housing with a landlord (in cases of sub-leasing) can be used for example.

More important, health support should be provided as well if needed. The Housing First Guide considers two types of help, "Intensive Case Management" (ICM) and "Assertive Community Treatment" (ACT), with ACT being targeted for those with very high support needs. In the case of ACT, generally the Housing First services use a multidisciplinary team (with for example a psychiatrist, a drug or alcohol worker, a doctor, a nurse, a peer-support worker, and/or specialists in employment or family advisers). Otherwise, ICM only need a single worker providing direct support, redirecting the service user person to other services outside of the Housing First team if needed. This case management way of doing is often use in European countries, as good welfare systems can be enough to cover the eventual needs. Only for people with very high and/or complex needs, the multidisciplinary team (ACT) may be necessary. Final treatments or support provided by health supports (either ICM or ACT) are psychiatric and mental health services, drug and alcohol services, clinical, personal services, occupational therapy.

## Successes and limitations of Housing First

Housing First has proven multiple times to be an effective strategy when it comes to tackling long-term homelessness.

Indeed, experiments of Housing First have shown that a large proportion of long-term homeless person maintain itself in the provided housing for a long period of time (for example, in the French experiment "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", 80% of the concerned people are still housed two years after the beginning of the experiment) [Tinland et al., 2016; Chayata and Gueguen, 2016]. OECD [2021a] similarly point up that Housing First tactics with integrated service can be effective to reduce chronically homeless.

Furthermore, their well-being and social situation tend to evolve in a positive way as well, as being housed motivates social integration, helps with administrative procedures and access to social rights, and boosts self-esteem and autonomy [Chayata and Gueguen, 2016; Buxant, 2018].

From a health point of view, Buxant [2018] shows better health conditions for tenants of Housing First compared to houseless person, which also translates into diminished hospital individual costs. Fowler et al. [2019] similarly observes how Housing First can diminish social expenses by avoiding cases of shelterisation, hospitalisation or criminalisation, Buxant [2018] even estimates that 50% of individual costs linked to hospitalisation can be avoided with Housing First.

Yet, Housing First has its barriers, limitations and eventual drawbacks too. First, the adoption of Housing First can prove to be challenging under neoliberal construction of chronic homelessness, believed to be a self-inflicted condition [Pleace and Bretherton, 2013]. Not only that, but for Housing First to be implemented, enough affordable housing is needed at first: without that existing affordable housing supply, no strategy of Housing First can succeed [Pleace, 2017b]. In addition to that issue, NIMBY (not in my backyard) attitudes and reluctance from landlords to house complex homeless profiles, and assurance that the available housing is targeted correctly still need to be ensured with this model [Pleace, 2017b].

Additionally, as Pleace [2017b] points out, a lack of support or a bad implementation of services can lessen the success of Housing First in maintaining housing or simply achieving a better quality of life for the ex-homeless person. For example, a lack of support can lead to isolation, or being unable to deal with new responsibilities coming with housing such as paying the rent or daily chores [Laval and Estecahandy, 2019]. Also, the reality of "choice" for the service user within the Housing First (which is one of its principles) is still limited, being determined to an extent by the person's social conditions and resources available: poverty means a reduced choice of housing given the capacity of paying the rent, notably [Vives, 2009].

This ambiguity of the fashionable, catchy term "housing first" indeed can cover a whole variety of approaches more or less actually engaged with tackling homelessness, and this rebranding can actually serve just as a political trick [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Laval and Estecahandy, 2019]. This also means that the adoption of a Housing First strategy can be used as an excuse to reduce the role of other existing homelessness services [Pleace and Bretherton, 2013].

## Allowance for variation

Questions have raised over the possibility to adapt the original "Pathways to Housing" program to local Housing First programs [Pleace, 2017b]. In particular, questions were raised if Housing First programs would succeed similarly in any European countries, and to what extent it was possible to change the ways of implementing the program.



Pleace and Bretherton [2013] has analysed this question under multiple angles. It has observed that Housing First programs existed in the United States, in Canada and in Europe with comparable forms but divergence in details, and that despite small model drifts, the success rates were similar. It has also observed variance between implementation possibilities: Housing First could be either "Scattered" or "Communal" / congregated / single-site. While some argued that congregated Housing First models showed worse performance than scattered sites, other studies showed the opposite [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020]. Kaakinen [2019] underlined how both scattered or congregated (single-site) sites could have advantages.

Finally, Pleace and Bretherton [2013] also mentioned how lesser forms of Housing First (in term of limited services proposed - less intensity, range or duration), such as housing-led programs could still prove to be effective to reduce homelessness.

In brief, Housing First is indeed scalable and adaptable to situations without compromising its first role ; evidence base differentiating the effectiveness of scattered or congregated and their effects on long-term integration of ex-homeless person is lacklustre, yet both types of Housing First programs show success in dealing with chronic homelessness. Similarly, lighter services following the core philosophy and principles of Housing First shows high levels of effectiveness in ending chronic homelessness as well, in that sense, cheaper variants of Housing First can be used [Pleace and Bretherton, 2013].

### **Housing First in a nutshell**

As observed in this subsection, Housing First has proven to be a successful strategy at tackling certain types of homelessness given the right contexts and services. In that sense, it can be a core strategy to fight against homelessness, but should not be used at the depends of other strategies even so. As Pleace and Bretherton [2013] mentions, a mix of approaches would be preferable. Housing First strategies are more and more implemented in Europe, and even when not in use in a country, similar strategies are sometimes used in some regions and municipalities [OECD, 2021b]. Yet, a basic requirement for such strategies is the availability of affordable housing. Its lack complicates any possibility to implement any kind of large scale housing-led approach, thus program of new apartments alongside such strategies are crucial [Pleace et al., 2015]. Indeed, the availability of affordable and adequate housing, well-functioning security net, adequate crisis intervention and flexible support services all impacts the success of a Housing First strategy [Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010]. Only by falling within a housing-led public policy, by avoiding a focus only on Housing First and insisting on the synergy of usages such a strategy will succeed [Buxant, 2018].

## **5.4 The Finnish case: an extensive look**

As mentioned previously in the introduction and the research design (Chapters 1 and 3), Finland is the only European country with consistent declining numbers of homeless people in the last decades [Taylor et al., 2020; Shinn and Khadduri, 2020]. In this section, a quick glance at the historical homelessness plans of Finland is done, followed by an analysis of the content of the plans and their application, reflecting with what has been observed in the previous section 5.2.

## Historical aspects: plans and statistics

As presented by Shinn and Khadduri [2020], the first governmental plan of Finland was launched in 1987. It instituted an annual point-in-time to follow the levels of homelessness in Finland, which is still in use nowadays, with annual reports on homelessness pursued by ara, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland [ara, 2021a]. Otherwise, this plan focused on the use of a staircase model with homeless services, which proved to work efficiently during the first years of application, effectively reducing by more than a third the numbers of homeless people in Finland from 1987 to 1994, before a stagnation, as observed in Figure 5.1.

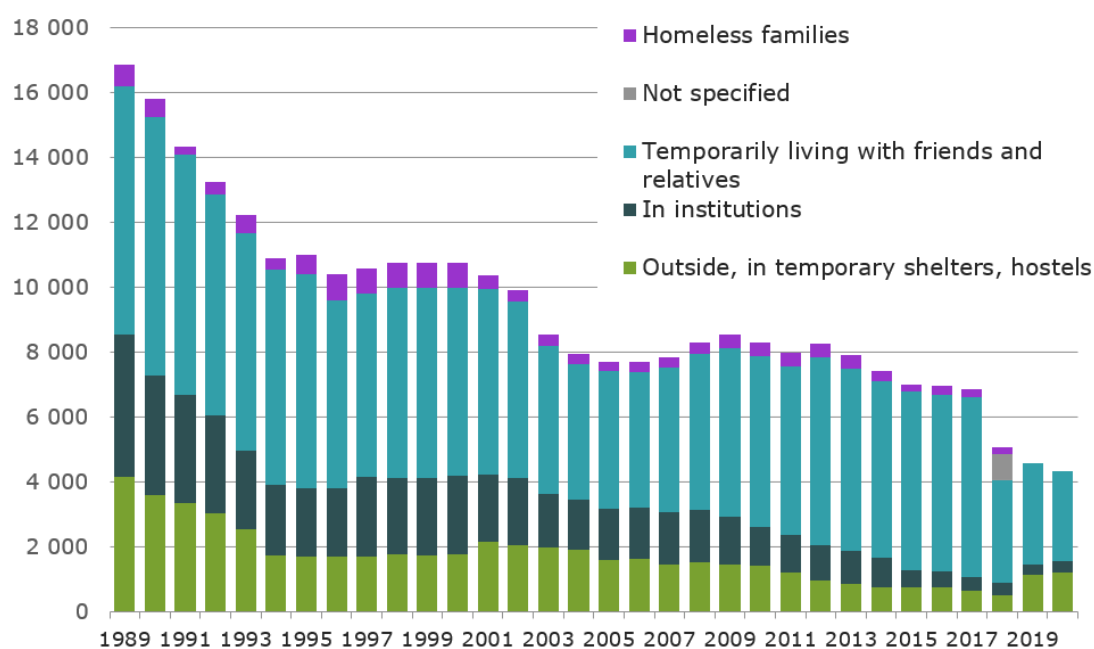


Figure 5.1: Homelessness in Finland from 1989 to 2020 (taken from [ara, 2021a])

In particular, the staircase programs seemed not to be able to accommodate for people experiencing long-term homelessness, which were believed to account for the stalled progress of reducing homelessness [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020].

To account for them, a new action plan for homelessness was launched for the 2008-2012 period, Paavo I, which consisted in a housing-led approach based on a refinement of "Pathways to Housing", and became in that sense the first national-level homelessness strategy using a Housing First model [Pleace, 2017a; Taylor et al., 2020]. This change of approach led to the replacement of existing emergency shelters and linked services with permanent supported housing, as the aim was to deliver quickly permanent housing to long-term homeless people without asking for requirements to reach further "steps" like in the previous staircase model [Pleace, 2017a]. In Helsinki for example, the numbers of shelter and hostel beds decreased from 2,121 to 52 between 1985 and 2016, while the number of permanent supported housing units grew from 127 to 1,309 and the number of rental apartments for former homeless people grew from 65 to 2,433, achieving a considerable decrease of the numbers of homeless people [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020].

This plan was followed by Paavo 2 from 2012 to 2015, which extended the original goals of Paavo 1 with a new focus on homelessness prevention [Pleace, 2017a]. With these programs, between 2008 and 2015, a 35% decrease of long-term homelessness has been observed [Taylor et al., 2020].

This was then followed by a third action plan, considered as a *"third stage of the implementation of an integrated homelessness strategy"* [Pleace, 2017a, page 1], the **2016-2019 Action Plan for Preventing Homelessness in Finland**. It kept on the previous goals of Paavo 1 and 2, aiming for an increased affordable housing supply and early identification and prevention of homelessness, and added a focus on "hidden homelessness", or specific homelessness that could have been ignored before, with observations of gender-based, youth and migrant homelessness, and specific measures for these categories [Pleace, 2017a].

Overall, the results of these multiple successive plans are impressive, with a diminution of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness from more than 18.000 in 1987 to less than 5.000 in 2019 [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020].

The last, most recent continuation of these plans has been brought with the **"Cooperation Programme to Halve Homelessness 2020–2022"**. The objectives from this programme, as stated on the official website from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, are an allocation of more affordable housing and use and development of social services (continuing on the previous plans), as well as a new focus on cooperation at local levels [Ympäristöministeriö / Miljöministeriet / Ministry of the Environment, 2022]. It aims to reinforce homelessness work at municipal and regional levels [OECD, 2021b, page 5]. Because it is recent, no recent data following this last plan have been obtained yet.

## Analysing the Finnish strategy

As mentioned by Taylor et al. [2020], a simple reason for the success of Finland strategy to reduce homelessness is the difference in commitment compared to other European countries. For example, even if it is not enough to explain the success because a lot of other factors intervene, it can still be observed that Finland was approximately spending seven times more money than France per homeless person in 2013.

Numerous papers mentions also the cooperation and commitment of numerous actors as a key factor: Pleace et al. [2015] mentions how the will of parties with power and resources help achieving results, and that the collaborative planned strategy could tackle even extreme forms of homelessness such as long-term homelessness. Similarly, Taylor et al. [2020] says that this effectiveness of homelessness policies was achieved thanks to a coalition of actors (containing the state, government agencies, municipalities, NGOs or other service providers).

These first looks describe a Finnish approach which is complex, mixing competences and views from a grid of actors. On top of that, the Finnish strategy is additive rather than reductive and considerate about improvement. Indeed, as observed in the history of the Finnish plans in the previous section, when data showed that the staircase model, while it worked before, reached a dead-end and could not accommodate for certain forms of homelessness, Finland changed its approach by using its own form of Housing First with Paavo 1, to account for long-term homelessness Tainio and Fredriksson [2009]. After its implementation, Paavo 2 kept on the strategy by adding specific measures aiming for homelessness prevention [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020]. Then again, when an international review from the ministry of environment [Pleace et al., 2015] pointed out lacks from the Paavo plans in 2015 (notably, the lack of accounting for some forms of homelessness, such as migrant and youth homelessness), this has been taken into account in the following 2017-2019 Action Plan, which added a focus on gender-based, migrant and youth homelessness that could

require specific interventions [Pleace, 2017a]. This additive approach is also visible in the content of the Action Plan 2017-2019, which requires the expected savings generated through homelessness prevention and diminishing long-term homelessness to be reinvested into further spending on homelessness programs [Pleace, 2017a].

This way, the successive Finnish plans built step-by-step an integrated strategy that takes into account numerous good practices from other countries, broadening its action and including a variety of actors, taking into account the dynamic of homelessness [Pleace et al., 2015; Pleace, 2017a; Shinn and Khadduri, 2020], while still aiming to diversify its levels of actions with the new 2020-2022 plan [Ympäristöministeriö / Miljöministeriet / Ministry of the Environment, 2022].

Part of the successes of these plans comes from the solid data Finland gathered yearly on its homeless cases, with ara (the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland) [ara, 2022]. By doing so, the Finnish strategy managed to design specific plans for accommodating specific cases of homelessness that were not tackled properly with prior plans, for example [Pleace, 2017a].

Yet, the most prominent success of the Finnish strategy was its ability to always focus on the supply of affordable housing available since its very first plan. Indeed, already in 1985, significant shares in housing companies were obtained by the state (notably through the Y-Foundation, which role was to ensure that the social housing park was growing according to the needs [Y-SÄÄTIÖ, 2022]), and at a city's scale, the Helsinki government bought numerous apartments [Taylor et al., 2020]. In general, the Finnish strategy used every sector they could to guarantee the housing supply, by using both social housing, private rented sector or alternative forms [Pleace et al., 2015, pages 87-89]. One singular point to obtain this supply was the transformation of old shelters and hostel beds into supported housing units or permanent housing, which became a significant part of the delivered permanent housing [Shinn and Khadduri, 2020; Pleace, 2017a]. This aim is reflected in the official government website which states that "*Solutions to homelessness cannot be temporary*" and that "*Conventional shelters and dormitory-type hostels are no longer adequate responses to homelessness*" [Ympäristöministeriö / Miljöministeriet / Ministry of the Environment, 2022].

To sum up, the strategy to fight homelessness in Finland is mixed, complex, broad, leaving room for adaption, based on solid data. It has a continued preoccupation for affordable permanent housing with the help of multiple tools, among which social housing. It integrates a large coalition of actors, from civil society to private actors, and encounters for that a large endorsement. Finland is basically doing numerous best-practices concerning homelessness as mentioned in international strategies, and allocating sufficient resources to have it working.

## Limitations

Despite all best efforts and successes of the Finland action plans, the aim of zero homeless still is not reached [Pleace, 2017a; ara, 2022]. In fact, homelessness being "a constantly changing phenomenon" [Pleace et al., 2015, page 105], this complex nature makes it impossible to reach this aim one-and-for-all, all efforts must be made to get as close to it as possible though. In addition, Finland also has some housing policy problems: Helsinki has insufficient supply of affordable housing, and younger people or lowest income households face a housing market disadvantage (it is still, though, the third lowest level of housing stress in Europe: the housing cost overburden is relatively low) [Pleace, 2017a]. Finally, Pleace [2017a] mentions that Finnish data on homelessness could be improved, as they are only based on the homeless contacting homelessness services: a proposed improvement is mixing administrative and survey data, like Denmark is doing, to obtain better homeless numbers.

Other questions should concern the possibility of replicating the successes of Finland strategy. To that, Shinn and Khadduri [2020] and Sasová [2018] say that despite a generous structural context for Finland (prosperous society, with relatively low levels of housing stress, and a relatively small homelessness problem), there are no systemic obstacle to making similar strategies work with the correct prerequisites. Notably, good social welfare, political consensus across different levels of government and private sector, and a sufficient supply of affordable housing would be needed to make the strategy work. Of course, larger homeless populations would mean bigger pressure on resources and capacities.

Other recommendations to make similar strategies work are the enhancement of the evidence base (by showing the results of strategies, both to assess the cost effectiveness or reach consensus), and ensure effective support services (for both homeless prevention and reduction) [Pleace et al., 2015, page 85]

## 5.5 Conclusion of the chapter

As observed in this Chapter, strategies to deal with homelessness have always been linked to the way homelessness is considered. Section 5.1 has made it clear for past strategies, yet this is still true nowadays, with integrated strategies trying to deal with multiple determinants of homelessness (economic structures, housing structures, interpersonal structures and individual attributes, as seen in section 4.2.1), as well as allowing for specific answers for various homelessness profiles, considering the complexity of homelessness.

Strategies used or suggested by different countries or associations are varied, with different tools and implications for the homeless people. However, some common grounds appear. First, the absolute need for enough affordable housing is constantly underlined (with various ways of achieving it, ranging from social housing to rent subsidies). The prevention of homelessness seems a strong tool to limit pathways into homelessness as well, with specific support to the person in the verge of being homeless. More sparsely, the need of knowledge of the homeless population in a specific context is recommended, as it makes it easier to accommodate for these specific populations, and helps deliver a clear communication on the results achieved with strategies over time. Finally, all these tools should be coordinated within an integrated strategy, in order to boost their effects.

In that regard, the Housing First strategy has its merits, managing to effectively get out of homelessness some specific profiles of homeless people, the long-term (or chronic) homeless population. Yet, because of its high requirements (high support levels, availability of housing), it should be used alongside other housing-led strategies aimed at homeless population with lower needs to be successful, or at least the help provided should be adapted accordingly.

The Finland strategy particularly shines among national strategies. Indeed, it had aimed to mitigate the problem of supply of affordable housing from the start of its successive governmental plan, in 1987, by pushing the acquisition and building of new affordable housing as well as slowly transforming shelters into permanent housing. On top of that, the successive action plans have always build on the past plans and acquired data to keep on doing what was successful and adapting what was not anymore, launching the first national-level "Housing First"-led homelessness strategy with the Paavo plans to deal with long-term homelessness, and encourage homelessness prevention, then working on specific interventions for youth, gender-based and migrants homelessness with the following Action Plan. It has managed to build an integrated strategy that includes a large variety of actors, encounters consensus, and have diversified its levels of actions without forgetting the importance of the housing supply, and keeps on adding new tools to reinforce its global strategy.

Of course, a city or a country cannot simply replicate the Finnish strategy without consideration for its own context. However, the best practices from this strategy and other are still relevant as long as there is a political will to implement them and that they are adapted to their context. Pleace [2017a] mentions how this Finnish approach is notably transferable in countries where welfare systems or social housing are well developed, which is the case of France. In that regard, Chapter 6 analyses the homelessness strategy of the city of Nantes by comparing it with best practices from this Chapter, and how they fit with the strategy.

Table 5.1 summarises the best practices and requirements this thesis is using for the following chapter. These requirements are inspired by the various strategies observed in this chapter, with a clear focus on recurrent tactics used, Housing First and the Finnish strategy and its actions. Of course, these requirements are only indicative and no solution is giving a perfectly predictable outcome when dealing with homelessness.

Best practices / Requirements	Details
Sufficient provision of affordable housing	Social housing, subsidised housing, private housing of limited price can all work
Solid homelessness data	Yearly collection of data, with details on the homeless population when relevant context-wise
Prevention of homelessness	Limitations of eviction power, rent subsidies, negotiations, family counselling (for family break cases)
Housing-led actions	Housing First to deal with complex cases of chronic homelessness, less intensive housing-led models alongside
Limitation of precariousness	Reinforced welfare state, housing subsidies, solid employment rates
Specific actions for specific cases	Need the knowledge of homeless profiles in the given context, and solid data. Consideration for specific answers to special needs
Integration and coordination	The multiple actions should be coordinated under integrated plans, at multiple levels, and their results are reinforced by the consensus and coordination of actors
Political will	Pursued effort to improve the homelessness strategy over time, financial involvement, saved funds are reinvested into improvement of homelessness policies

Table 5.1: Best practices observed to tackle homelessness, based on Chapter 5

This way, when doing the case study analysis of Nantes in chapter 6, for each requirement, relevant points from Nantes strategy, actions and actors can be emphasised, analysing how they fare with this particular requirement.

## Chapter 6: The case study analysis of Nantes

Chapter 5 sorted out multiple practices considered to be important for an integrated homelessness strategy to work well from the analysis of already-existing homelessness strategies, notably the Finnish strategy.

With the knowledge of these recommended practices, and with in mind the factors causing homelessness observed in chapter 4, an analysis of Nantes homelessness strategy is done in this chapter to answer the third Sub-Question of the thesis: *What main influencing factors from homelessness practices emerges from Nantes' case study analysis?*.

To do so, the first section of this chapter summarises relevant data for the case study analysis of Nantes, to have an understanding of the national and local context in which Nantes' homelessness strategy is taking place, of the typology of the homelessness population in Nantes, and to summarise knowledge obtained from the documents (official strategy plans) analysed and the interviews done.

The second section of the chapter starts the analysis per se, building toward a critical view on Nantes' homelessness strategy, with in mind the framework obtained from chapter 5.

### 6.1 Relevant data

#### 6.1.1 The national context of France

As mentioned in the problem analysis (Chapter 2), there is now a higher number of homeless people than ever in France, with estimations of 300.000 homeless people and 4.1 million people living in inadequate housing conditions [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022c].

This is supported by the French Court of Audit (*Cour des comptes*, responsible for performing financial audit on public spending), which wrote an audit controlling the first results obtained by the "*Logement d'Abord*" policy launched for the period 2018-2022 in France [Cour des comptes, 2020]. Indeed, a quick progression of the number of homeless people in France was observed, with a limited success of mitigation. One explicating reason given by the audit is the arrival of numerous people in great poverty from stronger migratory flux since 2012, as an estimated 100.000 "new" homeless (among which 30.000 refugees), comes every year from the national arrangements on legal provisions on the right of asylum, thus leading to an average of 30.000 more homeless per year despite an estimated 80.000 ex-homeless entering housing every year. The audit also observed a recent rise of public spending in shelters, reaching more than 4 billion euros in 2019, while social housing State aid ("*aide publique au logement social*") was reaching 15 billion €. Despite this, some positive points are still observed: the dynamic of access to housing has accelerated, but is still lower than expected results and the aimed numbers, while the sanitary COVID-19 crisis reinforced the need for success.

Even more recently, since the 20th of May 2022 and the ministerial cabinet reshuffle of the second mandate of President Emmanuel Macron, the dedicated ministry of Housing was removed, raising concerns about the will of the government to actually fight against housing inadequacy and linked topics. Yet, the Elysee mentioned that this ministry's core tasks (alongside with the Mobility ministry's one, which was also removed) have been added to the portfolio of the "*Ecological transition and Territorial Cohesion*" ministry, and might be taken care of by soon-to-be

nominated state secretaries after the next French legislative elections, happening on the 12th and the 19th of June 2022 [France Info, 2022].

A look at numbers and trends is not enough to give a sufficient overview of the national context though, thus in this subsection, an overview of relevant policies, of the French welfare system and of the French housing market is done. For clarity, only the main information gathered are shown here. A more complete look is available in appendix A, and is referred in the analysis when needed.

### Relevant policies and tools in France

Numerous French policies and specific tools are relevant to affordable housing. Among them, the **SRU law** has proven to be useful: indeed, it pushes forward the creation of social housing by enforcing cities to reach a minimum rate of social housing (20% to 25% of the newly-constructed housings, depending primarily on the size of the city), with levy for cities not respecting the law. A limitation to SRU however is that every social housing, PLAI, PLUS and PLS indifferently, are included in the total rate, while PLUS to an extent and PLS notably rarely are affordable to the poorest part of the population. Suggestions have been made to raise the minimum rate to 30% social housing in housing-stressed area, with an attention to produce more PLAI (**Fondation Abbé Pierre** suggests to make it half the social housing production) [Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales, 2021b; Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021a; Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b]. For these reasons, attention is paid to the SRU rates of Nantes and its communes, and the part of PLAI, PLUS or PLS included.

An important recent policy to also have in mind is the **ELAN law**. This 2018 law have notably aimed to the simplification and increased flexibility of construction norms and procedures to facilitate the housing construction, as well as new tools like rental control in stressed areas or state-covered rent guarantee (Visale). Yet, the more recent evaluation report of this law have shown mitigated results, with notably an intended "supply shock" of housing that did not happen [Gouvernement français, 2021b; Assemblée Nationale, 2022]. Attention is paid at the use of new tools from ELAN (Visale, Bail Mobilité) and the eventual impacts it had in Nantes.

Finally, the **DALO law**, already mentioned in the problem analysis (2), has been a relevant tool to facilitate access to housing for precarious households and rehousing for evicted people, yet it has shown limitations to its enforceability [Taylor et al., 2020; Légifrance, 2007]. Eventual mentions of the use of DALO in Nantes are underlined.

Additional tools and policies, as well as the complete overview of previously mentioned policies, is available in appendix A.1.

### Welfare in France

French welfare is strong in regard to health coverage, as every person living regularly in France can benefit from PUMA (a universal health protection), which covers entirely regular health expenses and partially more intensive one, guaranteeing a minimum access to healthcare to precarious people. In addition, undocumented strangers can also benefit from similar health coverage with the AME (a state medical assistance), as long as they lived in France for more than 3 months and earn less than 746€ per month [Service Public, 2020a, 2022a].

In addition, a minimum income (RSA) is also available (under conditions) for precarious people, yet is unavailable



for students or young adult people of less than 25 years-old (which are supposed to benefit from family solidarity) [Service Public, 2022c]. The effects of these welfare policies for homelessness are mentioned when relevant.

The complete overview of the French welfare system is available in appendix A.2.

## Housing in France

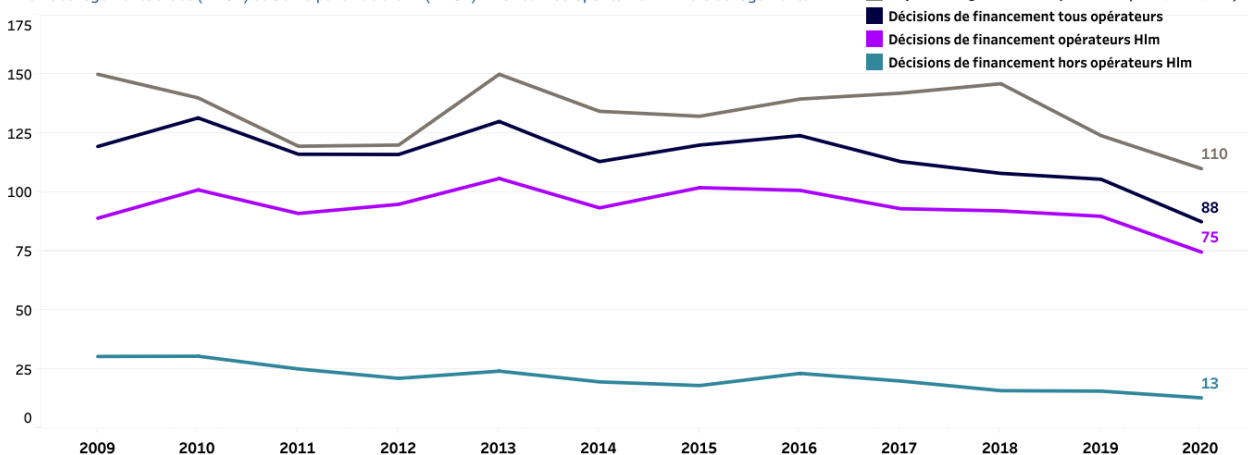
The French housing market has shown to face difficulties and constraints, notably with an insufficient affordable housing provision, which results in DALO being unenforceable in numerous cases, and a considerable 12 millions people living in poor housing conditions [Taylor et al., 2020; Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

The main answer to the lack of affordable housing supply comes from the social housing sector, which represents 15.6% of the total primary housing in France [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021c]. Social housing in France is mainly produced by operators called HLM bodies, with different types of social housing depending on the resources: PLAI is the cheaper type of social housing, PLUS, which is a bit more expensive, is the most common form of social, and PLS is the most expensive form of social housing (usually aimed for the middle-class) [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2020].

Yet, the HLM production has been steadily slowing down since 2017, in part due to increased construction costs and reduced funding for HLM operators [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b]. Figure 6.1 shows the recent constant decrease of financed social housing (dark blue line):

### Objectifs et décisions de financement de logements locatifs sociaux (droit commun)

Bilan des logements aidés (DHUP) et USH à partir de SISAL (DHUP) - France métropolitaine - Milliers de logements



Chaque année sont fixés en loi de finance des objectifs de production de logements sociaux. De l'ordre de 40 000 à 50 000 au début des années 2000, ils s'établissent entre 125 000 et 150 000 ces dernières années.

En fonction de ces enveloppes et des conditions locales de production, les opérateurs, et au premier plan les opérateurs Hlm (80% des décisions de financement), déposent leurs demandes de financement qu'ils traduisent les années suivantes par des réalisations de logements sociaux.

Le nombre d'agréments est en baisse depuis 2016 ; il est particulièrement bas en 2020, année marquée par un contexte économique et électoral particulier.

Source USH, Hlm en chiffres 2021

Figure 6.1: Aimed and actual rulings of financed social housing in France, taken from L'Union Sociale pour l'Habitat [2021a]

An important role of the social housing is to give access to housing to the most precarious people. To do that, the

allocation rules play an important role, as they prioritise applicants based on certain criteria. The criteria for the main stock are decided at a national level. However, these prioritised stock are completed with local quotas decided by prefectures, departments and housing landlords [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2021a; Ministère Chargé du Logement, 2020].

In the case of Nantes, an attention to the current housing situation, to the aimed housing production (notably social housing) and to the specific allocation rules is carried out when relevant for the analysis.

The complete overview of The French housing market is available in appendix A.3.

### 6.1.2 Nantes contextual factors

Starting with demography, Nantes is the 6th biggest town of France, with 323.975 inhabitants in 2019, while being the main city of its area of attraction (a set of communes defining the influence of a pole of population and pole of work on surroundings communes) which reached 997.222 inhabitants in 2018. The department Loire-Atlantique has, for its part, 1.429.272 inhabitants (in 2019) [INSEE, 2021e,d,c,b].

In term of housing, Nantes municipality has centralised most of the public information available about tools and solutions to access housing with its "Maison de l'Habitant", both a place for specialised advice on matters relative to housing (legal or financial questions, available tools and subsidies, answers for specific populations), and a website for more general information about housing in Nantes [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2022a]

As already mentioned in the Problem Analysis, Nantes is among the 24 pilot-territory for promoting the national "Logement d'Abord" plan at local scale, with transcription of certain national goals in its PLH, the local housing plan, analysed in more details later [Gouvernement français, 2021a; Nantes Métropole, 2018a]. Among more unique point, the municipal decision to allocate a maximum of 10 million euros of municipal funds for homelessness project every year has been praised [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021c].

Looking at numbers in more details, in recent years, the yearly demand for social housing kept increasing while the yearly answer stagnated [Nantes Métropole, 2018a]. Notably, a lack of T1 and T2 apartment in social housing, compared to the demand, as well as a low rate of attribution of adequate housing for the poorest part of applicants have been observed (29% rate of attribution, compared to a 44% rate usually), alongside a low rate of vacant housing [Fondation Abbé Pierre et al., 2022, page 88]. A growing phenomenon of gentrification has been observed too. Indeed, the social diversity has indeed been reduced in recent years, notably in the city centre of Nantes, alongside a comparable rise of property prices [Rivière and Batardy, 2022; Rivière et al., 2020].

Yet, the SRU law is still respected in the case of the city of Nantes [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2022a]. It is not necessarily the case for other communes from the municipality, as observed in Nantes Métropole [2018b].

Another phenomenon affecting housing in Nantes is the migratory pressure that followed the migrant crisis, in particular since 2018. Préfet de la Région Pays de la Loire [2021] shows how the major part of the migrants arrival in the "Pays de la Loire" region was concentrated on Nantes, going from 45% of arrival in 2017 to 60% in 2018 and 63% in 2019, for a total of 4.051 asylum seekers in 2019. Consequently, the regional reception scheme is constantly saturated, with approximately 44% of asylum seekers that were homeless in 2020 because of insufficient places, and 66% homeless asylum seekers if only considering the Loire-Atlantique department.

This has been exemplified with the situation of square Daviais in Nantes, in 2018, where a total of 698 migrants set up with tents for more than three months [Ouest France, 2018]. Their evacuation was coordinated by an unconditional rehousing action into gymnasiums or shelters from the municipality and association Aurore, which was then followed by a progressive rehousing into supportive housing by the municipality, seconded in the longer term by the state, for conditional rehousing into other supportive housing depending on the status of the migrant [Aurore, 2020; Roy et al., 2021].

### 6.1.3 The typology of Nantes homelessness

In Loire-Atlantique, the PDALHPD (departmental housing plan for precarious people) points out 8 priority targets with some already-existing dedicated help when considering sub-population categories of homelessness: the Roma people (or "Gens du voyage" in French), people exiting prisons, people with severe mental illness, dropout youth (from family breakdown or facing problem of social insertion, or with addiction problem, etc.), women victim of violence, ageing marginalised people, and refugees and migrants. Additionally, general precarious people are also mentioned [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, pages 93–105]. As these distinctions are in use in the local context, this typology of homeless population is used for Nantes analysis, with eventual additions to the typology if found relevant through the interviews and document analysis.

### 6.1.4 Official strategy plans used

To help with the case study analysis of Nantes, three official strategy plans related to housing were analysed, each covering different thematic and scales, and originating from different levels of public actors, yet all with important points for affordable housing and/or homelessness in Nantes.

The plans used were:

- the five-year national plan for housing first and fight against homelessness, for the period 2018-2022, here referred as "Logement d'Abord"
- the Loire-Atlantique PDALHPD (departmental plan of actions for housing and accommodation for vulnerable people), for the period 2021-2025
- Nantes Municipality's PLH (Local Plan for Housing), for the period 2019-2025

In this subsection, a short summary of the main data considered for each plan is done. The entire relevant content of the plans considered for this thesis is available in appendix B, and is mentioned when used.

#### **The national housing plan: Logement d'Abord:**

The "Logement d'Abord" plan have adopted several principles from Housing First strategies, yet does not actually use Housing First as its core policy. It does have an action dedicated to Housing First per se, "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", but it is still only an experiment led in some French cities, not systematically used. "Logement d'Abord" is more of a housing-led strategy, heavily focused on producing enough affordable housing, with notably the creation of 40.000 PLAI-type social housing per year, and the use of alternate tools such as "Pensions de famille" and rental intermediation to reach other precarious people. Indeed, among its priorities are underlined the need for more affordable housing, more easily accessible. On top of that, the prevention of homelessness as well as an improvement of the support they can have are also among the priorities of the plan [Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2018; Gouvernement français, 2021c].

However, as of 2022, numerous objectives of the plan have not been achieved, with a particularly low number of social housing produced, and a lack of funds or support for intermediation which sometimes is out-of-reach for precarious people. While an acceleration of the rehousing of homeless people seems to happen, because of a greater number of people becoming homeless, the homeless numbers are actually still rising. A speeding of evictions have also been observed, with no solution of quick rehousing in most cases, which contradicts the prevention priority of the plan. On top of that, the execution of the plan has shown to be done very differently depending on the political will of local actors. For that reasons, recommendations of boosting the social housing production prioritising better homeless person, and speeding the transformation of shelters into permanent housing in a similar way as Finland has been issued [Cour des comptes, 2020; Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

A more complete look at the contents from this document is available in appendix B.1.

#### **The departmental homeless plan: PDALHPD:**

The PDALHPD is specifically designed as an orientation document for homelessness strategy in the department of Loire-Atlantique, aimed towards people having difficulties to maintain themselves in housing, or access housing.

The main goals of the PDALHPD are to coordinate and simplify homelessness actions in the department. To do so, the PDALHPD make a contextual overview of Loire-Atlantique in terms of housing provision, and potential reasons for limited access to housing, among which the reduced production and turnover of social housing, and the increasing numbers of migrants without rights to access social housing. Based on that overview, the PDALHPD made axis of work and orientations underlining the intended actions to solve the existing issues. Among them, the collaboration of actors, shared knowledge and strategy, as well as specific located actions, or specific actions for specific homeless populations, are mentioned. Notably, a large part of the PDALHPD lists most of the already-existing actions, available subsidies and actors of homelessness of the department, and points out the results obtained with specific tools, numbers of specific supportive housing or shelters available, and underlines as well the help and needs available for specific homelessness populations [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021].

A more complete look at the contents from the PDALHPD used for this thesis is available in appendix B.2.

#### **The local housing plan: PLH:**

The PLH is not only dedicated to homeless people or vulnerable people. Instead, it defines the objectives of production, rehabilitation as well as the municipal strategies and tools used to try to reach the desired amount of housing per type, with the aim to accommodate for every person living in Nantes or in one of its 24 communes.

These production aims are summarised inside the PLH in Table 6.2:

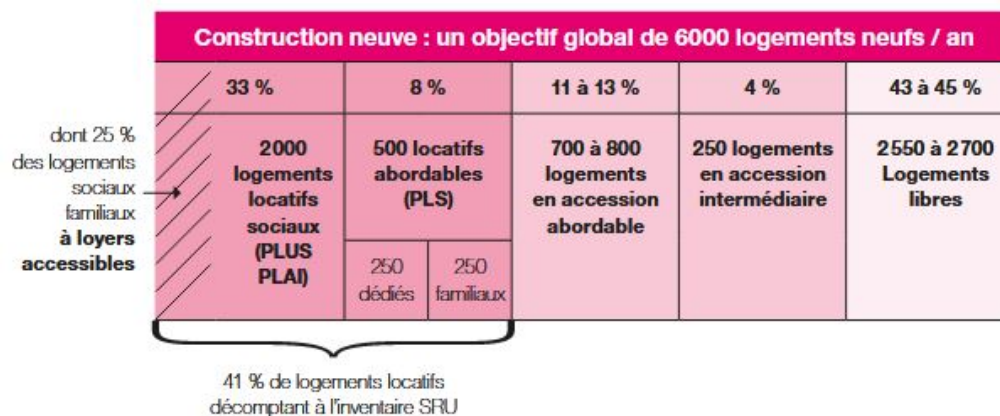


Figure 6.2: Yearly housing production aim per type [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 215]

Following a diagnosis of the context of Nantes, in terms of demography, inhabitants profiles, housing dynamics, these production aims were obtained. Notably, the PLH main stakes are to keep a high level of housing production, with 6.000 housings per year, among which a good share of housing types should be achieved. 41% of the total aimed housing are social housing, among which 500 are PLAI and 1.500 are PLUS (which makes supposedly a third of affordable housing among the total production). Note that the rate production of social housing is different according to the communes, with a global aim to reach SRU rates in every commune of Nantes Municipality by 2025. The aimed diversification of housing also aims for a better share of housing per size (more T1, T2 and T6 or more social housing), and specific housing for specific categories (disabled people, ageing people and new young inhabitants are mentioned) [Nantes Métropole, 2018a,b].

The final orientation of the PLH deals with the case of access to housing for precarious people, and is stating to be in-line with the "Logement d'Abord" plan. To do so, actions such as the use of allocation's quotas for social housing to prioritise those precarious people, or the "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" experiment (with 100 housings in Nantes), as well as more specific actions for specific populations are all mentioned in the plan [Nantes Métropole, 2018a]

More details about the important data from the PLH used for this thesis are available in appendix B.3.

### 6.1.5 Interviews used

In order to obtain specific local knowledge and better vision of the actions of some homelessness stakeholders of Nantes, five interviews were done, with actors from various backgrounds and with different means of action.

As already mentioned in the Research Design (3.3.5), the interviews done were the following:

- Interview 1: a municipal councillor of Nantes
- Interview 2: the Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality
- Interview 3: the Association Saint Benoit Labre 44
- Interview 4: the Association Les Eaux Vives / 5 Ponts
- Interview 5: the Social landlord Atlantique Habitations

In this subsection, a short summary of the main data obtained from each interview is done. The entire relevant content of the interviews is available in appendix C, and is mentioned when used.

**Interview 1: municipal councillor of Nantes:**

The interview with the municipal councillor focused on the "homelessness funds" unique initiative of Nantes, as this municipal councillor was the head of this initiative. An in-deep explanation of how these funds worked was thus given: a maximum of 10 million euros from the municipality budget are available each year for projects of Nantes or its communes. Yet, these projects must answer criteria: they need to provide quick improvement of living conditions, provide at least 3 months of temporary housing and need to integrate an exit solution toward either permanent housing or other appropriate solutions. While these funds does not directly finance permanent housing, they do alleviate some of the existing pressure on already-existing shelters or temporary housing, and can stimulate and finance new initiatives for homelessness.

The changing views and policies for homelessness in Nantes were also discussed, notably concerning the municipality role for the rehousing of migrant people of square Daviais in 2018, and how more and more solutions of "legal squat" have been use with some associations to compensate for the lack of housing (with the use of unoccupied places, usually before a construction project, provided by the municipality).

Finally, the current housing stress of Nantes was discussed as well: the interviewee notably mentioned how the need for housing were not sufficiently answered, due to possible factors such as the rising prices of land, or the disagreement of some mayors with the construction aims of the PLH.

For more details, the entire content from the interview is gathered in appendix C.1.

**Interview 2: Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality:**

The interview with the Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality focused mainly on the aims of the PLH. According to the two people interviewed, the 6.000 housing per year planned by the PLH are intended to accommodate both people staying and newcomers to Nantes Municipality, which has a 1.5% demographic growth per year. However, they mention how there actually is a discrepancy for the numbers of PLAI produced, as the demand for this cheapest type of social housing has been rising extremely fast in Nantes Municipality (from 28.000 to 36.000 PLAI demands between 2018 and 2022), which only represents a portion of the social housing produced with the PLH. The interviewees mentioned to use municipal subsidies to decrease the rents of social housing to compensate for that.

In addition to this topic, challenges for some specific homelessness population were mentioned as well. Approximate data on Eastern Europe migrants, Roma people and refugees living in improper conditions were obtained, and some actions intended to offer access to temporary housing to these populations as well as other very precarious homeless people, such as the use of modular housing, were discussed. The municipality is conscious of the diversity of needs and various profiles that compose homelessness, yet the greater problem still is the reduced production of social housing according to the interviewees, with a slowed-down turnover inside both social housing and temporary structures.

For more details, the entire content from the interview is gathered in appendix C.2.

**Interview 3: Association Saint Benoit Labre 44:**

The interview with the Association Saint Benoit Labre (or ASBL) focused mainly on their role as a homelessness association. Again, the fact that Nantes is facing a housing crisis, thus limiting the success of any long-term housing solution, is mentioned by the interviewee. After that, the main activities of ASBL are mentioned: a frequent action is the use of interlayer housing (defined as a form of legal squat done with cooperation from the municipality) to achieve temporary housing: ASBL retrieve empty housing that is used as a temporary housing solution, with minimum rents, for a given amount of time (after which the housing is destroyed or transformed by the municipality or a land

developer).

Different divisions of ASBL are handling different homeless populations, with different solutions: solutions can be permanent housing (with Maison-Relais, which is a type of Housing First according to the interviewee), or subleased flat-sharing, or specific residences for example. ASBL also mentions supportive roles of the association (with services such as a social baggage service, or a moving service of help with social demands). The collaboration with other stakeholders is mentioned as a useful tool, with specific associations being able to accommodate better for specific needs (such as women victim of domestic violence for example).

The conclusion of the interview was that there were two constant needs: adapting to the current homeless situation (with the example of the Ukrainian war being cited), and slowly building a bigger housing stock.

For more details, the entire content from the interview is gathered in appendix C.3.

#### **Interview 4: Association Les Eaux Vives / 5 Ponts:**

The interview with the Association Les Eaux Vives focused mainly on their various activities, among which their new project called "5 Ponts". Eaux Vives have no activities related to permanent housing. Instead, their main activities are based on shelters, with sometimes temporary housing for longer periods, which they use for support activities to access housing, the workplace, or care mainly. Their activities are mainly aimed at high-priority people, which they qualify as roofless people, people with mental suffering, foreign homeless populations, or precarious people with difficulties to pay or find housing, yet the interviewee mentions that their actions are flexible and adaptable to the person.

For that, in 5 Ponts, their newly opened site, there are multiple structures: an overnight shelter, which serves also as a day centre, and 40 rooms serving as either supportive housing (for a few months) or an emergency homelessness centre for staying a few days. There is unconditional access to the day centre / night shelter, within the limit of available places, while the other rooms have applications using the SIAO (the French service for urgent housing), with rules to abide to, as they are not adapted to any type of person. However, Eaux Vives mentioned how there is permanent communication between the association's network of Nantes to re-led homeless people to a more suitable association, when possible.

Other relevant points of the interviews were the presentation of some other projects lead by Eaux Vives, such as an other night shelter only for women (as some women did not come to the shared night shelter), and a modular houses project that is still being worked on, or "Pont Santé", a treatment room for small health intervention directly at 5 Ponts. The variety of the homeless population of Nantes was also mentioned, with profiles such as the "traditional" tramp, people suffering from physical or mental diseases, people exiting medical institution, asylum seekers, potential undocumented migrants, or young people in family breakdown, for example.

For more details, the entire content from the interview is gathered in appendix C.4.

#### **Interview 5: Social landlord Atlantique Habitations:**

The interview with Atlantique Habitations focused mainly on their activity as a social landlord. As expected, their main role is the development, management and production of social housing (PLAI, PLUS, PLS), yet some special operations exist as well, such as emergency supportive housing managed altogether with association Aurore. To help with access to and stay into social housing, Atlantique Habitations is doing pre-allocation support, financial support and pre-contentious discussions with its tenants if needed. In addition, Atlantique Habitations allows the use of the Visale guarantee to avoid evictions measures.

A large part of the interview was about the allocation rules, notably, specific quotas for Nantes' prefecture were mentioned for people concerned by DALO, people exiting institutions, refugees, or victims of violence.

Other important knowledge mentioned in the interview was how some associations have lowered their rules for accessing shelters or temporary accommodation since COVID-19, with in particular the possibility to bring animals or without anymore rule regarding alcohol consumption for example, which led to a better relation with the helped homeless person in general.

For more details, the entire content from the interview is gathered in appendix C.5.

## 6.2 Analysing the case of Nantes

In this section, the analysis of Nantes, based on the previously collected data, is done with the help of the table 5.1 obtained in chapter 5. The analysis notably considers how the data obtained from the various papers, documents and interviews complement each others, create synergy or mitigate each other, and how they fare in regard to the best practices collected in table 5.1. This is done with a critical perspective, as the table obtained might not cover certain aspects of the local reality.

### Provision of affordable housing

The provision of affordable, adequate housing is probably the most critical point of Nantes' strategy to deal with homelessness. Indeed, all interviewees without exception always mentioned this housing provision to be an issue in Nantes: the difficulty to operate any Housing First strategy because of a housing shortfall was mentioned in both interview 1 and interview 4 (C.1 and C.4), the slowed down production of social housing in an already stressed housing market was cited in interview 2 (C.2, interview 3 (C.3) started with a mention of the housing crisis of Nantes limiting any solutions. In interview 5, a more precise concern was mentioned, with a social housing shortage for T1 and T2 apartments, limiting solutions for isolated people (C.5).

This lack of social housing has also been underlined in Nantes contextual data (6.1.2). Not only there is a lack of T1 or T2 apartments, but also they are usually too expensive for the poorest part of applicants. Notably, the estimated waiting time before being allocated an adequate T1 or T2 social housing is 5.5 years, compared to 0.7 year, 1.0 year or 3.4 years for T3, T4 or T5 respectively [Fondation Abbé Pierre et al., 2022,93]. This has been recognised by Nantes Municipality, as the PLH has planned for a high rate of social housing construction, with a third of 6.000 new yearly housing aimed to be affordable social housing (500 PLAI, 1.500 PLUS). The lacking typology of housing has also been recognised, as Action 16 and Action 19 from the PLH mention the need to push forward T1 and T2 production (with a 35-to-40% aim of production for those typologies) B.3.

However, these efforts might not be sufficient, as the demand for PLAI rose from 28.000 to 36.000 demands between 2018 and 2022, as mentioned in interview 2 (C.2), far above the produced quantity. It was however mentioned in the interview that subsidies issued by the municipality were used to try to compensate this lack of PLAI by decreasing rents, reaching a mean rent of 6.5€/m<sup>2</sup> for social housing in Nantes (which is still above the mean rent from PLAI, from 4.56€/m<sup>2</sup> to 5.97€/m<sup>2</sup>, seen in section A.3). While it can accommodate for a certain number of cases, it can be assumed that it is not enough to fully compensate for that discrepancy between the demands (77% applicants within



the criteria for PLAI) and productions (approximately 30% of new social housing being PLAI), in particular for T1 or T2 apartments.

An other policy lever the municipality is trying to use to improve the situation is the increased share of social housing in its communes which are not reaching the legal SRU rates: communes with lower rates of social housing have extra-efforts to make, with attentions to produce PLAI and PLUS, and even communes having already reached SRU have to keep the effort going, as shown in table B.1. Yet, this effort is sometimes limited by the reluctance of some mayors to build more social housing in their communes, as mentioned in interviews 1 and 2 (C.1 and C.2).

This stressed housing market also has consequences on temporary housing structures: as the eventual access to social housing is slow, so is the turnover in temporary structures, as mentioned in interview 2 (C.2). This has been noted as well in interview 5 (C.5), in the case of refugees' homeless population, for which specific emergency centre are saturated, as they are mainly isolated people in need of T1 or T2 social housing. The PDALHPD also noticed how shelters and supportive housing were impacted by the stressed social housing market, with slowed down exits of these temporary solutions (see B.2).

In contrast to these, the use of quotas for social housing applications seems to work to a certain extent to speed up the access to housing for people with priority: Fondation Abbé Pierre et al. [2022] mentions notably that only 1.5 out of 1.000 people having the right to DALO were not rehoused in Nantes, which can be explained by the fact Nantes prefecture has quotas for DALO. Quotas for Nantes municipality includes people exiting institutions, having right to DALO, refugees or victims of violence notably, as mentioned in interview 5 (C.5), to which must be added people corresponding to the national allocation rules, mentioned in section A.3.

Finally, while the city is claiming to aim for social diversity, notably in the PLH (see B.3), with measures such as enforced inclusion of some social housing apartments in any construction project totalling more than 4 households mentioned in interview 1 (C.1), facts are that some neighbourhoods have become more and more expensive, notably in the city centre, with a phenomenon of gentrification [Rivière and Batardy, 2022; Rivière et al., 2020].

## Homelessness data

When discussing homelessness data, two things are distinguishable: the knowledge of numbers of homeless people, and the typology of the homeless populations.

The relevant typology of the homeless populations in Nantes is well-documented by the PDALHPD, as already mentioned in subsection 6.1.3. Indeed, a whole part of the document is mentioning 8 categories of population which already have or necessitate specific answers. On top of that, through the interviews and other planning documents, specific populations and some specific solutions to accommodate them were mentioned. The following table 6.1 summarises the various typologies of homeless population mentioned for Nantes throughout the documents used and the interviews. Some categories are merged, for they were used indifferently, or for clarity concerns.

Typology of homeless population	Mentioned in
"Average" homeless people, "traditional" tramp, precarious people	PDALHPD (p.105), PLH (p.76 and Actions 18, 20, 41, 42), Interviews 1 and 4
Roma people	PDALHPD (p.93), PLH (p.78 and Action 46), Interview 2
Eastern European migrants	PDALHPD (p.104), PLH (p.76 and Action 45 bis), Interviews 1 and 2
People exiting institutions	PDALHPD (p.95), PLH (Action 45), Interviews 4 and 5
Dropout youth, isolated minors	PDALHPD (P.97), PLH (Actions 37, 38), Interviews 1, 3 and 4
Victims of domestic violence	PDALHPD (P.100, for women), PLH (Action 45, for women), Interviews 1, 3 (women victims) and 5
Ageing marginalised people	PDALHPD (p.103), PLH (Actions 33 to 36, 42), Interview 4
Refugees / Non-European migrants / asylum seekers	PDALHPD (p.103), PLH (p.77 and Action 44), Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
Long-term homeless with severe mental illness	PDALHPD (P.95), PLH (Action 43), Interview 4

Table 6.1: Typologies of homeless populations mentioned in the used data

As seen above, there is extensive, recognised knowledge of the main homeless populations of Nantes municipality. Yet, official data for either each groups or estimations of the total numbers of homelessness of Nantes municipality are hard to find.

Indeed, no recent official homelessness data exist for Nantes, as mentioned in interview 1 (C.1), and only estimations for certain typology of homeless populations, or deductions based on indicators, can help having a rough approximation of the total number of homelessness in Nantes. The closest existing "official data" is the 5-year HMSA census (for homeless people and mobile homes). However, the last one was done in 2016 (which accounted for 289 homeless people and 744 living in mobile homes), as shown page 76 of the PLH, and the results of the new one, done on the 20 and 21 of January 2022, are not yet known [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2022b] [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 76].

Among others data, interview 2 (C.2) mentioned an estimation of 2.500 Roma people and Eastern European migrants living on 56 settlement sites around Nantes, which is completed by the PLH (p.77, which mentioned 2.000 Eastern European migrants living in 40 sites, without mentioning numbers for Roma people) and the PDALHPD (which mentioned a census of 1.751 people in Loire Atlantique on 34 sites in 2017), giving a range of somewhere between 1.700 and 2.500 Roma people or Eastern European migrants. On top of that, interview 2 (C.2) also mentioned an estimated 1.000 refugees living in improper temporary housing, which may be close to the truth, as a total of 698 migrants were known to live in square Daviais in 2018 (as seen in subsection 6.1.2), and it is unlikely that these numbers went down since 2018, as Nantes is known to be a main reception point for migrants within the regional reception scheme, which was considered to be saturated [Préfet de la Région Pays de la Loire, 2021], and interview 5 (C.5) stated as well that specific emergency centres for migrants were overrun, and that most of them faced the shortage of T1-T2 apartments when applying for social housing, as they are usually isolated persons.

Another method to try to estimate the homeless numbers would be to use the total number of places in the available

support housing and shelters, collected page 118 of the PDALHPD, which is 2.797 places for the whole Loire-Atlantique department [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, page 118]. However, this estimation is limited to a number of places (with no precision of the number of people accommodated per housing, additionally), and does not account for actual numbers of homelessness, but rather only for those temporarily housed and sheltered. In addition, no knowledge of the actual length of homelessness is known using this data.

As a brief conclusion, the knowledge of the specific populations of homeless which need to be accounted for in Nantes is well-known and documented, and as seen later, corresponds to different, adapted answers depending on their typologies. However, no solid data of the numbers of homeless people seems to exist in Nantes, with only estimations given. In interview 2 (C.2), the existence of an observatory of precarious households led by Nantes Municipality was mentioned. Yet, no interview with the person responsible for this observatory have been done, despite trying to get one, so no knowledge of the content of this observatory was obtained.

### **Prevention of homelessness**

No actions of prevention of eviction were mentioned in the PLH. However, the people that need rehousing following urban renewal projects are mentioned as having priority on re-allocation of social housing, as they have the right to DALO [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 157]. The PDALHPD have more information on prevention of eviction: while the total number of evictions tended to rise at a national level (see appendix B.1), in recent years, the total number of evictions went down in Loire-Atlantique, and the new chart of the commission on prevention of eviction aims to reduce this total number even more by 20%, with actions such as better partnership on the prevention of evictions, and with a quick detection of late payment [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, page 106]. As mentioned in appendix B.2, the PDALHPD even devoted the whole orientation 4 to the prevention of eviction.

From the interviews, interview 3 (C.3) mentioned that the prevention of eviction was an activity of ASBL, with discussion to bring people to pay their rent again or to ease the neighbours for example, while interview 5 (C.5) mentioned that pre-contentious discussions or the use of the Visale guarantee were tools used by Atlantique Habitations to avoid evictions measures. In addition, other forms of housing breakdown are factored in, as interviews 3, 4 and 5 (C.3, C.4 and C.5) mentions support toward young people in family breakdown, or people victims of violence, which is already mentioned in the PDALHPD. While it does not directly solve the housing breakdown, it helps to facilitate rehousing thus limiting the time spend without housing.

While Nantes has things going for it when looking at prevention tools, it does not shine particularly and no spectacularly strong actions have been taken other than those existing at a national scale (the use of the right to DALO, the use of Visale guarantee, or pre-contentious discussions), even if evictions rate are going down. The PDALHPD has aimed to reduce this eviction rate further more, this has to be observed on the long run.

### **Housing-led actions**

As seen in the local context (subsection 6.1.2), Nantes reclaims itself as a pilot-territory taking part in the national plan "Logement d'Abord" (B.1), which is heavily focused on producing an adequate affordable supply of housing, which is also replicated in the aims of the PLH (B.3). Notably, orientation 4 of the PLH states the need for permanent housing, with the use of housing-led actions such as the development of several new permanent housing units with

support services dedicated to precarious homeless people, with notably the "Maison Relais" (for which the aim is 100 more places by the end of the PLH), "IGLOO", "Woodstock", or the French Housing First experiment "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", with 100 supported housings in Nantes. These initiatives have been underlined as successful yet demanding by the interviewed people: interviews 1 and 4 (C.1 and C.4) said that "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" faced the technical difficulty of reuniting various actors for the intensive support needed, which required consequent investment even if the implied cost may payback on the long run, and faced the burden of the lack of housing available. Interview 3 (C.3) stated that "Maison Relais" type of housing was probably one of the best tool to rehouse people and work toward social integration.

However, the vast majority of interviewed actors works with temporary housing and shelters. The main activities of Eaux Vives (C.4) are based on shelters for example, and some of their new activities still imply temporary housing rather than permanent one (which they don't have the resources for). In a similar fashion, the homelessness funds discussed in interview 1 (C.1) are designed for projects of temporary housing, yet with including an exit toward a permanent housing. ASBL manages both permanent housing and temporary supportive housing, yet aims to find for more temporary housing to offer with the use of interlayer housing (C.3).

In the end, most of the actions observed from the data seem not in-line with a working housing-led strategy, as from one side, the affordable housing production of Nantes is insufficient as observed sooner, and on the other side, the majority of actions to deal with homelessness happening in Nantes are limited to sheltering or temporary housing used to wait for the access to permanent housing, in a saturated affordable housing market. Surprisingly enough, no mentions of transformation of shelters into permanent housing have been found either in local data or during the interviews, while it is a main priority of the national "Logement d'Abord" plan (B.1). A probable answer for this is the investment costs of such a strategy, as the investment for "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" was already mentioned to be consequent, and Eaux Vives mentioned not having resources for taking care of permanent housing. Yet, a positive mention can still be made at the new permanent initiatives launched, such as "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", IGLOO or Woodstock, or the reinforced stock of "Maison Relais", and as was mentioned when discussion the housing provision, the PLH has shown a will to compensate for the housing supply in particular for the missing types and size of housing, even if no convincing results can be assessed for now.

### **Limitation of precariousness**

When dealing with homelessness in Nantes, an important factor for limiting the effects of homelessness is not specific to the municipality, as France is known to have a strong health coverage provided by a strong welfare state: as mentioned in appendix A.2, a universal health protection allows every legal inhabitant of France to have the most part of its health expenses entirely covered, and a state medical assistance guarantee similar rights to any person in France, given (s)he proves (s)he lived for a continuous minimum of 3 months in France and does not earn more than 746€ per month. This alone alleviates largely part of the harsh consequences of being homeless (explored in section 4.3), and helps limiting the worsening of an homeless' condition. Additional financial subsidies, such as family allowances, unemployment benefits or the active social income, are all parts of the French welfare as well. While they are not available to everyone, for those who can claim them, they are definitely factors that can make the difference to be able to afford adequate housing.

Zooming back at the local scale, as previously mentioned when discussing housing, Nantes municipality has subsidised the social housing market with municipal funds to further reduce the prices of the market, helping out

precarious households in affording housing once again. Apart from subsidies, the homelessness association network of Nantes is dynamic (as mentioned in interview 1 (C.1)), and offers a various support for homeless people, on top of temporary housing: just among the interviewed people, Eaux Vives delivers a place to stay at day, with services and support for access to right, and minimum health services, as well as a specific program to reintegrate the job market (C.4), and ASBL also delivers services to keep baggage safe, or make a kitchen available, as well as helping with social demands (C.3).

Otherwise, Nantes has a relatively high poverty rate (11.9%) as well as unemployment rate (12%), despite being under the national mean. This rate is specially high for young people, with an estimation of around 25% unemployment rate and 17.4% poverty rate, exacerbating their risk factors for homelessness, or at least precarious living [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, pages 52-53]. While the various supports and services available can help to relieve homeless or precarious people to some extent, it does not stop people from actually being homeless and only serves as a momentary relief.

### Specific actions for specific cases

As observed previously in the homelessness data, a wide variety of homeless population is recognised in Nantes Municipality. This is evenly matched by varying actions and support offered depending on the type of population addressed. The PDALHPD is probably the most complete document to have an overview for Nantes on that regard, as it presents the different actions planned for varying typologies, with specific services for young people facing breakdown (Edit de Nantes Habitat Jeunes or Adelis), people exiting prison (ETAPE, Trajet), or women victims of marital violence (Espace Simone de Beauvoir, Prévenir et Réparer) among the other previously cited typology (see subsection 6.1.3) [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, pages 93-105].

The PLH also have among its actions some dedicated to specific types of homelessness: Action 45 bis for example aims to integrate and stabilise willing Eastern European migrants into housing, and remove progressively shanty towns, with support to access common rights. Action 46 is aimed at Roma people, and aims to accommodate for their nomadic style of life by making proper trailer parks areas on one side, with potential access to social housing with support on the other side. Action 43, with the execution of "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" experiment, aims to accommodate for long-term homeless with severe mental illness with a Housing First solution (extensive support included) [Nantes Métropole, 2018a].

Similarly, the interviews demonstrated the use of various methods: while some actions were constant and provided equally to anyone, such as shelters for the night (in Eaux Vives for example), others are used to address the needs of specific populations. Interview 2 (C.2) mentioned the use of temporary insertion terrains and boarding houses for Eastern European migrants as a tool to bring some out of shanty towns. The use of modular housing for migrants and other precarious homeless people was mentioned multiple times in the interviews (C.2, C.4, C.5). ASBL also mentioned how it got proper divisions for dealing with unaccompanied minors (which are housed in specific youth residences) and adult migrants (housed as roommates) (C.3). Eaux Vives had to open a only-women night shelter to retrieve a homeless population which did not come to their non-separated night shelter, which has since been full every night (C.4). In addition to these, the need for adaptability of the methods delivered was mentioned as well: Atlantique Habitations mentioned not only accommodating for a type of population, but for a human being with its complexity before that (C.5), and both the counsellor of Nantes Municipality and ASBL also said that there is a constant need to adapt to the current homeless situation (C.1, C.3). One of these noticeable adaption has been the welcomed dropped requirements in some temporary housing and shelters to not drink or not have an animal, as

underlined by interview 5 (C.5). The strategy plans, the various actors of Nantes as well as their actions seem to have shown their ability to take into account the homeless person they are dealing with and address correctly hi(s)her needs and personal issues, with adaptability and communication if needed. With an on-going change in some associations of accepting homeless with no regard for their company of animals or consumption of alcohol or drugs, which has been a key point in making Housing First work (see subsection 5.3), and in the future might ease the homelessness support, or at least facilitate its access to housing.

### Integration and coordination of actions

As seen in the document analysis (appendix B), multiple strategy plans at multiple levels (national, departmental, municipal) shape the housing and homelessness strategy from Nantes: the PLH reclaims itself as rooted in the "Logement d'Abord" national plan, and for that mentions its actions in favour of new affordable social housing, shelters, temporary housing and permanent housing with support [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021b]. In addition, its legal and regulatory framework is taken in consideration and shown in the PLH, with Figure 6.3:

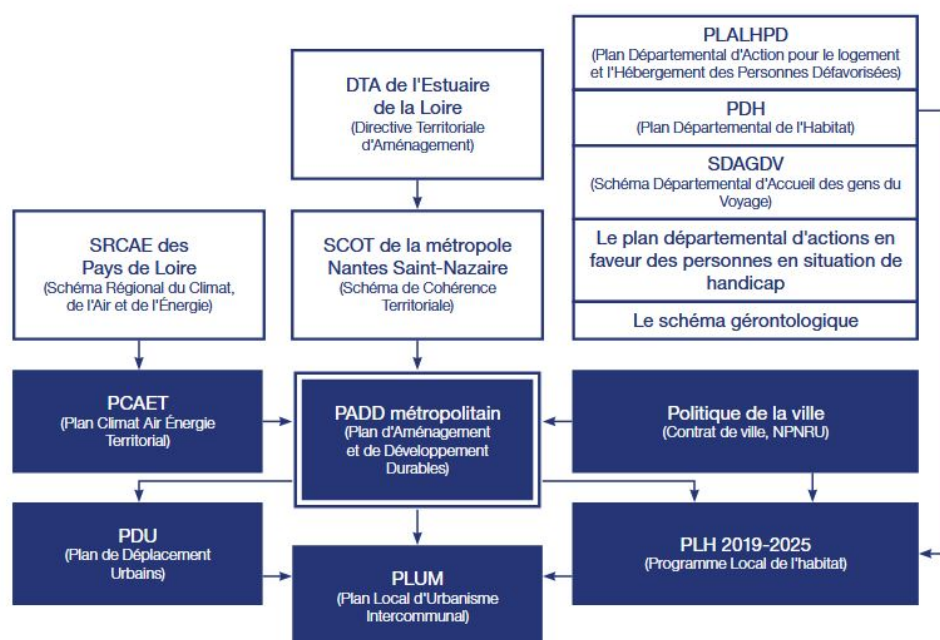


Figure 6.3: Legal framework of the PLH [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 13]

Similarly, the PDALHPD mentions the legal framework it relates to, including the law ELAN, and the "Logement d'Abord" national plan [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, pages 6-7]. This is also underlined by the complete axis 1 of the PDALHPD dedicated to the common strategy and coordination with other departmental and local plans, with objectives to share data, good practices and shared governance of the housing strategies, and to articulate this PDALHPD with local issues.

At Nantes level, this coordination of actors is mentioned several time through the interviews: interview 4 (C.4) mentions how each homelessness association is constantly communicating with one another, particularly to redirect homeless people to the most appropriate association if one cannot take care of them. ASBL (C.3) mentions the

constant collaboration with the municipality or land developers to use interlayer buildings (buildings intended for destruction before new projects) for temporary housing, and in a similar fashion, Atlantique Habitations (C.5) mentions how they provide housing units that are then handled by associations for homelessness projects.

As observed, the network of actors for homelessness is particularly active in Nantes, involving active communication and knowledge of the resources of other actors. In addition, this is supervised by integrated plans that work in coordinated ways, with similar objectives for different scales: this provides a solid basis to enforce greater scale of actions in the future.

### **Political will**

It has been observed in the recent past that strong actions have been led by the municipality to try to limit the consequences of homelessness, and accommodate for some linked precarious conditions: the strongest example probably is the temporary rehousing of the quasi-entirety of migrants from square Daviais, mentioned in interview 1 (C.1) or in subsection 6.1.2, and not only it implied an important voluntary action from the municipality but also the active collaboration of association Aurore to take care of the rehoused people accordingly. The homelessness funds, which can use a maximum of 1% (or 10 million euros) of the municipality budget every year for temporary supportive housing solutions, have also been a strong symbol of the fight against homelessness, and so has been the use of "official" squats for temporary housing in interlayer buildings, mentioned by the Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality or ASBL (C.2 and C.3). Yet, all these actions only offer temporary solutions to a persistent problem, and on the other hand, only a few initiatives implied new permanent housing places: the lack of resources for permanent housing was pointed out, despite some associations (Eaux Vives, ASBL) stating that it would be a better solution than shelters (C.3 and C.4). No actions of transforming shelters into permanent housing were mentioned whatsoever in the PLH, despite being mentioned in the national plan (B.1).

## **6.3 Conclusion of the chapter**

In this chapter, data from various papers, official documents and interviews were used in coordination to have a solid case study of Nantes, including knowledge of the various tools, policies and actors working on the issue of homelessness in Nantes. These were used in conjunction with the previously built analytical framework obtained from Chapter 5 to analyse various aspects of the fight against homelessness in Nantes in section 6.2.

From these, it has been observed that Nantes has a clear vision of the complexity of the phenomenon of homelessness, with a varied network of stakeholders delivering a wide range of support, services and temporary housing possibilities adapted to a various homeless population, reflected in the local housing plan and the departmental homelessness plan. Nantes Municipality has shown to be involved in this homelessness strategy, with collaboration with associations to deliver temporary housing, and special funds dedicated to homelessness.

However, all these actions are severely limited by the scarcity of housing the municipality is facing. While the local housing plan has shown awareness for this lack of housing, with attention to particularly lacking types (PLAI) and size (T1-T2, or T3 and more), it has yet to answer properly to this scarcity, which considerably hinders any long-term solution for many homeless people only relying on temporary housing and support.

This is also emphasised by the lack of sufficient resources to work on the slow transformation of more and more shelters or temporary housing into permanent housing with support, in a Housing First logic. While some new permanent housing support experiments and actions, such as "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" or supplementary "Maison Relais", are developed, these are still far from being the usual answer to homelessness in Nantes, which still heavily relies on precarious solutions.



## Chapter 7: Discussion

Because of the framework used for the analysis of Nantes, numerous other aspects of homelessness and homelessness strategy have not been evoked, and may limit the opportunity for better integrated solutions. For example, the PDALHPD mentioned how Nantes' attractiveness also was a factor of the concentration of homeless people and of specialised homelessness associations around the municipality, and discussed that a better share of services and homelessness, and a better balance of jobs and public services in Loire-Atlantique, could also contribute to relieve both the stressed housing market and the concentration of homeless people of Nantes municipality [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, page 10].

That being said, the framework used allowed to easily point out positive actions and limiting factors for Nantes' homelessness strategy, as well as have a basic knowledge of the homeless population of Nantes, and a vision on the involvement of associations and the municipality, indicating the considerable lack of permanent housing solutions due to a constrained market and funds still largely devoted to temporary solutions.

This framework seemed easy to use and worked well with the collected data (context, official documents, interviews), and since numerous mechanisms and contextual factors (the welfare, the national plan, the role of social housing) are similar from the ones used in other major French cities, this method of analysis seems replicable to these cities, as long as the required data are easy to obtain. Possibly, the used categories can be adjusted, or other practices categories or additional notions relative to homelessness can be added to the framework for adapting it to a city, and/or give another analysis axis. The allocation of housing and local quotas, for example, could also be used, to analyse if it benefits indeed the most precarious people without impacting too much on the general application system.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

Homelessness is a complex subject with heavy consequences for those dealing with it, which sadly has been on the rise for the quasi-totality of European countries, including France, despite numerous actions and strategies aimed at tackling the issue.

In this thesis, the preliminary study of the phenomenon of homelessness done in chapter 4 allowed to obtain a clear understanding of its complexity, with a peculiar attention to its structural causes, its various effects, and how diverse could be pathways into and out of homelessness. This allowed us to underline recurring strategies to cope with these factors and limit the effects of homelessness, reduce it and prevent it in chapter 5. Even better, the observation for practices used regularly within homelessness strategies allowed to retrieve knowledge on what appeared to be good practices. A particular attention was given to the Housing First tactic, which has shown success in dealing with critical cases of homelessness, and the Finnish strategy which is a rare example of a European homelessness strategy which manages to reduce the numbers of homeless people. From these, a framework made up of chosen best practices or requirement was done to see how it fits Nantes. To do so, chapter 6 used interviews, contextual data and official planning documents to make a case study analysis of Nantes' homelessness strategy using the said framework.

What was observed is that Nantes' strategy is ambitious, has understand homelessness in its complexity, and has a wide panel of tools, associations and other helps to prevent homelessness to an extent and limit its the effects. However, despite showing political will and aiming in the right directions, all these efforts are failing to actively reduce homelessness due to a considerably saturated housing market which cannot guarantee any exits from shelters and temporary accommodations toward more permanent housing, thus slowing down the turnover of these structures, equally saturated. On top of this lack of housing, another glaring difference with the homelessness situation in Nantes compared to that of Finland is also the limited, quasi non-existent effort to transform shelters into permanent housing, which was a key factor in Finland to reach sufficient permanent housing, yet is still barely done in Nantes: if some Housing-First initiatives do exist, they are in minority, and associations have pointed out a lack of resources to do more at the moment.

These negative points must be tempered by the observation that the homelessness actions in Nantes, and in France in general, are slowly aiming for a more-and-more housing-led answer. Possibly, with better experience of such models, the homeless conditions of France might improve. That is, if enough affordable housing supply is produced.

### Further research

Further research could include more in-deep knowledge of the current situation for homelessness in Nantes, with additional time for the interviews of more stakeholders (notably the ones cited in the limitations in section 3.4), as well as interviewing directly homeless people in Nantes to have a non-planning point of view, in a similar manner as Raynaud and Devisme [2019] did, with an attention to the journey of homeless people. Other researches could try to analyse the phenomenon of criminalisation of homelessness in French cities (or just Nantes) as well, or question the implications of attractive cities in the concentration of homelessness and homelessness services.

## Appendix A: French national context

### A.1 Relevant policies and tools

#### Law SRU

The 2000 law SRU is a planning law, which modify the previous planning laws [Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales, 2021b; Légifrance, 2000]. For social housing concerns, its leading article is article 55, which aimed to create a "social balance" in each territory, and answer the shortage of social housing in some territories. To do so, it enforced municipalities (of more than 3,500 inhabitants) to have a minimum rate of social housing, proportional to the housing supply. Some municipalities are exempted (if they are far from employment area, or with a low housing stress, or with constrained constructibility). For non-exempted municipalities, if a minimum rate of 20% or 25% (depending on criteria such as the population) is not reached, then they need to pay a levy (proportional to the difference between the social housing they have and the minimum rate they need to reach) used to finance social housing [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021a]. It has proven to be a strong tool to push forward the creation of social housing as well as promoting social diversity, yet it is still not applied everywhere, as approximately 1,100 non-exempted communes are lacking social housing, with an estimated 631 indeed paying the levy [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

*Fondation Abbé Pierre* still underlines that the Macron government defended this SRU law for the 2017-2022 period, with policy of firmness directed to prefects. Yet, a minor setback in enforcing law SRU is still mentioned: with the law ELAN (2018), sold social housings are still considered to be social in the eye of the law SRU for 10 years (from 5 years before the law), discouraging the quick production of more social housing when some are sold.

The SRU law has proven to be a strong tool to enforce the production of social housing in France. To cope with the affordable housing crisis, *Fondation Abbé Pierre* suggests to reinforce the article 55 of the law, by aiming for a minimum of 30% social housing for housing-stressed area, with bigger parts of very-social housing (aims of 50% of PLAI among the social housing produced) [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

#### Law ELAN

The law ELAN ("Evolution du Logement de l'Aménagement et du Numérique" - evolution of lodging, planning and digital) was launched in 2018, with 4 targets: build more, better, less expensive housing ; push forward the social housing sector ; promote social diversity while answering anyone's needs ; enhance the living conditions [Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales, 2021a; Légifrance, 2018].

Again, at first glance, the law seems rather ambitious: a large part of the plan intends to simplify considerably planning procedures to trigger a positive "supply shock". Gouvernement français [2021b] summarises different measures, among which are mentioned the simplification of norms, the acceleration of procedures, the facilitation of transformation of empty offices into housing. Another large part of the law aims to change the social housing sector, with intentions to regroup HLM organisations, simplify the selling of HLM social housing, and enforce more social diversity with minimums and maximums social housing attributions depending on the resources. In addition, several

tools and policies have been created alongside the law ELAN to give more flexible housing opportunities: the Visale guarantee (which is discussed in more details later), Bail Mobilité (mobility lease) for short loans, a more important framing of tourist rental, and public rental control in some areas.

Yet, an official evaluation report of the plan has demonstrated only partial successes for most targets of the plan: the "supply shock" did not happen as seen earlier, simplification of planning and construction rules still have to make an impact, the public rental control long-term impact are still to be assessed, and the Visale guarantee proved to be efficient but is still insufficiently used, among other concerns [Assemblée Nationale, 2022].

## **DALO**

The DALO law ("Droit Au Logement Opposable" - enforceable right to housing), has shown to be an important tool to help give a priority for social housing to homeless people or people in poor housing conditions. It gives effective allocation priority for access to social housing when criteria are met: either having waited for unusually long time (the time depends on the department), or being homeless (sleeping at a relative's place, as well as being roofless all count), being evicted, being in a shelter since more than 6 months, or in a temporary supportive housing since more than 18 months, living in places unfit for human habitation, being a disabled person or in charge of a disabled person and living in an overcrowded accommodation, or being a disabled person or in charge of a disabled person and living in a non-adequate accommodation [Service Public, 2022d]. Yet, the lack of housing available caused issues to enforce DALO effectively [Taylor et al., 2020; Légifrance, 2007].

## **Other relevant policies and tools**

### **Visale guarantee:**

Among interesting tools of the law ELAN, the Visale guarantee (or mechanism) is worth presenting in more details.

It has been created as a replacement of the universal rental guarantee. Indeed, a previous policy was supposed to offer protection against non-payment, and prevent evictions, yet it failed for an operating cost considered too important (1 billion euros per year) and the fact it was compulsory, causing opposition by private assurances [LegalPlace, 2019].

Yet, it laid the foundation for the Visale guarantee, which removed the compulsory trait of the policy, and limited the guarantee to certain amounts, as well as set a maximum guarantee time of 3 years outside the social housing market, and 9 months in the social housing market. It also was only limited to primary residence [Service Public, 2021b].

Another limitation comes from the non-compulsory trait of the Visale guarantee. Since it can be more intuitive for private renters to use private insurances for unpaid rents, that the Visale guarantee delays the possibility of eviction, and that not using it allows to ask for a specific guarantor thus having more control over the tenant, it is observed that other guarantees are generally preferred to Visale, yet it might just be because of the lateness of the mechanism [Cassilde, 2021].

In a nutshell, Visale guarantee is still confidential and landlords have no obligation to use it. Yet, it has proven useful to mitigate risks of eviction as well as easing the access of housing for more precarious people, making it a advisable tool to facilitate the access and stay in affordable housing.

### **Solibail:**

The Solibail has been used as a tool to use private housing for social means, by subleasing an accommodation to an association in exchange of tax deductions on the rent, allowing to grasp more housing toward social use [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2021b].

**Bail Mobilité:**

The Bail Mobilité (mobility lease) has been a new tool created with law ELAN, which eased the rental of an accommodation for studies or short period of work reasons, by fixing a maximum rental time of 10 months, and by using Visale guarantee to secure rent for the renter and offer temporary financial security for the tenant [Service Public, 2021a].

**SIAO:**

The SIAO ("Service Intégré d'Accueil et d'Orientation" - integrated service of reception and orientation), is an important actor of homelessness in France, as a national service with departmental divisions, centralising knowledge for availability in shelters by calling "115", or offering orientation towards adequate housing and support for less urgent demands [Les services de l'État en Loire-Atlantique, 2020].

## A.2 Welfare

The French welfare covers several branches: everything related to health (sickness, maternity, paternity, disability, and death), accidents and occupational diseases for employees, family allowances, unemployment benefits and old-age pension [CLEISS, 2022]. Unemployment benefits as well as professional accidents or old-age pension depends on being inserted in the labour market, which leads Busch-Geertsema et al. [2010] to describe France as a corporatist welfare regime (page 33). Yet, the welfare health coverage is available to any regular resident in France, and family allowances are available to any regular resident under a certain resource ceiling.

In the context of this thesis, the health coverage is one of the main point of interest of welfare in France, and will be described briefly here. The PUMA ("Protection Universelle Maladie" - universal health protection) allows any person working or living in France on a continual and legal basis (for more than three months) to have its health expenses covered [Service Public, 2020a]. As CLEISS [2022] shows, there is still limitations to the maximum expenses covered (for examples, for hospitalisations, insured people need to pay 20% of the total spending of hospitalisation plus 20€ per day of hospitalisation, with however no further expenses past 31 days of hospitalisation). Yet, to have access to PUMA, non-French natives needs to prove their regular status. To do so, a European person only need to prove he/she is from Europe (a passport can be enough). For a non-European person, a (provisional or not) resident permit, an attestation of asylum application or a proof of the granted refugee status is needed. Exception is that a non-European student less than 28-years old can have PUMA without other papers [Service Public, 2020b]. For undocumented strangers however, another mechanism exists, the AME ("Aide médicale de l'État" - state medical assistance), which guarantee similar health rights than other persons. They need however to prove to live in France for a continuous minimum of 3 months, and not earn more than 746€ per month, to apply for AME, which needs to be asked again every year [Service Public, 2022a].

Another important social welfare policy in France is the existence of a minimum income, the RSA ("Revenu de Solidarité Active" - active social income), which can reach up to 575,52€ (more for people with children) under certain conditions (notably, being active in the research of a job). [Service Public, 2022b]. It is however unavailable for students, or young adult people less than 25 years-old (with exceptions), which has been pointed out by *Fondation*

*Abbé Pierre*, as France is one of the last European country not to have financial protection for young students other than family solidarity, which causes a risky situation in case of a family breakdown [Service Public, 2022c; Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b].

As a summary, the social welfare in France is well-advanced for anyone that can pretend to it: it notably has largely covered medical acts, which is beneficial to support precarious people and people suffering from physical or mental disease.

### A.3 The French housing market

In 2021, there were an estimated 37,2 millions housing in France, among which 82% are main residences and 55% are individual housing [INSEE, 2021a]. Yet, this housing market is facing constraints, notably in dense urban areas. As the fourth booklet of Fondation Abbé Pierre [2022b] mentions, there is already 4 millions ill-housed people in France, and 12 millions people in poor housing conditions. Before considering that, there is already an estimated need of 210.000 to 325.000 new housings per year just for the rise of total households in France. Thus, *Fondation Abbé Pierre* estimates that from 400.000 to 500.000 new housing per year for 10 years would be needed to even hope for housing everyone, specially affordable housing. These housing needs have to be apprehended at local scale, based on the needs, on top of that.

For this thesis, the main interest however is about affordable housing, as it is more likely to be the one in reach of homeless and other precarious people. Only a minor part of the affordable housing in France comes from private investors. For example, ANAH ("Agence Nationale de l'Habitat" - National Agency of Habitat) states that only 48.000 private housings have been used for social use for the whole 2017-2021 period (with 8.371 produced in 2021), when even in 2020, which was a relatively bad year for housing production with the COVID-19 crisis, 66.600 social housing were produced [ANAH - Agence NAtionale de l'Habitat, 2022; Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021c].

Some new initiatives of pushing private sectors toward more affordable "social-like" housing do exist, such as the aforementioned Solibail, or the Loc'Avantages device (previously Cosse device) which allows for tax benefits under the condition that the renter guarantee rents not exceeding certain ceilings [Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de la Souveraineté Industrielle et Numérique, 2022a,b].

Yet, despite these initiatives, the affordable housing stock in France mainly comes from the social housing sector. On January 2021, it was estimated that there was 5.2 millions social housings in France, which represents 15.6% of the total supply of French main housing. The mean rent for this stock is 5.99€/m<sup>2</sup>, and is rising (mainly in Île-de-France, the region which contains Paris) [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021c].

Social housing in France is mainly known under the term HLM (*Habitat à Loyer modéré* - social accommodation at reduced cost), which does not represents all forms of social housing in France but is regularly used as a shortcut [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2020].

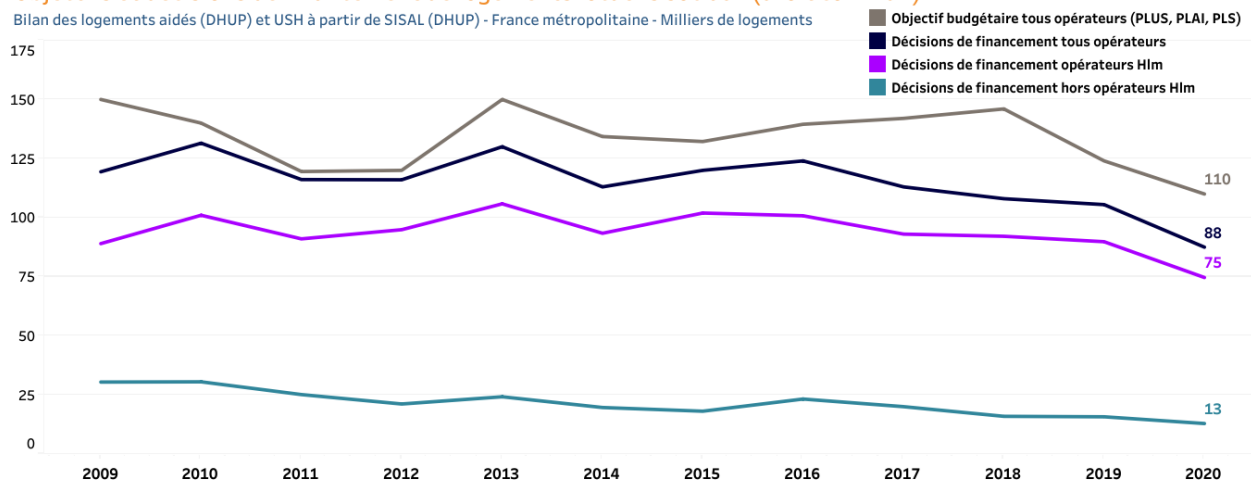
The operators producing, building, renovating and taking care of social housing are generally considered under the term "HLM organisations", despite their differences. HLM organisations regroups the OPHLM (*offices publics de l'Habitat* - public boards for housing), ESH (*Entreprises Sociales pour l'Habitat* - Social Housing Companies), SACI (*Société anonyme de crédit immobilier* - mortgage loans limited company), the HLM cooperatives as well as SEM

(sociétés d'économie mixte - mixed economy society) and certified associations [Canpolat, 2007].

HLM represents the largest part of social housing in France, as an estimated 4,7 millions social housing in 2021 are HLM, with 10 millions tenants, and it is estimated that one people out of two lived or is living in a HLM in France [L'Union Sociale pour l'Habitat, 2021c; Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2021b]. Yet, the production of HLM has been slowing down since 2017. Indeed, considering two figures (A.1 and A.2) taken from L'Union Sociale pour l'Habitat [2021d], it can easily be observed. Figure A.1 show the official production aims of social housing and the official decisions taken, in thousands of housing. It can be observed that the aim (grey line in the figure), which rose slightly from 2017 to 2018 (from 142.000 to 146.000), kept decreasing after that down to a level never reached since at least ten years. Worse, the actual ruled financed production (dark blue line in the figure) declined constantly between 2016 and 2020, from 124.000 down to 88.000 housing.

#### Objectifs et décisions de financement de logements locatifs sociaux (droit commun)

Bilan des logements aidés (DHUP) et USH à partir de SISAL (DHUP) - France métropolitaine - Milliers de logements



Chaque année sont fixés en loi de finance des objectifs de production de logements sociaux. De l'ordre de 40 000 à 50 000 au début des années 2000, ils s'établissent entre 125 000 et 150 000 ces dernières années.

En fonction de ces enveloppes et des conditions locales de production, les opérateurs, et au premier plan les opérateurs Hlm (80% des décisions de financement), déposent leurs demandes de financement qu'ils traduisent les années suivantes par des réalisations de logements sociaux.

Le nombre d'agréments est en baisse depuis 2016 ; il est particulièrement bas en 2020, année marquée par un contexte économique et électoral particulier.

Source USH, Hlm en chiffres 2021

Figure A.1: Aimed and actual rulings of financed social housing in France, taken from L'Union Sociale pour l'Habitat [2021a]

In a similar fashion, in Figure A.2, the yellow bars (representing the total number of start of construction of social housing, per thousands housing) show a steady decline of new social housing starting to be build between 2017 and 2020 (from 105.000 to 82.000 constructions started).

## Part des logements sociaux dans l'ensemble des mises en chantier

Modèle Fanie (AEREL à partir de Sit@del2) et Statistiques d'activité des fédérations - France entière - Milliers de logements et foyers

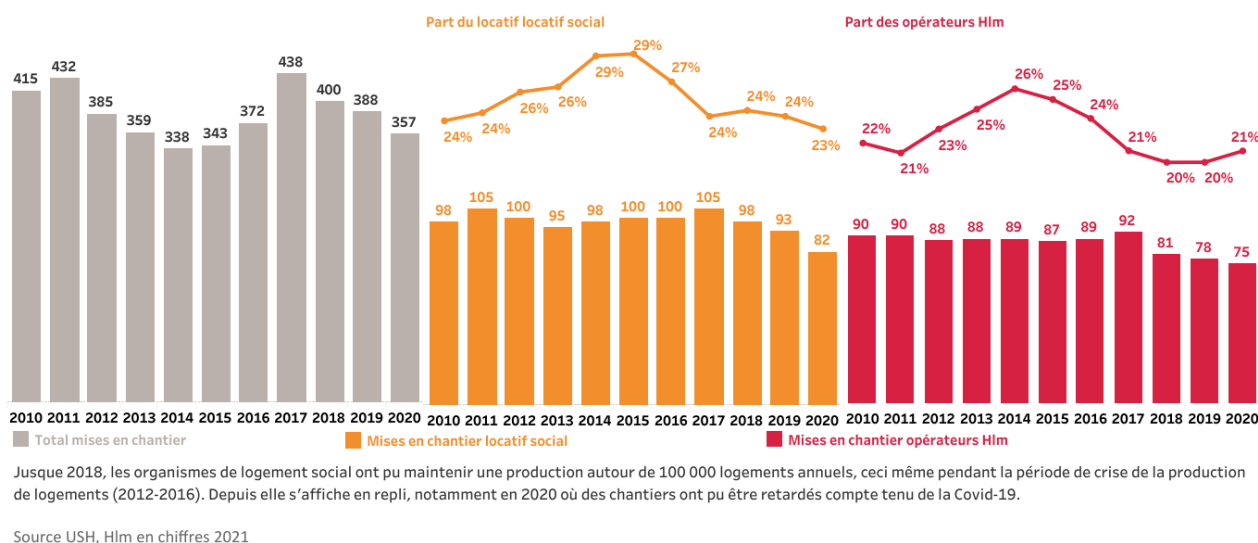


Figure A.2: Numbers of new housing constructions started in France, taken from L'Union Sociale pour l'Habitat [2021b]

Reasons for this slowed-down production are mentioned in the "Logement d'Abord" section (B.1), with notably decreasing funding for HLM operators with the decrease of APL, but also increased costs of construction in general.

An important part of the role of social housing comes from its allocation rules, as some applicants can be prioritised over some others depending on national criteria (a minimum of 25% social housing should go to prioritised households), completed by local quotas decided by the local prefecture (in the case of Nantes, the Loire-Atlantique prefecture), which can set aside up to 30% of the total HLM stock for direct attribution [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2021a]. Note that a temporary residence of permit is needed for non-European people.

The main prioritisation criteria is if someone is concerned by the DALO (homeless people, or facing eviction without rehousing, or in transitional housing, or living in unsanitary housing conditions, or in overcrowding, or living with a minor or a disabled person in unacceptable housing). Other factors includes people facing domestic violence, disabled people, or people victims of sexual violence [Ministère Chargé du Logement, 2020].

After that, each social housing applicant will go through an allocation commission, which will offer a positive or negative answer to the application, given the prioritisation criteria and the committee final decision [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2020].

Of course, the access to social housing also depends on the type of social housing asked for. A single person cannot apply for a T5-apartment, for example. Moreover, three main types of social housing are available depending on the resources of the applicant. **PLAI** ("Prêt Locatif Aidé d'Intégration" - integrated subsidised rental loan) corresponds to very-low income housing, for people with severe economic and/or social difficulties (rent from 4.56€/m<sup>2</sup> to 5.97€/m<sup>2</sup>). **PLUS** ("Prêt Locatif à Usage Social" - social usage rental loan) is the most common type of social housing, with more than 80% of social housing (rent from 5.14€/m<sup>2</sup> to 6.70€/m<sup>2</sup>). Finally, **PLS** ("Prêt Locatif Social" - social



rental loan) corresponds to social housing for middle-class, situated mainly in stressed-housing areas [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2020].

As observed in this subsection, while responsible for delivering the largest part of affordable housing in France, the social housing sector, notably the HLM sector, has been producing less housing in the last years, while the demand of social housing, notably low-rent social housing, is on the rise. Fondation Abbé Pierre [2022b] recommends, on top of boosting the affordable housing production, to extend the prioritisation of social housing to families with some members not prioritised (because of lacking residence permit for example), or reinforcing subsidies to the social housing sector.

Yet, a sudden increase of delivery of building permits have been observed on the first trimester of 2022, with 141.900 authorised buildings and a 23.5% rise compared to the previous trimester. While it might be explained by the entry into force of a new environmental reglementation at the beginning of 2022, as a similar phenomenon was observed with thermal regulations in 2012, it shows that high levels of housing production can still be achieved, and one can hope that this trend continues [Ministère de la Transition Ecologique, 2022b].

## Appendix B: Document analysis

### B.1 Logement d'Abord

As already mentioned in the Problem Analysis (see Chapter 2), a national housing and homelessness plan, "plan quinquennal pour le Logement d'abord et la lutte contre le sans-abrisme" (five-year plan for housing first and fight against homelessness) has been launched for the first time in France for the period 2018-2022 [Gouvernement français, 2021c]. DIHAL ("Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et à l'Accès au Logement" - Interministerial delegation for lodging and access to housing) is responsible for the elaboration and the execution of this plan, which will be referred as "Logement d'Abord".

In this section, an analysis of this national plan will be done, based on multiple documents:

- the official national plan [Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires, 2018].
- the official page for the last news about "Logement d'Abord", which gives a quick summary of the intended actions as well as some of the last numbers achieved with the program [Gouvernement français, 2021c]
- Results achieved after 4 years and an overview of some programs [DIHAL, 2021]
- An exchange of emails with DIHAL, about this national plan [DIHAL, 2022]
- the synthesis of *Fondation Abbé Pierre's* 2022 report on homelessness, for a critical point of view and nuances [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b]
- the French Court of Audit's report on "Logement d'Abord" [Cour des comptes, 2020]

What strikes first is the similarity between "Logement d'Abord" and the Housing First guide for Europe [Pleace, 2017b]. For both documents, similar principles are mentioned: for example, "Logement d'Abord" is mentioning as an aim the quick reorientation of homeless people inside housing, with adapted, flexible, multidisciplinary support. Additionally, the plan explicitly mentions the use of Housing First in Scandinavian countries and in United States, and how it proved to be pertinent in those countries. Yet, the plan itself is not a solely "Housing First" plan per se, despite aiming for the development of permanent housing. Only one part of the plan, "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord", corresponds to a Housing First strategy, with sites experimentation in several major French cities. More generally, numerous parts of the plan are dealing with housing and its affordability. For this matter, the plan aimed for the creation of 40.000 PLAI ("Prêt Locatif Aidé d'Intégration" - the cheapest form of social housing in France) per year for the five years of the plan, and the creation of a total of 40.000 spots of rental intermediation (a system in which an association, renting an accommodation, sublease it to a homeless person for a maximum period of 18 months to help him/her stabilise for a while and help him/her reaching permanent housing), and 10.000 spots of "Pensions de famille" (special, small-size structure, mixing collective spaces with private housings for limiting the isolation of lonely precarious people).

Five main priorities are mentioned by "Logement d'Abord":

- The production and mobilisation of more affordable, adequate housing for homeless people (with actions such as a boosted production of social housing, the mobilisation of private housing for social means through tools

such as intermediation, the development of adequate housing for specific needs, or easing the transformation of emergency shelters into permanent housing)

- The promotion and acceleration of access to housing, and facilitation of residential mobility of precarious people (with actions such as an improved knowledge on homeless people or a better access to social housing for precarious people)
- A better support for homeless people (with actions such as a strengthening of social support toward housing, multidisciplinary and coordinated approaches, developing a more coherent access to housing and access to jobs)
- The prevention of housing breakdown and the redirection of shelters to their missions of unconditional, prompt help (with actions such as strengthening the prevention of evictions, preventing breakdown for victims of violence or people exiting institutions such as hospital or prison, and redirecting shelters to their goal of urgent situations)
- The mobilisation of actors and territories to set up housing-led principles (with actions such as setting up an efficient governance at each level)

When considering these priorities, the considerations of the plan and its objectives, the plan seems ambitious, covering numerous best practices observed in other strategies (see Section 5.5), with notably goals of prevention of homelessness, better knowledge of profiles, aim of affordable housing, use of housing-led strategy, aim of coordinating multiple actors.

Yet, a lot of mentioned objectives have not been achieved during the five years of the plan: there has been only 79.000 social housing attribution between 2018 and the end of June 2021 (when it should have been more than 120.000), only 28.400 intermediation (against 40.000 needed), or only 5.200 "Pensions de famille" compared to the expected 10.000. The data may have risen up a bit since June 2021, as according to the e-mail exchange done with DIHAL in March 2022, the aims of 40.000 intermediation and 10.000 "Pensions de famille" should be reached by the end of 2022. Yet, no proofs were given to back-up the information given in the e-mail, which makes it unreliable [DIHAL, 2022].

Some positive points deserve mentions though: the e-mail and statistics after 4 years of the plan shows a rehousing of quasi-100.000 homeless people in 2021, which is the higher number of the 2017-2021 period (a 37% increase compared to 2018). While it is not enough to actually decrease the numbers of homeless people, as seen in the Court of Audit's report (as between 100.000 and 110.000 people are entering homelessness every year), if this trend keeps going and is indicating that the slow start of the plan is beginning to pay off, it can be hoped that the numbers of homeless people start stagnating and slowly reducing.

The *Fondation Abbé Pierre* report is not that positive though. Notably, it points out how other laws and numbers have sometimes been contradicting the "Logement d'Abord" plan and aims. Among them, the APL ("Aide Personnalisée au Logement" - subsidies for making housing more affordable) have been greatly reduced, with a total of 15 billion euros of savings done by the government on this subsidy. The government has also encouraged social landlords to ground up and privatise HLM by selling them (*Habitat à Loyer modéré* - social accommodation at reduced cost, the main type of social housing in France), with a goal of 40.000 HLM sold every year, while the production of HLM reached a low-point, partially due to reduced investing capacities (with the lack of APL being sometimes compensated

by lowering the HLM rents, and increased building costs), and was aggravated with the COVID-19 crisis, going down from 124.000 HLM housings produced in 2016 to 105.000 in 2019, and even 87.000 in 2020. Similarly, the official aim of building 40.000 PLAI per year was never reached, going down from 34.000 in 2016 to 32.000 in 2019, and 28.000 in 2020.

These trends appear clearly when looking at the total number of housing construction started every year in France, showed in Figure B.1:

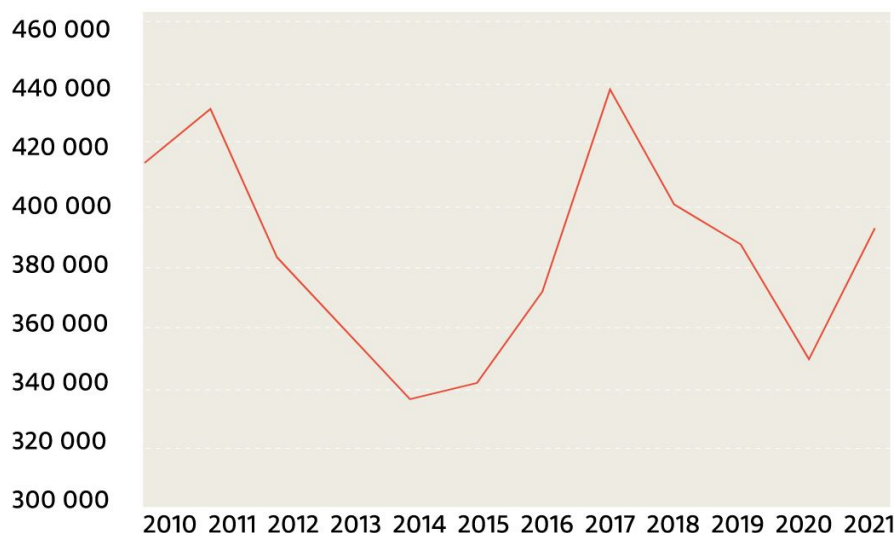


Figure B.1: Total number of newly started housing construction in France [Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2022b, page 24]

While the aim of 40.000 HLM sold every year does not always mean increasing rent, the report underlines how this privatisation creates risks of social housing not being social anymore, as once sold, they don't have to respect rules of maximum rents or prioritisation of certain applicants (despite still being counted as one for 10 years for the law SRU, that will be mentioned later). The report also underlines the discrepancy of state financial helps for different types of housing, with intermediary housing receiving nearly as much help with law PINEL (with tax credit) as affordable housing while being designed for upper-middle class, which does not need as much state support.

The third booklet of the *Fondation Abbé Pierre's* report is explicitly about "Logement d'Abord". While it agrees that there has been some improvements with the plan, notably with intermediation, "Pensions de famille" or better prioritisation of attributions of HLM for homeless populations, the results are still underwhelming, with shelter still being the main answer to homelessness when it should only be for urgent cases. Indeed, the report states how certain factors are slowing down the achievement of the plan. One main point underlined is the lacking supply of affordable housing, which limits any possibility of success of the plan. As mentioned before, PLAI are not produced as quickly as hoped for, and the use of private accommodation for social housing, through intermediation, seems a nice opportunity yet is limited by a lack of funds and support, with rents sometimes still being too expensive for precarious people (a maximum of 7€/m<sup>2</sup> is recommended). On top of that, contradictions of public policies with the aims of the plan are slowing down its execution. Contrary to its aim to prevent housing breakdown, evictions of housing are on the rise in France, as well as evictions of squats or shantytowns (with an estimated 91% of the people evicted of squats or shantytowns being without solutions of rehousing, and solutions are often precarious such as gymnasiums or hotel rooms). The Logement d'Abord plan is also unevenly considered depending on the territories:

lack of interest or of mobilisation, or opportunist use of the plan to boost the image, have been observed. The actual application of the official instructions depends on the will of local elected officials and local actors. On top of that, undocumented migrants, which are estimated to be between 600.000 to 700.000 in France, are not covered by most of "Logement d'Abord", as they have no access to social housing and can rarely access private housing both because of rents and guarantees to offer. Only rare initiatives of associations or municipalities try to mitigate this.

As a summary, "Logement d'Abord" has shown very ambitious aims of improvement of housing conditions for homeless people or precarious people, with numerous actions reminiscent of good practices from other homelessness strategies. And indeed, there has been positive outcomes following this plan on certain topics, such as the development of new tools to better accommodate for homeless people. Yet, the plan never fully reached its intended results, notably in term of housing provision, which is the basis for any long-term improvement of the national housing conditions, while at the same time other laws and policies have limited the impacts the plan could have had on eviction or social housing production for example. Following these observations, *Fondation Abbé Pierre* suggests corrections and improvements of the plan, with notably a real-time measurement of objectives, a better social support, a continuity of funds and subsidies, and a sufficient affordable housing supply. A suggestion is made to inspire more from Finland, by increasing helps to housing rather than decreasing them, pushing forward the transformation of shelters into permanent housing, with more intensive support. Similarly, *Cour des comptes* [2020] gives several recommendations following its evaluation of the plan, among which a better prioritisation of homeless people for social housing, and a clear programme to indeed gradually transform shelters into social or other adequate housing.

## B.2 PDALHPD

The analysis of the PDALHPD is done using only the reference document itself [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021].

The current edition of the PDALHPD has been out on February 2021, covering the period 2021-2025. On top of the department, it has been done with the collaboration of the state and two major municipalities of the department, Nantes (with Nantes Municipality) and Saint Nazaire (with the Carène). It is the more localised plan specifically designed as a plan addressing homelessness, as at city level, no official plans are aimed expressively at homelessness, even if some actions are done at that level.

From its editorial, the PDALHPD states its main goals of coordination and simplification of homelessness actions of the department, with aims to bring new answers and facilitate the access and stay in housing for homeless and precarious people.

From its table of contents, a good overview of the tackled topics is already available. The document starts with explaining the reasons for its creation (with its stakes and legal setting), before giving the context in which it takes place. Then, intervention principles, governance and the general concerned population are mentioned. A whole part of the document is then dedicated to a presentation and explanation of the axis and orientations used by the PDALHPD, with precise operational objectives for each orientation (including a description of more refined context, stakes, aims, foreseen execution, actors, affected area, schedule and indicators for evaluation). Then, the major part of the document is devoted to the departmental diagnosis, including contextual data, giving more precision about the governance, then using a third of the document (35 pages) to describe all, or at least most of, the available tools to run the plan and its objectives. It includes details about tools to access housing or accommodation (from shelters to permanent housing), about mobilisation tools aimed for homeless or poorly-housed people, about support services

and funds, as well as details about specific answers for specific homeless populations, and prevention of evictions. A small part is dedicated to the action against indecent lodging or energy insecurity, to specific territorial challenges, and synthesising the main stakes. Finally, appendices are mentioned, including a table showing the shares of places per structure and type of housing, and examples of experimentation done on other territories [Loire-Atlantique et al., 2021, page 4].

The PDALHPD describe itself as a plan of action in line with several recent national plans: the law ELAN, the five-years plan "Logement d'Abord", and the precariousness strategy (2018-2022). It aims to reinforce the articulation between several strategy documents, and to do that aims to deliver a global vision of requirements in term of housing and shelters, to define shared orientations to access and stay in housing, and coordinate housing or shelter projects from partners and actors.

About the global vision, the document summarises the main characteristics of the department. The context of the PDALHPD, as it is a departmental plan, is larger than Nantes' one: it includes 207 communes, 16 EPCI ("Etablissements Publics de Coopération Intercommunale" - basically a municipalities group), for a total of 1.380.852 inhabitants in 2016, with a quick rise (estimated to be around 17.000 new inhabitants per year, 3,5 times the national mean). For this department, a majority of the social housing is located in Nantes municipality (68% of the total), seconded by Saint Nazaire's agglomeration (14%), which also indicates under-resourced rural areas. This social housing production has been stalling compared to the constant demand, mainly in Nantes, with a 5,5% rise of the demand in 2020 compared to 2019 (for a total of 49.512 demands in 2020). In addition, PDALHPD also mentions a discrepancy between the supply and demand of social housing in term of type and size of housing: while Loire-Atlantique have 63% of housing with at least 4 rooms, T1 or T2 apartments make up for 51% of the total demand nowadays. The impacts of this stressed social housing stock are underlined in the document: lacking housing for precarious people, shelters and supportive housing impacted by the growing demand, a more and more diversified offer of housing on the territory, but largely concentrated in Nantes and eventually the Carène. Major migratory flows, including isolated refugees, that can't access the usual social housing market due to missing documents, are also provoking a lack of smooth entry into and exit of shelters or temporary housing. The increased part of precarious people, who have a tendency to stay longer in social housing, also had the effect of slowing down the turnover of social housing. Finally, the document also mentions how the COVID-19 crisis has slowed down the entire production chain, as well as accentuated phenomenons of poverty or marginality, on top of an extremely reduced turnover during the crisis.

From this context, the PDALHPD shows how it aims for long-term solution with its axis and orientations. Not all are described here, yet a summary of the main points to dig up is done.

First, as said before, the PDALHPD is linked to the "Logement d'Abord" national plan. **Axis 1** of the PDALHPD (*Animate a common strategy for habitat, housing and lodging coherent with the "Logement d'Abord" approach*) states how it stresses the importance of the visibility of actions, and the importance of tools to simplify the access and stay into housing and fight against non-use of tools by trying to approach the varied situations transversely, to avoid silo effects. It is once more included in **Orientation 1** (which aims for the convergence of strategic departmental planning tools, with objectives such as a shared governance over the housing strategy, and crossing and sharing the data on needs from multiple sources - *objectives 1 and 2*).

**Axis 2** (*Conduct a territory-differentiated operational action for residential opportunities of precarious people*) mentions the need for multi-level organisations for spreading more equally the social housing stock and its

attribution, engaging a reflection on territory attractiveness in favour of more implementations out of Nantes municipality, as well as easing the use of subsidies and adapted tools to facilitate housing for the most precarious people. This includes **Orientation 2** for example, with actions such as *Objective 4* (reinforce articulation between this plan and other planning documents at department scale) or *Objective 5* (strengthen ways of engaging the private housing stock with intermediation) and *Objective 7* (Develop shared information and common language between housing experts, social workers, support associations), with aims for a better understanding of the various needs of specific populations concerned by the plan, adapting the housing stock, achieving better flexibility and understanding of localised needs and knowledge between actors.

**Axis 3** (*Contribute to the securing and the flow of pathways, using an adapted and flexible support provision*) mainly discuss the need of a specific answer for specific type of households that have no answer in the common right, because of their status (isolated people, or large families), marginal lifestyles, specific diseases or conditions, lack of resources, with a zoom on support into housing. The importance of multidisciplinary support (with medical assistance, professional integration, social support) is underlined here. This axis corresponds to a large panel of objectives: both **Orientation 3** (building adapted answers to answer the complexity of situations) and **Orientation 4** (Preventing tenants' evictions) can be linked to this axis, and they include objectives such as the aim for better flexible and multidisciplinary support (*Objective 9*), adapted solutions for Roma people (*Objective 13*), better access and support into housing for people with mental illness (*Objective 15*), or develop tools of "Going toward" - support to try to avoid eviction as soon as possible (*Objective 17*).

### B.3 PLH

In order to analyse the PLH, the main documents used will be the two booklets of the complete PLH [Nantes Métropole, 2018a,b]. Two summaries of the PLH are also used [Nantes Métropole et Ville, 2021b,a].

As mentioned above, the PLH is the main housing planning document for Nantes municipality, answering the housing needs with strategies to produce and renovate housing with demography, balanced share of type and size of housing and social mix concerns. The first booklet notably contains a diagnosis of the context of Nantes (in terms of demography, inhabitants profiles, housing dynamics), an orientation document with the main principles and objectives of the PLH, and finally a detailed action plan which takes up the largest part of the document. This action plan is completed by the second booklet of the PLH, with more precise data and numbers of housing to be produced for each commune of Nantes municipality.

From the observed context, the PLH defined main stakes to consider for this plan. These stakes underline aims to both diversify the local housing market, with greater numbers of low-income social housing and better shares of housing types, and keep a high level of housing production, with an aim of 6.000 yearly housings. Concerns are also raised about coherence with other public policies, and the demography changes of Nantes, creating needs for new specific answers.

Looking now at the plan of actions of the PLH, among the five strategic orientations, three orientations are particularly of interest for this thesis (the two others being about energy transition of housing, and animation and later evaluation of the plan). These orientations, and the main actions they encompass, will be analysed here.

**Orientation 2** is about the diversification of the housing supply. It mainly is about taking into account needs

and changing demographics to adapt the housing supply. It is partially summarised by figure B.2, which presents the objectives of yearly housing production, with the distribution of the total 6.000 yearly housings. It is notably observed that a third of this aimed housing production is meant to be affordable social housing, with an aim of 1.500 PLUS and 500 PLAI (25% of the 2.000 housings). An additional 500 PLS housing (the most expensive part of social housing) are also aimed for. The total aimed housing production thus reaches a 41% rate of housings corresponding to SRU, which will help to reach the 25% rate needed on the whole municipality.

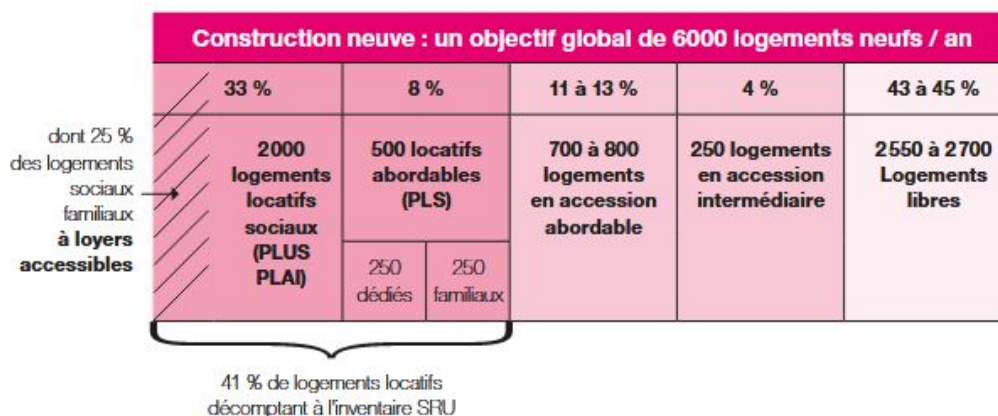


Figure B.2: Yearly housing production aim per type [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 215]

Actions from this orientation, on top of the ones about the housing production mentioned above, include the increase of production of T1 and T2 apartments, as well as T6 or more, for social housing. Indeed, there is numerous T1 apartments in Nantes, yet, most of them are from private landlords and are not affordable for low-income households. Thus, as seen in subsection 6.1.2, there is a lack of T1 and T2 size of apartments in the social housing sector, which is emphasised in the PLH by figure B.3.

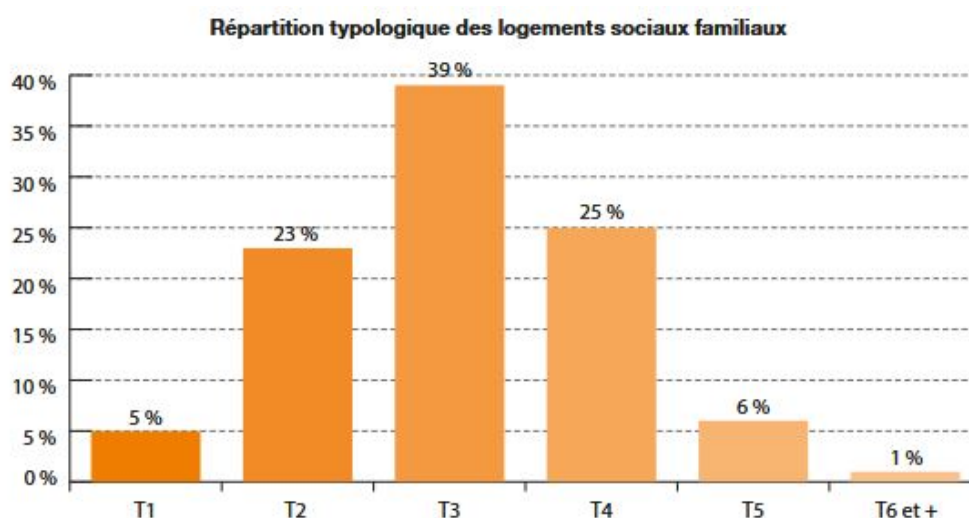


Figure B.3: Typology (size) of existing social housing in Nantes [Nantes Métropole, 2018a, page 61]

**Orientation 3** is about the adaption to a changing demography, with notably intention points for ageing people, disabled people and new young inhabitants. Actions include specialised housings for these categories, from



retirement houses to students residences.

**Orientation 4** is the most relevant to the thesis, as it is about the development of solutions for the most precarious people. It mentions the "Logement d'Abord" plan, and states the need to access permanent housing.

Part of the actions are about the allocation of social housing in Nantes municipality, and how to use it to enforce a better share of attributions for priority households. For example, the municipality seems aware of the low rate of allocation for the poorest part of the applicants mentioned in subsection 6.1.2, as an action is aimed to boost priority for this part of applicants. The *Conférence Intercommunale du Logement* (Intercommunal Housing Conference), reuniting Nantes Municipality and several others local housing actors (mayors of the communes, social landlords, Action Logement among others), have indeed agreed to add local allocations rule on top of the national ones for 47.5% of the annual allocations.

In addition, this orientation also uses housing-led actions, with the development of new permanent housing units with support services (Maison Relais, experimentation such as "IGLOO" or "Woodstock") as well as better coordination of actors. The French Housing First experiment "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" is also mentioned in this orientation, with an aim of 100 housings in Nantes taking part in the experiment.

Actions aimed for specific precarious populations are also part of this orientation. Action 44 for example consider the need for transitory housing actions for people coming out of prison or migrants, as well as improve data on the most precarious populations, with mention to the PDALHPD. Action 45 mentions the use of transitory supported housing for women victim of domestic violence, old dependant people, or people exiting hospital or prison, and Action 45 bis talks about specific plans to accommodate for Eastern Europe migrants living in shantytowns around Nantes, estimated to be 1.500 to 1.800 people living in approximately 40 areas, with aims to rehouse and support those who wants to integrate to common right status. Action 46 Roma people is dedicated to Roma people, and the development of reception sites to offer them proper habitat.

On top of the orientations and actions from the first booklet of the PLH, more precise intended aims of housing production commune per commune is done in the second booklet of the PLH.

Figure B.4 presents the targets of yearly housing production for each of the 24 communes of Nantes as well as Nantes: the green numbers are the total aimed housing production, and the blue numbers below the green ones are the aimed social housing production.

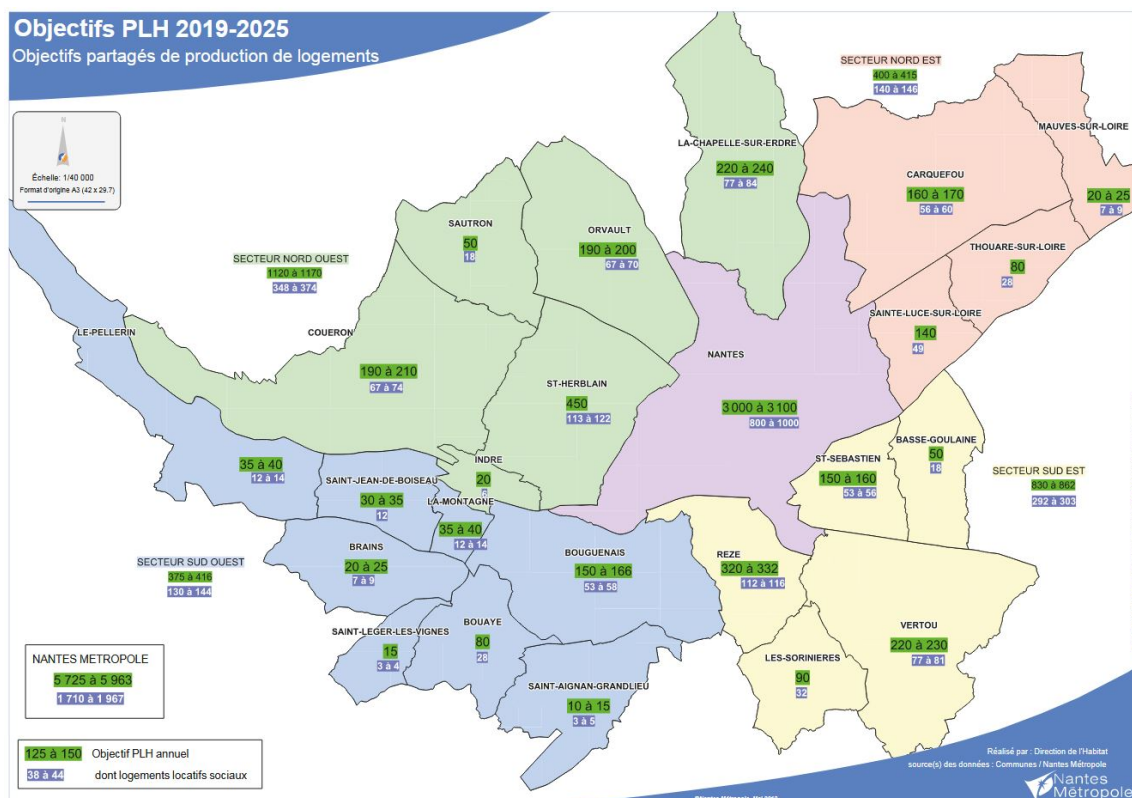


Figure B.4: Yearly housing production targets of Nantes and its communes [Nantes Métropole, 2018b, page 10]

From the second booklet of the PLH, it can be observed that while Nantes already has above 25% of its housing as social housing, thus is above the needed SRU rate, the large majority of its communes does not. To do that, among the intended 2,000 social housing per year which should allow the municipality to reach the 25% for every communes by 2025, a majority (in term of percentage of total housing build) is needed in communes with lower SRU rates.

Table B.1 shows how Nantes municipality has chosen to distribute its social housing production among its communes:

	Communes not reaching SRU	Communes already reaching or not aimed by SRU
<b>Closest communes (from Nantes, or close to public transport lines)</b>	35% to 40% new housings are respecting SRU (max 5% in PLS)	25% to 35% new housings are respecting SRU (max 5% in PLS)
<b>Other communes</b>	35% new housings are PLUS/PLAI	25% of new housings are PLUS/PLAI

Table B.1: Share of social housing production among Nantes' communes (taken from Nantes Métropole [2018b])

As expected, communes having not reached the SRU rates have higher rates of PLAI or PLUS among their new housings than the other ones, but it is still noticeable that every commune of Nantes Municipality is expected to continue producing more than 25% of housings respecting SRU.

## Appendix C: Interviews

### C.1 Interview 1: municipal councillor of Nantes

The first interview was done online on the 17th of February 2022, with a municipal councillor of Nantes who is the head behind the "homelessness funds" initiative.

Before the start of the interview, as an answer to the mail I sent him and the question about official numbers of homelessness in Nantes, he replied that there was no official homelessness numbers in Nantes, yet that out of 36.000 social housing applications, there was an estimated 10.000 households (families or single persons) who did not have any housing solution, and this does not include people who did not asked for social housing (people with an irregular situation or living in shanty towns for example).

The start of the interview was mainly about the homelessness funds. The councillor presented me with the rules for these funds, the conditions for their use, and the projects already helped with these funds.

On short, the rules of the funds are simple: they can reach up to 1% of the total budget of the municipality, which represents 10 million euros per year for the current municipal mandate. To benefit from these funds, either for investing in a new project or for keeping an already existing project running, criteria have to be fulfilled, and the priority should be to obtain other contributors (such as the department or the state) before (the funds are aimed to be a complement, not a subsidiarity). A maximum of 85% of the total budget can be covered by the municipality.

In short, the municipality is not using the money in actions, but rather is offering these funds for communes with projects answering the criteria and asking for the funds. Criteria are that the projects must give a quick and important improvement of living conditions of households, that the offered housing is temporary (with a minimum time of 3 months offered) and must integrate a solution to access permanent housing when leaving the temporary housing, or at least appropriate solutions. The funds can be use for any type of homeless person, from roofless person to victims of violence, the entering conditions are left free for each project to choose though.

The governance of the funds is done by a steering committee, a review board (examining the projects and feedback on projects) and a technical group (in charge of sharing tools and experiences).

As of February 2022, 4 communal projects had been helped with the funds, for a total of 388.647€, which leave the councillor to say that not all 10M€ will be used for the first year of existence of the funds, which he explains by the progressive stepping up of the arrangement, as the projects are still being set up and accepted.

To give an idea of the type of projects, the four projects were described. The first one is the use of 19 mobilhomes as an emergency solution after the fire of a shantytown, for accommodating 22 families of Eastern European migrants, in Bouguenais. The second one was a temporary housing for 28 minor migrants, with help of social services, in Orvault. The third one is the use of 9 apartments for temporary housing of 9 families of Eastern European migrants, in Rezé. Finally, the last one was the housing of 20 asylum seekers as roommates in 4 temporary housing, with social support, in Rezé.

After talking about homelessness funds, other topics came into discussion. Notably, about "Housing First" (or "Un Chez-soi d'Abord" in the French experiment done), the councillor mentioned that there was the significant burden

of having housing shortfall limiting the possibility to operate such strategy, as well as a technical difficulty to put into relation every needed actor (social and medical support) for the support needed in Housing First. He mentions that the temporary housing main use now is to help families accessing social housing to reach certain steps (knowing to pay the rent and expenses for example) and registering for their social rights.

An additional solution is mentioned, the IGLOO experimentation, which is a special social housing with the specificity that the future tenants participate to the finishing work of their housing (as a way to socially integrate them by working on something valuable). For now, two IGLOO operations have been done in Nantes.

When asked about some historic initiatives of Nantes and notable changes about policies for homelessness in Nantes, he mentioned first the sheltering of important past squats in Nantes, notably the square Daviais. According to him, all the people sleeping in tents at square Daviais have been offered a temporary shelter, which costed the municipality a few million euros. According to him, the current diversification of homeless population brings the need of adaption and new solutions. Among them, there has been an ongoing discussion since then to try to house in official manners people living in squat, managed by the SIAO ("Service Intégré d'Accueil et d'Orientation" - integrated reception and orientation service), with funds from the state and unoccupied places provided by the municipality. About 200 accommodations have been obtained this way, with diverse unoccupied buildings (for example, an old youth hostel). He says that it is a major step, as there has been a progressive partnership with the prefecture, the associative network (which is usually managing squat housing) and the territorial collectivity to fortify the structure of these temporary shelters. He recognises that such unprofessional structures (usually made by volunteers without expertise) can be fragile, but it allows for cheaper practices, and the dynamic associative network of Nantes allows it. Among these new solutions, he also mentions the developing practices of interfacing professional and volunteers to help mobilising vacant dwellings (multiple examples are quoted: the use of the Sourdille medical clinic in 2020, or the use of abandoned offices in 2021).

In the end of the discussion, the councillor presented his personal activities. His main role is to prevent disputes and find compromises in specific cases, with the aim to set up the policies defined by the PLH (sufficient production of housing). Yet, he observes that the construction does not follow the need of housing, which leads to a housing stress. He mentions possible factors for this: the compelling local Urbanism Plan, the rising prices of land, and sometimes mayors disagreeing with the continued growth of their communes, freezing or at least slowing down new constructions.

He recommended to ask the Habitat branch of the municipality for questions concerning the social landlords of Nantes, the planned constructions and if they include social housing, as well as local statistics of homelessness.

## **C.2 Interview 2: Habitat branch of Nantes Municipality**

The second interview was done online on the 25th of February 2022, with two people from the habitat branch of Nantes municipality, in charge of the Local Habitat Programme. One is working on the PLH (interviewee 1), and the other is working on the social housing attributions (interviewee 2).

The interview starts with generalities about the PLH, therefore only interviewee 1 was answering for this part of the interview. Interviewee 1 mentions how the PLH is definitely the reference document for the foreseen housing production of the municipality, and that it used studies and demographic projections to determine the needs. A

consequent demographic growth of 1.5% per year was observed, as Nantes municipality is one of the most attractive French municipality, and phenomena of ageing population and single living replacing more and more living with other persons. Thus, interviewee 1 underlines that the 6.000 housing per year aim of the PLH is made to accommodate both staying people and newcomers, and that the diversity of housing proposed has been worked with care. Yet, interviewee 1 mentions a discrepancy of very social housing produced: the demand for PLAI (very social housing) rose from 28.000 to 36.000 housings between 2018 and 2022, with an estimated 77% of applicants that indeed answers the criteria to access PLAI, while approximately 30% of the social housing produced are PLAI. To compensate for that, subsidies such as APL are boosted in such ways that social landlords are decreasing rents: this represents 5 million euros per year of subsidies financed by the municipality. With these, the rent of social housing approximates around 6.5€/m<sup>2</sup>, which is within the recommendations of *Fondation Abbé Pierre* for example. The most expensive social housing, PLS, are capped to 9€/m<sup>2</sup>. According to interviewee 1, this voluntarist approach to try to keep affordable prices is conform to the national plan "Logement d'Abord".

Interviewee 1 mentions also, about social housing, the imperative of social diversity, enforced with the PLU (urbanism local plan) which requires a part of social housing for any construction project totalling more than 4 households.

Interviewee 2 then talks about the attribution rules. He recalls that the attribution rules are defined at a national level, with priorities for DALO and domestic violence for example, but he mentions also that there is space for small local adjustments. Local adjustments add in the prioritisation of households concerned by urban renewal with demolished housing, as well as the entirety of households mentioned by the "Logement d'Abord" policy.

A short mention of the French housing First experiment ("Un Chez-soi d'Abord") in Nantes is mentioned as well, in order to make the clear difference with "Logement d'Abord". Interviewee 1 states how "Logement d'Abord" is more of a call for interest lead by the government to push forward the mobilisation of actors and the delivery of housing, while "Un Chez-soi d'Abord" is indeed what is called "Housing First" usually. In Nantes, this Housing First experiment aims for 100 housings for two-years.

About social support, interviewee 1 mentions how "Logement d'Abord" works toward a multi-actor network to try to avoid silo effects, and households being stuck with one non suitable actor.

When asked about estimations of homelessness in Nantes, interviewee 1 mentions the existence of an observatory of precarious households led by someone else of the Habitat branch of the municipality that may give the precise knowledge. Additionally, he mentions known estimations for certain types of public: 2.500 Eastern Europe migrants and Roma people are supposedly living on 56 settlement sites. In addition, 1.000 refugees are noticed as living in improper temporary housing instead of common rights asylum structure because of a lack of places, thus there is an aim of production of specific "social" housing for refugees with "interlayer" housing (using already-existing unoccupied housing for temporary housing).

When asked about the main challenges to help homeless populations, interviewee 1 mentions how the rising costs of construction, as well as the COVID-19 crisis and the reluctance of some mayors have slowed down considerably the production of social housing for the last years, in an already stressed housing market, causing a slower turnover inside the social housing as well as in temporary housing structures. This is also a given reason for searching interlayer housing, and using new tools to obtain new available housing. As was already mentioned in Interview 1, one used solution is the mobilisation of vacant dwellings set available for associations, sometimes even from land developer preferring this to potential squat (the example of the Sourdille medical clinic is mentioned again). Another tested

solution is the creation of modular social housing, with offsite construction (such as a converted container) to achieve a quick construction of housing operations, with quick housing of people. For Eastern Europe migrants, TIT (temporary insertion terrain) as well as boarding houses are used to help them out of shanty towns. For very precarious people, multiple experiments happened. Notably, Aurore association, which was already partially in charge of the rehousing of refugees from the square Daviais into gymnasiums, has developed the idea of small modular housing for both refugees and other precarious homeless people to help with finer, specific solutions when common rights can't answer. The final aim is to create small "villages" of such modular housing mixed with social support (for professional inclusion and help with day-to-day errands). Yet, these experiments have sometimes face poor experiences (deterioration), and the interlayer housing has difficulties to get finances.

The interviewees gave me some recommendations on who I should meet for specific topics: they recommended that I met with the operation responsible of 5 Ponts (a project led by association Eaux Vives) as well as with Aurore, Trajet, St Benoit Labre and UFUT 44 to have a good overview of some homelessness associations in Nantes. They recommended that I met with Nantes Métropole Habitat and Atlantique Habitation for interviews with social landlords, and recommended that I met with the local government services and departmental authorities for specific plans, as well as with another person from Nantes Municipality for the observatory of homelessness.

### C.3 Interview 3: Association Saint Benoit Labre 44

The third interview was done online on the 23rd of March 2022, with the head of housing division of Association Saint Benoit Labre 44. The association will be referred by its abbreviation, that is to say "ASBL".

One of the first thing mentioned by the interviewee is the housing crisis of Nantes, which is limiting any sort of solutions for housing concerns. When asked about general actions of *ASBL* for homelessness and its principles, the interviewee underlines that *ASBL* is not a form of "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" or Housing First (he gives me the name of the associations responsible for experimenting "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" in Nantes). He explains that *ASBL* is more about temporary housing, or interlayer housing which he defines as a form of official squat, with rents, in housing intended to disappear, when land developer or the municipality buy the terrain for a future project. *ASBL* guarantee low rents during the occupation, and negotiates with land developers to include at least one or two affordable apartments in their development projects.

When asked about the employees available and the budget, the interviewee starts by giving a short history of *ASBL* is then told: how it started in 1953 by welcoming roofless people, how it has slowly grown to accommodate for other types of homeless people (unaccompanied minors since 2010) as well as in term of employees (from 150 to 400 employees just between 2015 and 2018, and between 400 and 450 nowadays) and housing stock (600 housings nowadays). The different activities of *ASBL* are then presented: 3 different divisions: one for general housing, one for unaccompanied minors, and one for adult migrants. With *ASBL*, the unaccompanied minors are usually housed in specific residences (while it was hostel room before, but it was not sustainable long-term). The adult migrants are housed as roommates with the help of social or private landlords. The total budget of *ASBL* is 40 million euros per year. Most of the funding of *ASBL* comes from the state. Some additional funds are obtained from the municipality, subsidies for special national action plan (such as the Winter plan), the department.

When asked about changes, new methods used, the interviewee mentions the role of the general housing division, which integrates shelters as well as "Maison Relais", French transitory houses with no determined end of stay. The

interviewee states that "Maison Relais" is probably the most interesting tool used to rehouse people with *ASBL*, and is a type of "Housing First" according to him. He states how they include working toward the social integration by the way they work, while proposing individual rented housing. He also states that there are still difficulties to accompany specific populations, he quotes notably the example of people with dogs that are rarely accepted in shelters or temporary housing.

The interviewee then states other homelessness actors *ASBL* works with: he mentions the CHRS ("Centre d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale" - accommodation and social rehabilitation centre) which have 390 rooms that can be used for shelter, the "Service Azur" which works in the South part of the municipality on rehousing and prevention of homelessness, as well as with "Solidarité Femmes Loire-Atlantique" for housing women victim of domestic violence.

About challenges, the interviewee mentions the competition for housing because of the stressed market, and the intense work needed to prevent evictions in some cases: bringing people to pay again their rent or ease the neighbours for example. In contrast, the interviewee states new and innovative services available with *ASBL*: a social baggage service, the Solibus (a moving bus going from places to places to help people with social demands), and "Ma Marmite", a coordinated project with other associations to offer accessible kitchens for homeless person that needs to cook something (among which one truck-kitchen).

The interviewee concludes on the actions of the *ASBL* by stating that the approaches are mixed, with always a need to adapt to the current situation, and the need to slowly build a housing stock. For example, he mentions how the war in Ukraine brings a new refugee public.

## C.4 Interview 4: Les Eaux Vives / 5 Ponts

The fourth interview was done in the offices of the association "Eaux Vives", located inside one building of the "5 Ponts" project, on the 5th of April 2022, with the development manager of the association "Les Eaux Vives". The association will be referred by "Eaux Vives", the related project will be referred by its name "5 Ponts".

The first part of the interview consisted in a general description of actions and principles carried out by *Eaux Vives*. The interviewee starts with a short history of *Eaux Vives*, which is an association that started in 1976 with groups of doctors acting with charity acts for fighting homelessness (with unconditional day centre for homelessness, places to shower, eat, and sit). It since became more and more professional, with additional employees and a more structured social action alongside public policies. The actions of *Eaux Vives* are mainly aimed toward high-priority people: roofless people, people with mental suffering, foreign homeless populations, or precarious people with difficulties to pay or find housing. Their actions consist in 4 main categories: sheltering, support for access to housing, support for access to the workplace, and support for access to care (notably for mental and psychiatric conditions). These actions and categorisations of people are not restricted though, as the reality is more complex, and people can accumulate vulnerabilities.

In terms of resources, *Eaux Vives* have around 150 employees, mainly social workers, working mainly on Nantes municipality and some other cities from the department, north of the Loire (St Nazaire, Savenay, Nosay for example). The interviewee mentions they do not have activities in other cities South of the Loire, which is in part where *ASBL* intervenes. In addition to the employees, the interviewee underlines an important volunteer work (with more than

70 active volunteers - which by "active" means in that case coming recurrently, with a planning).

When asked about financial resources, the interviewee mentions a total budget of 8 million euros per year, mainly from the state, the departmental council, as well as Nantes Municipality, and mentions getting European funds for the 5 Ponts project. *Eaux Vives* is gathering some private philanthropic funds as well.

Then, a large part of the interview is about 5 *Ponts*, as the main new solution used by *Eaux Vives*. Indeed, the interviewee mentions that *Eaux Vives* used to have multiple emergency structures spread through the city: overnight shelters, day centre, emergency homelessness centre - for a few days' stay), and that the first aim of 5 *Ponts* was to limit the need to wander between multiple different places in the city to find different services, by clustering the multiple services inside a single space, leaving more time for homeless people (for example, to loiter or do administrative works to access their rights).

As stated by the interviewee, the main idea was to reinforce 5 various support dimensions with a global structure: housing, care, job, self-confidence, social mix ("5 *Ponts*" for 5 support dimensions). In order to promote mixity and fight stereotypes, 5 *Ponts* has been built in a newly-constructed neighbourhood of Nantes, and is made of classic housing and meeting spaces on top of supportive housing and night shelter.

The interviewee then talked about the various homelessness actions happening in 5 *Ponts*. 5 *Ponts* has a day centre open from 10AM to 5:30PM, with room for 80 people at a single-given time (with an estimated max 120 people that would come a day), with social workers available to help with access to social rights, with Internet access, a washing machine, a social restaurant and coffee available. This day centre is then changed to a night shelter from 6:30PM to 9AM of the following day, for a maximum of 30 people sleeping on mattresses. Then, 5 *Ponts* is housing people in a more classic way: 40 rooms are dedicated to either temporary supportive housing (stay for possibly some months) or temporary shelter (maximum 5 to 6 successive days). For these shelter rooms, the SIAO and its linked "115" emergency number led homeless people toward *Eaux Vives*, which check the applications before accepting or refusing them. Some rules are in application to access these shelter rooms: no families are accepted, neither their children, and the shelters are not adapted for people with too important mental diseases. Yet, there is a constant discussion with other actors and associations to re-lead the homeless people toward more convenient shelters or housing, in that case. These communications are spontaneous, no proper network is coordinating these actions, according to the interviewee.

Other actions led by 5 *Ponts* are mentioned as well: "Premières Heures", a progressive relearning of work designed for people extremely remote from the job market. At the moment, 40 people per year are following this program, helped by a technical supervisor, a coordinator and an adviser. Up to 10 people at the same time are taken care of, following a 150 hours course, which can be from 6 to 9 months long depending on how fast the person manages some steps. Finally, the last mentioned action is the "Pont Santé", which is the availability of a treatment room inside 5 *Ponts* where mobile doctor teams can check up and do minor interventions on people from the day centre (yet, the interviewee despised the fact that this action is barely financed, because of the partition of certain public policies: housing being separated from health).

Then, the variety of the homeless population coming to 5 *Ponts* was discussed. The interviewee stated how the profiles and the pathways of these homeless people is diverse, with some people using services from *Eaux Vives* for more than 15 years, than no one manages to get "out of the street" permanently, as well as newcomers. Several profiles are mentioned: precarious "traditional" tramps, people suffering from physical or psychiatric problems, with pervasive disorders (such as schizophrenia, or bipolarity), some people coming out of the hospital, asylum seekers, potential undocumented migrants, and more and more frequently young people (either migrants, or in family breakdown, for



example).

Other projects outside of *5 Ponts* are then mentioned. Among them, a night shelter dedicated to women have been tested, as most women which came to the existing night shelter, with separate rooms, before *5 Ponts* were not coming anymore to *5 Ponts* where there was no separate rooms for men and women. The new women-only night shelter has since shown great success, as the 10 places are taken every night. As the project was temporary, a new permanent, bigger one (16 places), is planned to open.

Then, as a question about this particular project was asked, the interviewee explained what "Mobil'Eaux Vives" was: a modular habitat project, that could be used to limit construction prices by using an off-site process, allowing to easily move the modules when needed. However, it has not been started yet, as there are many legal peculiarities that needs expertise still.

When asked about "Logement d'Abord" and "Housing First", the interviewee mentioned that the idea is good in theory, but that it is unenforceable to a big scale in Nantes because of the lack of housing. Furthermore, the interviewee mentioned the "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" experiment taking place in Nantes, and how it implies a consequent support, involving multidisciplinary teams, needing a consequent investment at first, even if the financial impact would be positive in the end. The interviewee noticed how these strategies are still only experiments in France. In term of philosophy, however, the interviewee says that *Eaux Vives* totally sticks to it, despite lacking resources to actually do it.

The end of the interview was a discussion about the main successes and difficulties faced by *Eaux Vives*, what was working or not for the association. The interviewee mentioned how, despite facilitating the access to rights and support, having merged all activities in the same building have led some homeless people to live on a micro-neighbourhood and stop going outside regularly. This can however be overcome, according to the interviewee, with some attention to keep them active. A more challenging point mentioned is the care of certain extremely precarious people, notably ageing people suffering from physical dependencies (handicap, incontinence) and / or mental diseases. The interviewee mentioned how no one is really taking care of them, and that some end up dying in the street. Other, more minor, problems mentioned are squat problems around the *5 Ponts* site, as there is too much people for the night shelter, thus some people are not able to stay, and violent acts. For both these problems, solutions have been found though, a security agent is always available in *5 Ponts*, and conciliation is done with neighbours to keep cordial relationships. Some minor positive aspects (on top of all the positive from the actions) were pointed out as well: people are indeed talking to each others in the gathering points, such as the café and the restaurant.

The interview ended up with a quick visit of the building, and the different rooms mentioned during the interview.

## C.5 Interview 5: Atlantique Habitations

The last interview was done online on the 10th of May 2022, with two employees (a land developer and a director of customer relations) of the departmental social landlord *Atlantique Habitations*. The social landlord will be referred by "Atlantique Habitations", the interviewees will be equally referred as "the interviewees", as no specific knowledge was specifically given by only one of them, and they complemented each others.

The interviewees started by giving an overview of the activities of *Atlantique Habitations*. It mainly produces, buy and redevelop classic types of social housing, that is to say PLAI, PLUS and PLS. In addition, some specific operations

exist, such as 50 PLU housings ("Prêt Locatif d'Urgence" - Urgency Rent Credit), or retirement homes, as well as an emergency centre currently in construction. It has a total stock of 13,000 housings.

The interviewees recommended me to look after the activity report on *Atlantique Habitations*' website to have a quick overview of all the missions and the way the company works. Still, a summary of the main characteristics of *Atlantique Habitations* was still done during the interview. It has existed for 110 years, starting as a social company for housing. The core of their work is the management of a social housing stock: construction, management and maintenance of this stock, as well as renting it. Minor activities, such as the selling of part of the stock, are also done.

The interviewees then explain how *Atlantique Habitations* specific departments of the company have specific tasks, such as technical rehabilitation of buildings, or coordination and discussion with partners such as the municipality or housing associations, depending on the project. They also spotlight a unique characteristic of *Atlantique Habitations*, which is a work management team (20 staff members specialised on carpentry, electricity, etc) dedicated to a quick response to any small repairs needed in the housing stock.

As the interviewees mentioned "tenant support", I asked what it referred to. They answered that it could start even as people are still applicants of social housing: the aim is to start a discussion with the applicant in order to facilitate its access to housing (pre-allocation support). It is followed with eventual financial support, and a use of pre-contentious discussions before any eviction measures to try to bring back the tenant to pay his rent. The Visale guarantee is mentioned as a used tool to avoid eviction measures.

When talking about the attribution rules, the interviewees remind the national rules of attributions, before talking about the quotas for some prefectures or department. For example, the interviewees mention how people exiting institutions, having right to DALO, refugees or victims of violence can have allocations quotas. For these quotas, only one applicant per housing is discussed by the allocation committee, while there are three applicants per housing for non-priority applicants. Of course, the interviewees remind that before application, only certain types and size of social housings are accessible depending on resources ceiling, and on the number of people in the applicant household: the PLAI are accessible only to the poorest applicants, the PLUS have a higher ceiling, and the PLS have an even-higher ceiling. Similarly, the interviewees give an example on how a single person cannot access a T5-apartment.

A question was then asked about "Accession abordable" (affordable housing purchase): the interviewees answered that *Atlantique Habitations* could offer certain specific loans and subsidies as well as preferential prices to allow for affordable housing purchase. They mentioned mainly doing some in Nantes.

A discussion was then done on the homelessness situation of Nantes municipality. The interviewees mentioned, as social landlords, how they were engaged with the "Logement d'Abord" strategy, and also with the "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" strategy, for which they offered housing. They mentioned having regular meeting with actors dealing with the "Un Chez-Soi d'Abord" experiment, and more generally with people related to the execution of the "Logement d'Abord" plan, yet said that these issues could sometimes be really hard, as they imply actions and support with human being, underlining the complexity of it (there are not mere mathematical operations).

After that, they mentioned receiving a part of the homelessness funds for an emergency homelessness centre project they have of 50 modular housing units (the PLU housings mentioned earlier), that will be then handled by association Aurore. A specific feature they were really proud of for this project is that it will be one of the rare emergency centre to accept animals. They mentioned how it used to be forbidden in most places, but that the COVID-19 crisis forced many associations to lower their rules, which in the end gave positive results: with less conditions about quitting an

addiction or not having an animal, the housed homeless people tended to be more receptive to support and discussion, with less incivilities.

About the homeless populations, the interviewees has noted a a strong rate of refugees, for which the specific emergency centre is overrun. Similarly, as they are mostly isolated people, those of them who are applicants of social housing are facing a housing shortage for their specific application (T1-T2 apartments). According to the interviewees, a third of the 50% quotas for social housing allocation are obtained by refugees, the rest of refugees have to find other specific solutions, such as subleased shared houses that are being tested in Nantes.

The last part of the interview was about the Ukrainian refugees. The interviewees explained how they had their own framework. They obtained a temporary refugee title , while landlords were requested to make available housing, with conditions: they had to be available quickly, they had to be empty, and they had to be empty until the end of the year. Some housing from demolition or requalification project is now in use, with for example the temporary re-opening of a to-be-demolished, sealed building in Orvault. The interviewees advised me to directly discuss the topic with the DETS (state service of Nantes) for more details.

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