



Data collection methods on homelessness in France: a comparative analysis between two different methodologies

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Introduction



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Research questions

- How are reliable and up-to-date statistics on the issue of homelessness are organized in France?
- What are their particularity in terms of knowledge production?
- What issues do they address beyond counting?
- What are their limits in terms of scope and temporality?
- How have they evolved over time to adapt to changes in the population concerned?
- What blind spots can be identified?
- How do they complement each other?
- How are they used by decision-makers?



**Homelessness survey from the
French National Institute for
Statistics and Economic
Studies**

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Context of the survey

- Survey co-directed by French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (**INSEE**) and the statistical service of the Ministries in charge of Solidarity and Health (**DREES**)
- The survey produces in-depth, detailed reference data on the **profiles, life paths and living conditions** of homeless people
- The survey is carried out among **10 000 to 15 000 homeless people**, within a sample of services providing assistance to the most vulnerable in mainland France. 500 investigators mobilized for a budget of 9,5 million euros.
- Homeless = people living in the street + sheltered people



Survey process

- **Two-stage survey**
 - An initial “structures” survey is carried out among homeless assistance organizations
 - A second “individual” survey is carried out among a sample of different types of assistance services (including accommodation, catering and outreach services). INSEE interviewers first interview the service managers, then directly interview homeless people, selected at random within each assistance service.
- **Numerous questionnaire and protocol tests** are carried out to prepare for the survey in the best possible way
- A survey **designed with the various stakeholders**

Key findings of the homeless survey

- **Increase in the number of homeless people**

86 000 homeless people in France in 2001, 133 000 in 2012.

- **Link between homelessness and child welfare**

The 2012 survey helped to raise awareness of the links between child welfare and homelessness. Nearly a quarter of homeless people born in France passed through the ASE during their childhood, compared with 2-3% of the general population. This is a very striking finding.

- **Stronger presence of women and families**

In 2012, insee found that two out of five people (38%) were women, compared with 32% in the previous homeless survey in 2001.

Methodological challenges for 2025

- **Broaden the scope of the survey**
 - Asylum seekers (non-French speakers)
 - Shanty towns
 - Marauding and day shelters.

- **Expand the questionnaire**
 - Ensuring continuity with the 2012 survey
 - Ensure comparability with other general population surveys
 - Integrate new themes as they emerge

Limitations of homeless survey

- The homeless population “in non-use” is not captured by the survey
- Age of respondents: the issue of unaccompanied foreign minors
- Data age: the issue of updating quantitative data and the composition of the population.
- A scope still limited



**Solidarity Nights :
homeless count in Paris**

Context

- The homeless count in Paris called Solidarity Night has been run by the **City of Paris since 2018**.
- The count is based on the methodology of “**one-night-only**”, “point-in-time” surveys.
- The aim of this count is to :
 - to count the number of homeless people in Paris and have an evolution over time, to understand their profiles and needs
 - Advance public policies and programs in line with their needs
 - Encourage volunteer involvement, and mobilize Parisians around issues related to the fight against extreme exclusion.



Count process



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Key findings of homeless count 2024

- On the night of January 25 to 26 2024, 3 491 homeless people counted in Paris : a 16 % increase in the number of people counted between 2023 and 2024
- 12% women and 88% men (versus 10% women in 2022)
- Profiles that are evolving with the presence of more young homeless people and a resumption of post-health crisis migration routes.
- Difficulties in accessing certain services and facilities, with a continuing need for space to store belongings, social support and assistance with formalities.
- Slightly more frequent use of certain social emergency services, slight increase in calls to 115

Limitations of homeless count

- Spatial scope of count still limited
- Limited scope of the population counted
- Persistent blind spots: non-response and invisibility

Conclusion