

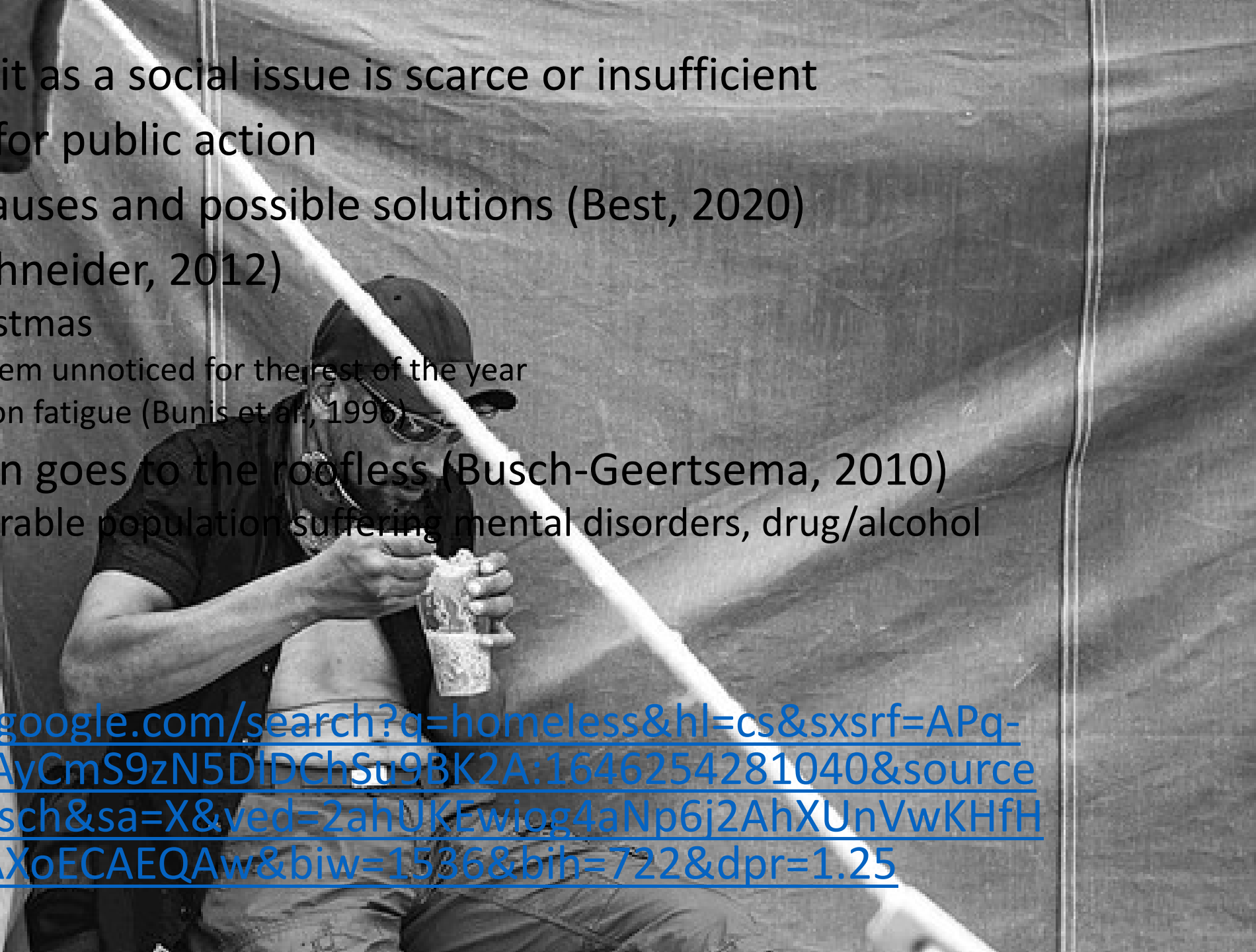
Mainstream media and homelessness

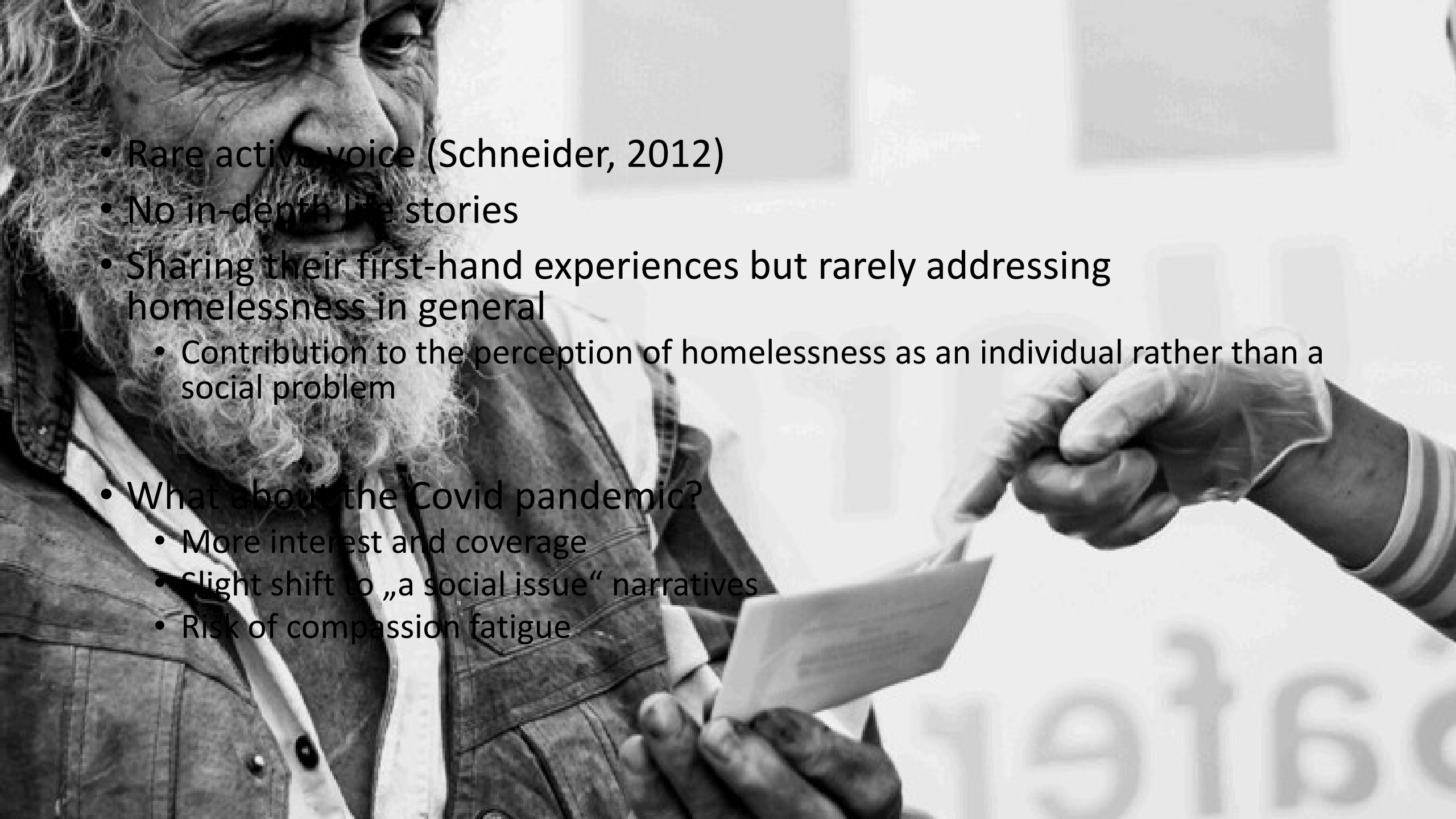
- Both positive and negative (more prevalent) depictions (Best, 2010)
- Stereotypical, simplistic
- Reinforcement of the „*obnoxious, dirty, hopeless, aggressive and drunk tramp*“ (Ravenhill, 2016)
- Deficits and deviant characteristics are much more discussed
- Dangerous criminals, drug abusers, mentally ill, having contagious diseases (Buck et al., 2004)
- At best victims of violence, or helpless, dependent on society's benevolence (Schneider, 2012; Doudaki & Carpentier, 2019)

- Representing it as a social issue is scarce or insufficient
- Not a matter for public action
- Leaving out causes and possible solutions (Best, 2020)
- Episodical (Schneider, 2012)
 - Winter, Christmas
 - Leaving them unnoticed for the rest of the year
 - Compassion fatigue (Bunis et al., 1996)
- Most attention goes to the roofless (Busch-Geertsema, 2010)
 - Highly vulnerable population suffering mental disorders, drug/alcohol abuse

- Google a bit:

https://www.google.com/search?q=homeless&hl=cs&sxsrf=APq-WBsWKUglwAyCmS9zN5DIDChSu9BK2A:1646254281040&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiog4aNp6j2AhXUnVwKHfHkBbQQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1536&bih=722&dpr=1.25





- Rare active voice (Schneider, 2012)
- No in-depth life stories
- Sharing their first-hand experiences but rarely addressing homelessness in general
 - Contribution to the perception of homelessness as an individual rather than a social problem
- What about the Covid pandemic?
 - More interest and coverage
 - Slight shift to „a social issue“ narratives
 - Risk of compassion fatigue

What's behind?

- Roofless people provide for most controversial, shocking readymade material that is considered newsworthy
- Inadequate training and understanding of homelessness
 - Is it possible to understand it from the outside?
- Criteria of newsworthiness and the competition to attract large audiences



Alternative media



- Independent, non-commercial, critical content, committed to social change
- Community news, street papers (Doudaki & Carpentier, 2019)
 - Resisting the mainstream media discourses
 - Focus on homelessness, and other social inequalities
 - Inclusive discourse
 - Raising awareness of social injustice
 - Seeking to bring in the voices and perspectives of the homeless and poor
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TLVgwoqhoc>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=276RZVt-SDk>
- Street papers
 - Opportunities for homeless people to become the vendors of the publication
 - Income
 - Reconnection with the society?

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- A black and white photograph of a man in a wheelchair wearing a face mask, with other people in the background. The man is the central focus, wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. He is looking down and slightly to the right. The background shows other people, some wearing masks, in what appears to be an outdoor setting with tents or temporary structures.
- Documenting and analyzing impacts of economic and policy changes on their lives
 - Seeking to critically engage the reading public
 - Helping to disrupt the stereotypical depictions of homeless
 - Opportunities to have their voices expressed
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6ZFzEW7_Q4

The limits

- Their voices receive only limited space
- Also restricted to specific writing genres and narratives (Torck, 2001)
 - Focus on the life stories
 - Limited/none power over the decision making
- Limited reach
- Already involved audiences



And again, why does it matter?

- Social services, prevention and financing
- Low self-esteem, self-acceptance
- High social exclusion levels
- Stigmatization





Next week: seminar

- 1st assignment
- Search homelessness
- What are the avenues for change?

Literature

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