

5) Mathilde Moffet-Bourassa & Isabelle F.-Dufour (Université Laval, Canada): **The consequences of experiences on the identity construction of Canadian justice-involved homeless women: Understanding the challenges of desisting from crime**

Abstract: The experiences lived by Justice-Involved Homeless Women (JIHW), and the meaning they attribute to these experiences, constitute integral elements of their current and future identity. However, the way a person perceives and interprets their experiences remains intrinsically linked to culture, suggesting that certain experiences may similarly affect the identity construction of individuals. Several contemporary studies document individual characteristics resulting from life experiences that may be stigmatized and influence the underlying meaning-making process essential to the continuous formation of identities. For example, substance use issues and homelessness are experiences that lead to social stigma, which can influence how they describe and define themselves. Identity construction, therefore, goes beyond belonging social class, gender, race, or sexuality; it is linked to the experiences individuals live through and the meanings they assign to them according to their individuality and culture. As part of this study, the life narratives of four Canadian JIHW were analyzed to identify the experiences characterizing their life paths and their consequences on their identity construction. It is intended to demonstrate the relevance of documenting the identity trajectories of JIHW throughout their development to better understand their challenges in desisting from crime.