People Out of Place:

Representations and Experiences Of
Female Homelessness
In Christchurch, New Zealand (Aotearoa)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology

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University of Canterbury 2006

Abstract

This anthropological thesis focuses on female homelessness in Christchurch, New Zealand. I am interested in how different groups in society understand female homelessness and how their perceptions compare to the experiences of homeless women. Consequently, my research centres on the narratives of women who have experienced homelessness providing a view from the "inside". It is also concerned with representations of homelessness in the media and by service providers. The different representations raise issues relating to "normalisation" and "abnormalisation", classification and dichotomisation, self-governance and control, and social participation. I take up these issues to explore the social exclusion of homeless women.

My research reveals a dominant homelessness discourse as well as one that might be considered a counter-discourse. The first suggests a dehumanising and unsympathetic approach as it situates homeless people as "abnormal" and "deviant" while the second suggests an empathetic and charitable approach as it situates homeless people as "normal" and "human". The media seem to reflect and reinforce the dominant discourse while service providers seem to reflect the counter-discourse. The women's narratives indicate that they reinforce the dominant discourse by internalising social norms. However, they are unable to reproduce them. Disconnection from mainstream society results in their being caught in a cycle they find difficult to break.

This research shows that homeless women are predominantly positioned as social failures. They seem to be unable, or do not know how, to reproduce social norms, to govern themselves and to create meaningful and enduring social networks. Essentially, I explore why homeless women often remain on the periphery of society as "outsiders" and why they find it so difficult to transcend their circumstances. As there has been no contemporary research undertaken specifically on homeless women in New Zealand, I hope the current research will provide a building block for further research on what I conclude is a marginalised and socially excluded group of people who are dominantly portrayed as dysfunctional and "out of place".

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the many people that have given me their time, encouragement, words of wisdom and financial support over the last year and a half.

Firstly, to my primary supervisor Dr Martin Fuchs, thank you for all the lengthy conversations in your office and for the patient, dedicated and conscientious way that you have helped me shape this thesis. To my secondary supervisor Dr Patrick McAllister, thank you for your "open door" policy and your willingness to drop what you were doing to discuss various aspects of this research. To the University of Canterbury and the New Horizons for Women Trust, your financial support is much appreciated. Thanks to my friends and colleagues at University, particularly Susannah, Roslyn, Michelle, Yan and Brigid who have listened to the ups and downs of my fieldwork!

Special thanks to Lauren – you really are an awesome friend. To my grandparents Kath and Ted, thank you for your wise words, your fantastic cooking and your critiques. Thank you to my wonderful family, particularly my parents Paul and Jocelyn, for teaching me the value of self-belief. Dad, your affirmations have been much appreciated and Mum, your superb editing skills and knowledge of the English language have certainly been put to use! To my partner Brad, thank you for your encouragement, for waiting up for me when I have been out on the street late at night and for reminding me to chill out!

"Thank you" does not convey how grateful I am to my participants for whom this research most certainly would not have been possible. To the service providers, thank you for your willingness to impart your knowledge about homelessness. I have enormous respect for your passion, empathy and dedication. A special thank you to the employees and volunteers of the organisation I did my fieldwork through, particularly the "Sunday night crew", many of whom began as participants and are now very good friends. I am grateful for your acceptance, encouragement and continued support. I also wish to acknowledge the person that used to meet me for coffee – you know who you are – thank

you for your contribution, which I know, was not easy. Last but certainly not least, thank you to the women who shared their experiences with me. I hope that you will eventually see the fruits of this research!

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INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

On 23 January 2005, a fire that erupted in Cashel Street, Christchurch received a high level of media interest as it closed down much of the central city over the days it took to put out the blaze. The derelict building (Cashel Chambers) had been used as a place to sleep by local street people some of whom were thought to be in the building at the time the fire started. This brought the city's homeless to the attention of the nation. The "Task Group on Homelessness" was brought together by the Christchurch City Council (CCC) as a result of the fire and was comprised of representatives from various organisations who worked with homeless people. The Task Group presented a report to Mayor Gary Moore in April 2005 where they broadly defined homelessness highlighting the need for "safe, secure and affordable housing" for everyone (2005:2). They proposed that homelessness should include "rough sleepers" such as those living on the street as well as the "hidden homeless" such as those living in overcrowded houses and caravan parks as well as couch surfers[1], refugees, migrants, people leaving institutional care and those with mental health needs not receiving supported care (ibid).

This broad definition and the media publicity homelessness received through the fire inspired me to increase my knowledge of homeless people in Christchurch. I became

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[1] "Couch surfers" refer to people that move around from place to place, usually between the houses of friends and family, because they have nowhere else to go.

interested in issues of representation relating to homelessness, particularly how the media and service providers perceive the homeless as well as the experiences of homeless people themselves. As I began my research, I realised there is very little information on homelessness in New Zealand and that female homelessness is not acknowledged as much as male homelessness, both in New Zealand and worldwide. Consequently, I decided to focus my study on homeless women in Christchurch.

This thesis is broken into five chapters. The first chapter will concentrate on contextualising the current research by focusing on how homelessness has been defined and the problems associated with that, as well as the connection between home and homelessness and the ways in which homelessness affects women. As the current research is undertaken from an anthropological perspective, it is important to explain why this approach is useful and to identify how anthropologists approach, and contribute to, studies on homelessness. A brief literature review will highlight the importance of ethnography in research such as this and will also expose the gaps in research on homeless people in New Zealand. I will conclude the chapter by outlining my approach to this research, particularly my methodology and the theoretical framework that will be used to make sense of my findings.

Chapters two, three and four will centre on how homelessness is represented and experienced by different groups. Chapter two will focus on media representations of homelessness which are important because of the wide audience the media reach and the power they have to influence public opinion. Data from newspapers and documentary films will be presented and compared using Blommaert and Verschueren's (1992) pragmatic approach that will uncover not only what is explicit but also what is implied. Their linguistic framework will be combined with the Foucauldian concept of discourse (see Hall, 2001 and McNay, 1994) to highlight the media's dominant representation of homelessness and any alternative positions that emerge.

Chapter three will concentrate on nine people who provide services for the homeless. Their views, as well as those of a council employee and a police officer, will be presented to gain an understanding of how they perceive homelessness and the issues

associated with it. Their views are important because they have a practical "hands-on" knowledge of homelessness. They will not only give insight into their experiences with homeless people and the various services available to them in Christchurch but they will also highlight issues relating to the gendered nature of homelessness.

Chapter four will focus on the narratives of five women who have experienced homelessness. While I employ the life history approach to frame the interviews, they are not full life histories but they are my are reconstruction of their narratives. I will identify various themes that emerge from their narratives and recognise that while their experiences of homelessness differ in many ways, there are continuities within or commonalities between their stories. The women's experiences are central to this research because they reflect a "first-hand" account of their views of the reality of homelessness and the consequent meanings they assign to their lives.

The last chapter will take up and analyse the major themes and theoretical issues that arise from the media and service providers' representations of homelessness as well as the women's narratives. The theories of Michel Foucault (1967, 1991), Mary Douglas (1984), Nikolas Rose (1990, 2000) and Robert Putnam (1995, 2002, 2004) will highlight why homeless people, particularly homeless women, are classified, discriminated against and socially excluded from participating fully in wider society.

CHAPTER ONE

Approaches to Homelessness

Traditionally, homelessness was understood worldwide as lack of physical shelter. Housing was both the problem and the solution; the lack of housing was seen as one of the reasons for homelessness and more housing was seen to be the solution (Kellett and Moore, 2003:125). This was particularly apparent in the 1960s and 1970s when homelessness was recognised as a social issue[2] in America and Britain and in the early 1980s when homelessness was recognised as such in New Zealand. The emphasis on physical structure is reflected in the narrow definitions of homelessness that were devised around that time.

The resultant research undertaken on homeless people, particularly research conducted outside of New Zealand, changed understandings of homelessness. It highlighted the varying factors contributing to homelessness, the different ways of experiencing homelessness, and the diverse people and groups that could be considered homeless, particularly families and women. As a result, after the 1980s homelessness became a much broader issue than previously thought, including not just those without shelter but also those residing in temporary accommodation and substandard living conditions. Scholars began to classify people in terms of the degree

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[2] The recognition of homelessness as a social problem was not synonymous with the emergence of homelessness. It really meant that research began to be conducted in the field and that it became more of a public issue rather than being ignored as it had largely been prior to the 1980s.

of homelessness they were experiencing. The hidden homeless or the "incipient homeless" as Kearns, Smith and Abbott (1991) called them, were highlighted as a group that needed further attention. They referred to the "incipient homeless" as representing "only the tip of the iceberg", an analogy that illustrated the increasing number of hidden homeless (Kearns et al., 1991:369).

The recognition of multiple issues[3] not directly linked to housing resulted in complex models of homelessness. Glaser and Bridgman point out that in the early 1990s, particularly in America, homelessness became "medicalized" being presented as a psychiatric problem rather than a housing one (1999:51-52). As a result of this model, homeless people were labelled "mentally ill" and this label was often presented as the cause of their homelessness. However, Liebow is opposed to mental illness being seen as the cause stating there is "no necessary connection" between these problems and homelessness (1993:224). He points out that not all homeless people have psychiatric issues and there are many more people with psychiatric issues who are not homeless (ibid). As homelessness became understood as complex and multi-faceted, research on the homeless reflected a holistic approach similar to that already taken by Watson and Austerberry (1986) and Liebow (1993). This is more apparent in overseas research because of the lack of research on homelessness in New Zealand.

Defining Homelessness: More than Loss of Bricks and Mortar

As Chamberlain and Johnson (2001) acknowledge, there have been many debates over how to define homelessness and who should be included in the definition. Traditionally, homeless people included those without permanent shelter such as hobo's[4], gypsies, migrants, bag ladies[5], homeless men, vagrants and urban nomads. They were categorised as "homeless" and essentially understood as "deviant" because of their real or perceived mobility and apparent rootlessness (Cresswell in Morley, 2000:33-34). However, Glasser and Bridgman argue that if moving around is part of

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[3] These factors included medical issues, family breakdown and lack of budgeting skills.
[4] "Hobo" is a colloquial term used to refer to a person who wanders from place to place and is perceived to have no home. "Tramp" is another term that has often been used in a similar way.
[5] Like hobo, "bag lady" is also a colloquial term. It is used to refer to a homeless woman who carries her possessions with her in a bag – often a shopping bag.

the *culture* of the group, even if they do not have access to adequate housing, then they do not consider them "homeless" (1999:5). This will become clearer when I outline literature on peripatetic people.

In the early 1980s when homelessness was equated to lack of accommodation, the term "rooflessness" was often used. However, Daly (1996) and Watson and Austerberry (1986) point out that this term only refers to those completely without shelter and does not recognise those living in emergency, temporary and insecure accommodation. Watson and Austerberry use their "home-to-homelessness" continuum which has "sleeping rough"[6] at one end, "emergency accommodation" in the middle and "insecure accommodation" at the other end to illustrate the broad nature of homelessness (1986:21-22). Their continuum highlights the different ways of experiencing homelessness indicating that rough sleeping is only one of them. It also recognises that people shift along the continuum as homelessness is often episodic, especially where an addiction is involved. People can move from insecure accommodation to emergency accommodation to the street and back to emergency accommodation again. Most significantly, Watson and Austerberry's homelessness continuum illustrates that because homelessness is episodic, housing is not the sole answer.

The definition proposed by the "Task Group on Homelessness" (2005) includes many people that have been excluded from previous homelessness definitions, such as "couch surfers". While they predominantly focus on types of housing or "safe, secure and affordable housing", they also need to explicitly state, as the Hutt Valley Housing Seminar did, that housing relates to all other aspects of life inclusive of the social, emotional and economic as well as the physical (in Waldergrave and Coventry, 1987:20). While the Hutt Valley Housing Seminar sum up homelessness well in their definition, the Task Group go into more detail about those who are included in the definition. As a result, both definitions provide the framework for how homelessness is understood within this research.

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[6] Some theorists, particularly those from America and Britain such as Watson and Austerberry, often refer to rough sleeping as "sleeping rough".

Not surprisingly, there are many problems with defining homelessness, particularly the inclusive and exclusive nature of the definitions. However, regardless of the scope of the definition used – whether it is narrow or broad - definitions can become labels and essentially categorise people as either homeless or not (Daly, 1996:7-10). Classifying people in this "black and white" way has ramifications for women, who according to Watson and Austerberry, are more inclined to be located either in the middle or to the right hand side of the continuum in emergency, temporary or insecure accommodation (1986:20). Thus, they are often not classified as "homeless". Daly recognises that once classified, people are then often judged as "deserving" or "undeserving" of financial assistance (ibid). Those on unemployment benefits could be considered "undeserving" when their circumstances are perceived to be the result of their own failing, whereas those on invalid or sickness benefits could be considered "deserving" when their circumstances are perceived as being outside their control.

Daly addresses the power of language arguing that the words used to define homelessness and what they imply or explicitly state, shape how people understand homelessness (Daly, 1996:7-10). As a result of defining who is homeless, Daly recognises that certain people can be 'othered' and distanced and, as a result, they can lose their individuality being "dehumanised" and seen as part of the larger group (1996:8). This process of "othering" creates an "us versus them" mentality as people focus on the differences between themselves and others rather than on their similarities. Daly also points out that the process of defining homelessness reflects the beliefs and values of those doing the defining, such as policy makers who might be well intentioned but have an underlying agenda that influences policy or the allocation of resources. According to Daly, they are "motivated by a desire to exercise power and a need for control" (1996:9). Therefore, definitions often reveal the particular interests and agendas of those doing the defining. Watson and Austerberry point out that people are also defined and measured within a specific cultural and historical context and that understandings of homelessness differ between cultures as do understandings of home (Watson and Austerberry, 1986:10).

Attempts have been made to quantify homeless people. However, they are hard to quantify because they are difficult to find and often they do not want to be found. In addition, Watson and Austerberry show with their own research that some people might not actually consider themselves to be homeless (1986:103). Many people, particularly those involved at the national level in lawmaking and local government in policymaking as well as the social welfare agencies who supply benefits, want statistical information on the specific "homelessness problem". However, as Watson and Austerberry point out, changes in the number of homeless persons might only reflect changes in definitions of homelessness or policies relating to homelessness (1986:13). As a result, statistics relating to homelessness can be ambiguous and misleading, resulting in homelessness being either underestimated or exaggerated.

Home is where the Heart is: the Connection between Homelessness and Home

Kellett and Moore (2003) point out that there cannot be any understanding of what it means to be homeless unless there is an understanding of what it means to have a home. Similarly, Wardhaugh (1999) argues that the concept of homelessness cannot exist without the concept of home. Thus, "homelessness" and "home" refer to each other in a dynamic and dialectic way; homelessness being synonymous with insecurity and home being synonymous with security. However, this is often not the way these conditions are experienced as home can be a place of fear and entrapment, particularly for women, as I will discuss further in this chapter.

There has been much literature written about home and the meanings associated with it. Writers such as Morley (2000) recognise that home is a problematic space. He argues that people in Western countries live in a "home-centred culture" which positions home as the "normal" or "ideal" way of life and homelessness as an "abnormal" way of life (2000:27-28). While homelessness has often been positioned as the problem and home the solution, Kellett and Moore argue that it is more complex than that (2003:126). Moyle (1997) recognises the complexity of "home" as he writes that "home" does not necessarily just refer to a physical structure - bricks and mortar – but it also refers to social and emotional attributes. In his thesis he

argues that homeless people construct home across the city and as such, home is a fluid concept as well as a complex one (1997:2-3). Similarly, Schrader and Birkinshaw (2005) acknowledge the memories, emotions and experiences associated with home which they refer to as the "social fabric" of home (2005:10-11). Like Moyle, Schrader and Birkinshaw recognise 'home' is an ever-changing concept that is renegotiated through the addition of new experiences and memories.

Somerville also writes about the emotional attachment to home and believes that it is the "signifiers" of home such as shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode, and possibly "paradise" that make home meaningful for it's inhabitants (1992:532-533). He points out there are two facets to understanding home, one based on experience and the other on an ideology of what home should be like, and as a result, the two do not necessarily mean the same thing. Gypsy Moon (1996) discusses the ideological notion of home in relation to American hobos who move around from one place to the next. She points out they are not homeless because "house" is a building whereas "home" is an attitude, and as such, home can be carried with them (Moon, 1996:24). This understanding of home can be problematic though as it can "normalise" homelessness and mean that home can become anything. I will discuss this in the last chapter.

Home has particular significance for women and Massey comments, "home is where the heart is … and where the woman is also" (cited in Morley, 2000:64). Morley (2000) recognises the gendered nature of home as he points out that, particularly before the mid 20th century, women were primarily associated in the West with the domestic space of the home. While women's roles within the home have changed somewhat since then, Massey argues that women are still symbolic of the home. Somerville notes that women's attachment, symbolic or otherwise, to the home has implications for homeless women. He is of the opinion that men are more affected by the lack of property while women are more affected by the resulting interference of their everyday routines (1992:535). Therefore, homelessness seems to have a significant impact on those women who have been "homemaker".

Wardhaugh notes that home and homelessness are often conceived of in gendered ways with home or "inside" being associated with security, order and femaleness, and homelessness or "outside" being associated with risk, disorder and maleness (1999:96). In this sense, the "unaccommodated woman" could be perceived as being even more deviant than the homeless man because she is in a somewhat foreign space. Once in that space, Wardhaugh argues women have an ambivalent relationship to the street which she calls the "quintessential male space" (1999:104). For women in particular, the street can be both a site of refuge and fear, independence and dependence[7], and visibility and invisibility (ibid).

Watson and Austerberry argue that women are more likely to be located to the right side of the continuum living in temporary and insecure accommodation as opposed to men who are more likely to be found on the left side rough sleeping (1986:20). Similarly, Daly argues that women are less likely to sleep rough and are more likely to be found in emergency, temporary and insecure accommodation because of their care-giving responsibilities for children (1996:133-134). He also believes that this occurs because women are more likely to have strong relationships with friends and family so they have other options. In addition, Daly believes women are socially conditioned to ask for assistance compared to men who are not, and that women are offered assistance more often than men (1996:134). Referring to the United States in particular, he also points out that homeless women are catered for differently than homeless men. Homeless women are more likely to be provided with a "home-like atmosphere" in places that accommodate fewer people where the rules are not as strict, whereas homeless men are more likely to be provided with boarding hostel accommodation that house many men with stringent rules and regulations (Daly, 1996:160-161).

In contrast to homelessness being positioned as the problem, Tomas and Dittmar claim that it can also be seen as the solution, which is a view that has particular relevance for women who have experienced abuse and become homeless in order to escape the home (1995:497). In this sense, home is the problem when regarded as a

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[7] It can be a site of dependence where women have to rely on others to provide safety for them; usually a male or group of people consisting of males.

place of fear, whereas homelessness is the solution when the street for example is regarded as a place of safety and freedom. While Kellett and Moore argue that it is not as simple as one being the problem and the other the solution, they do acknowledge that homelessness can be a "short-term" answer for many women. Similarly, Wardhaugh argues that for women who are victims of domestic violence, home can become a prison and she refers to this as being "homeless-at-home" (1999:91). According to Martin (2003) though, homelessness can be used to disguise other issues. She argues that homelessness can become a "silencing and subjugating discourse" for women and children who need to escape the home because of domestic violence if the contextual reasons for their homelessness are not revealed (2003:2). Homelessness can detract from the reality of their experience by obscuring the reason(s) for homelessness, concealing what is really going on (ibid). This is why Martin argues that definitions of homelessness need to be contextualised, particularly when addressing female homelessness.

Approaches to the Study of Homelessness

Various people have made their mark on studies of homelessness and many of them, while not anthropologists, have employed an ethnographic approach. This type of approach is relevant to this research because of the extended periods the authors spend in the "field" and their attempt to understand the "native" or local point of view. These types of ethnographic accounts have come from scholars in such disciplines as geography, feminist studies and sociology, including historical, policy-based and political accounts. There have been relatively few anthropological accounts of homelessness but those available to me have been included[8]. I have selected literature that is meaningful to my approach and nearly all of the literature that I will outline, aside from a number of reports that I will discuss, have come from overseas, mainly Britain and America, as little has been written on the topic in New Zealand. The literature includes texts written on homelessness in general, texts written about female homelessness and literature focused on peripatetic people. I will then refer to gaps in the systematic study of the history of homelessness in New Zealand by outlining various texts that address factors that could be associated with

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[8] There are a number of texts that I have been unable to locate – some anthropological and others not.

homelessness, such as poverty, housing and the labour market. I will conclude this section by highlighting various reports that have been written on homelessness in New Zealand.

Homelessness in General

The following texts are representative of the research that has been undertaken on homelessness and although they include excerpts about homeless women, their primary focus is homeless men[9]. I include the first text because it is one of the few that I have come across that explicitly links homelessness to the misallocation of global resources. Prepared by the Building and Social Housing Foundation in Great Britain, *Homes Above All: Homelessness and the Misallocation of Global Resources* (1987) marks the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Experts in the field discuss the misuse and waste of resources which has resulted in the impoverisation and suffering of homeless people. It aims to bring about change by suggesting ways that the situation can be improved. While not as relevant as other literature because of its focus on aid and development, this text highlights some of the global issues that contribute to the impoverisation of many people.

Homelessness in Australia (1992) by Cecily Neil and Rodney Fopp is one of the few texts in English that is written about homelessness in a country other than the United States or the United Kingdom. It is part of a research project funded by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Homelessness and Housing (MACHH) to provide an overview of homelessness and housing in Australia. It does not provide any new evidence but synthesises the findings of previous reports to aid the prevention of, and policy on, homelessness. Because of its quantitative policy-based focus it is not useful for my purposes but it shows that Australia is addressing homelessness at a national level.

In their book *Paths to Homelessness: Extreme Poverty and the Urban Housing Crisis* (1994), sociologists Doug Timmer, Stanley Eitzen and Kathryn Talley argue that

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[9] There are a number of texts that focus specifically on homeless men (see Borchard, 2005; Jordan, 1994; Sutherland, 1971; Vincent, Deacon and Walker, 1995).

homelessness is mostly an urban issue. They support this with data gathered from people sleeping on the streets, in shelters and those using soup kitchens in Chicago, Denver and Toronto. The authors emphasise that people's paths into homelessness are shaped by social and economic factors as they connect individual stories to larger political and historical processes. They intersperse their sociological study with ethnographic accounts as they try to capture the perspectives of homeless people while emphasising their need for autonomy and independence. Their strong focus on structural causes means they do not blame individuals for their circumstances and believe their participants had no choice in becoming homeless. This type of approach has the danger of presenting homeless people as passive subjects that homelessness has just happened to.

In his book *Homeless: Policies, Strategies, and Lives on the Street* (1996), Gerald Daly presents the experiences of homeless people and social policy addressing homelessness in Britain, the United States and Canada. He highlights that while these countries encounter similar issues with respect to homeless people, they respond to them in different ways. He provides a historical, institutional and policy focused account of homelessness to provide "broad coverage" on the different ways the issue has been approached. Although not anthropological or ethnographic, his book is useful for my research, particularly his discussion about contextualising homelessness and how language can be used to classify and stigmatise homeless people.

Something Left to Lose: Personal Relations and Survival among New York's Homeless (1997), written by sociologist Gwendolyn Dordick, focuses on the lives and experiences of homeless people who access various shelters in New York City. While her account lacks the analysis that other texts have, Dordick highlights the social relationships of homeless people that other authors do not. She shows that homeless people need interpersonal skills to negotiate their stays in homeless shelters because their time at the shelters is organised around their personal relationships with shelter employees, police and other homeless people. The manner in which they negotiate their social interactions is important for their daily survival. This is the only text I found that directly addresses the social networks of the street and it would have been

insightful for Dordick to write more extensively about this and to take her analysis further.

Susan Hutson and David Clapham, editors of *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles* (1999), provide a public policy approach to homelessness as various authors in the book focus on legislation, bureaucratic structures and housing issues they believe relate to homelessness in Britain. While the book focuses on wider political processes and public discourses of homelessness, the authors also acknowledge the ways in which homelessness is experienced individually. They emphasise that homelessness is caused by exclusion from various aspects of society resulting in a decrease in social participation. It challenges dominant discourses that position homelessness as lack of housing. The book begins with a focus on the public and leads to a focus on the private. It provides a good overview of how homelessness affects different groups of people but it does not focus specifically on one group. It is primarily concerned with public policies and legislation that relate to homelessness.

Irene Glasser and Rae Bridgman, anthropologists from the United States and Canada, provide a contemporary account of homelessness in their book *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness* (1999). The material for their book is based on research that was conducted primarily in North America. They highlight the impact ethnography has in documenting how people assign meaning to, and interpret, their lives. Glasser and Bridgman view homelessness in a heterogeneous way. They stress the importance of the native point of view and emphasise that anthropologists are valuable to the study of homelessness because of their creative approaches to various social issues.

Kim Hopper, an American anthropologist, focuses on homeless people who use shelters in New York in his book *Reckoning with Homelessness* (2003). He uses an ethnographic approach as he provides an account of homeless men on the streets, in shelters and at one of the airports in New York City. Hopper links homelessness to wider historical, economic, social and political issues as he discusses reasons for homelessness as well as possible solutions. His text addresses issues in current

research such as the classification of homeless people, the difficulties faced in researching a marginalised group, and the role of the anthropologist and the valuable contribution they make to such a study.

Homeless Women

There has been far less research undertaken specifically on homeless women than there has on homeless men and on homelessness in general. There has been even less from an anthropological perspective. Like homeless youths (see Hagan and McCarthy, 1997; Hutson, Liddiard and Campling, 1994) and homeless families (see Kozol, 1988; Seltser and Miller, 1993)[10], homeless women are often classified as the "new homeless". While some texts focus on women's experiences of housing (see Gilroy and Woods, 1994; Watson, 1988; Winstanley, 2000) and some dedicate a chapter or section to the gendered nature of homelessness (see Daly, 1996:21-22; Glasser and Bridgman, 1999:20-21; Hutson and Clapham, 1999:108-132), few focus directly on the experiences of homeless women. Instead, they are often lumped together with research on homeless men or completely neglected from the research. However, some authors have written specifically on female homelessness and Ann Marie Rousseau is one of them.

Rousseau's book *Shopping Bag Ladies: Homeless Women Speak about Their Lives* (1981) is a photographic documentation of the lives of homeless women in New York City. Compiled over a ten-year period she highlights the experiences of homeless women through the photos and interviews included in her book. Rousseau focuses specifically on "bag ladies" who are older woman that carry their belongings with them and are often seen rummaging through rubbish bins looking for food. "Bag ladies" are mythical figures that are often perceived as being symbolic of all homeless women when in reality they only represent a small number of them. While this text is not an analysis of the women's lives and it is not directly relevant to the current research as my participants are much younger than Rousseau's, it is one of the first

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[10] Similarly to the case of homeless women, there seems to be little research on homeless youths and homeless families. They seem to be predominantly mentioned as an aside rather than being seen as specific groups with specific needs. However, there are some texts such as the ones that I have mentioned that do focus on them.

texts that focus specifically on homeless women, addressing the invisible nature of female homelessness.

In their book *Housing and Homelessness: A Feminist Perspective* (1986), Sophie Watson and Helen Austerberry make a significant contribution to research on homeless women as they focus on single female housing needs in Britain. They employ a Marxist-feminist analysis and their research is widely used by others in the field. Watson and Austerberry focus on how housing has altered and affected the lives of women. They begin by documenting the history of homelessness in Britain and spend the second half of the book highlighting the experiences and needs of the women involved in their research. Essentially, they argue that housing reproduces the traditional family unit where women are marginalised because of the patriarchal nature of the "nuclear" family. Women end up being tied to the home because it is difficult for them to enter the housing market and it is often difficult for them to leave the home as they have nowhere else to go. Watson and Austerberry argue that housing policy and attitudes towards housing in Britain reinforce the hidden nature of female homelessness. While this text is useful for my research because it provides insight into the issues homeless women face, it also needs to be remembered that it is written in 1986 and that British society in the mid 1980s is different to New Zealand society at the beginning of the 21st century.

Medical writer Stephanie Golden, takes a historical and sociological approach in her account of women who live in a shelter for the homeless in New York. In her book *The Women Outside: Meanings and Myths of Homelessness* (1992) she points out that homeless women have not been treated as a distinct group and have often been lumped together with research on homeless men. She points out that women without a family or partner are difficult to classify, which she believes, makes society uncomfortable and wary of them. Golden focuses on myths surrounding homeless women and argues that they are frequently viewed as "bag ladies" and are often represented and treated as the modern day witch. She believes they are synonymous with images of the witch who represent power and sexuality and lives on the margins of society; there is a clear separation between them and other members of society

(Golden, 1992:9-10). Through using the witch as a metaphor for homeless women, Golden analyses perceptions of, and reactions to, them. Essentially, through emphasising the human reality of female homelessness she tries to lesson the gap between homeless women and mainstream society. This text is useful for my research because it focuses on how others understand female homelessness which is one of the aims of this thesis.

Elliot Liebow, an urban anthropologist, is an early contributor to the study of homelessness through his ethnography of Negro street corner men called *Tally's Corner* (1967). However, it is his second ethnography *Tell Them Who I am: the Lives of Homeless Women* (1993) that has particular relevance for this research as it documents female homelessness in a city just outside Washington, D.C. Liebow focuses on shelter life and the daily struggles the women face. He endeavours to retain the humanity of these women and takes a life history approach in his interviews. While it is obvious that Liebow has a wealth of knowledge on the subject, this book appears to be predominantly based on his experiences and does not include the work of other authors. As a result, it is less analytical than other texts.

In her text *Nobody Wants to Hear our Truth: Homeless Women and Theories of the Welfare State* (1996) Meredith Ralston employs a political approach and questions whether neo-liberal and neo-conservative theories can explain women's experiences of homelessness. She focuses on homeless women with addictions in America and although she reiterates that she uses a qualitative approach, her methodology is not clear. Ralston does not appear to incorporate other literature on homelessness as thoroughly as other authors have done and her argument is vague.

Peripatetic People

There has been considerable research on people who could be considered homeless if homelessness is solely defined in the physical sense. While I have already pointed out that homelessness involves more than just the absence of a physical structure, it is important to include the literature on peripatetic people such as migrants, hobos, house truckers, gypsies and nomads because they illustrate that moving round is part

of their culture. As a result, they are not homeless in the same sense as my participants.

James Spradley stands out as a pioneering anthropologist because he undertook his research in the United States a decade before homelessness was really acknowledged as a social problem. Although not specifically on homelessness, his text *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads* (1970) centres on "urban nomads" living in "Skid Row"[11] in Seattle in the 1960s. He aims to challenge stereotypes that surround people who are non-conformists, specifically men who drink a lot and are often imprisoned for it. He is interested in the assumptions many people seem to hold about marginalised groups and while his ethnography is not about homelessness per se, he mentions homelessness as being a major part of the lives of the "urban nomads". However, being an "urban nomad" does not necessarily result in being homeless. Spradley employs an anthropological approach through documenting the lives of his participants from their own perspectives.

Judith Okely, a social anthropologist, writes about gypsies in southern England in her book *The Traveller-Gypsies* (1983). She points out that gypsies have no fixed abode and they represent disorder and lawlessness because they live in ways that differ from majority society. The gypsies' understandings of their own lives are not aligned with how others perceive them and Okely recognises that they are stigmatised and are often misrepresented because of this. She is interested in how they construct boundaries which are predicated upon pollution beliefs similar to those of Mary Douglas that will be outlined in chapter five. Throughout her ethnography, Okely employs an anthropological approach as she uncovers the underlying meaning of the purity/pollution taboo in gypsy culture.

In their book *Home Free: Housetrucking in New Zealand* (1994), journalists Fiona Cunningham and Chris Hoult discuss the nomadic lifestyle of housetruckers through a

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[11] Skid Row or Skid Road as it was initially known in Seattle "was first used to describe the street down which logs were skidded to the sawmill, a street lined with flop houses, taverns, gambling halls, and other places common to the lives of the men in this book" (Spradley, 1970:8).

conversational photographic account of housetruckers in New Zealand. They include interviews with many housetruckers and point out the housetruckers perceptions of their own lives often differ to the perceptions held by others. Cunningham and Hoult use the example that housetruckers are often seen as dirty because of their mobile existence when they wash like everyone else. It is an interesting text but does not provide an analytical account of the lives of housetruckers.

As mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter, Gypsy Moon writes about hobos in her book *Done and Been: Steel Rail Chronicles of American Hobos* (1996). She presents the history and stories of various hobos as well as a collection of hobo recipes in a conversational manner. The way Moon discusses home shows that for hobos, home is an "internal" feeling relating to belonging and identity rather than an "external" feeling that relates to physical shelter. As such, according to Moon hobos do not believe they are homeless even though they do not have a permanent place of residence.

Lois Anderson's text *People on the Move: Migration: A Cultural Process* (1997), is about the process of migration which she defines as "moving from one permanent residence to another" (p.1). It is primarily about movement across borders although it can involve internal migration which is movement within borders. Anderson, a geographer, discusses various factors that contribute to migration and focuses on migration in Europe, particularly Germany as well as migration in New Zealand. As Anderson shows, while migration is about movement it is not necessarily about being homeless. However, being a migrant could make a person more vulnerable to becoming homeless.

This literature on peripatetic people shows that while they could be considered homeless, as in the cases of hobos, gypsies, urban nomads and house truckers, moving around is part of their culture. In addition, while migrants are more susceptible to becoming homeless, being a migrant does not make a person homeless. This literature indicates that peripatetic people embody their lifestyle and in this sense, their mobility seems to be more of an individual and/or cultural choice. Essentially, I am

highlighting that peripatetic people are not homeless in the same sense as my participants.

Absence of Historical Context

There is an absence of historical accounts, both systematic studies and sections in the literature, on homelessness in New Zealand. Much of the homelessness literature, particularly from America and Britain, devote a section of their text to an historical overview (see Bahr, 1973; Daly, 1996; Hopper, 2003; Wardhaugh, 2000; Watson and Austerberry, 1986). This is interesting because homelessness was recognised as a social issue in America and Britain just before it was recognised as a social issue in New Zealand yet there is little information on factors relating to homelessness in New Zealand. As a result, I will outline literature that addresses issues relating to housing, the labour market, attitudes towards poverty and women's role in society which could be seen as possible structural causes of homelessness.

In his book, *The Ideal Society and it's Enemies: The Foundation of Modern New Zealand Society, 1859-1900* (1989), Miles Fairburn outlines life in the mid 19th century which were New Zealand's early colonising years. He points out that New Zealand was marketed to potential migrants as the "labourer's paradise" where there was an abundance of land and opportunity and hard work equalled success. Amongst other things, Fairburn highlights the emphasis placed on home ownership at the time and the individualistic nature of colonial New Zealand where everyone looked after themselves.

Margaret Tennant, author of *Paupers and Providers: Charitable Aid in New Zealand* (1989), provides a comprehensive account of the labour market during the late 19th and 20th centuries. She specifically discusses women's role within the domestic labour force where they were employed as servants, waitresses or worked as prostitutes. Tennant points out that women were the primary recipients of financial assistance. The poor were classified into categories of deservedness and some were labelled "mentally ill". She emphasises that women were often classified depending on their male counterparts and were regarded as financially reliant on men.

Charlotte Macdonald also discusses female employment and the classification of women in her book, *A Woman of Good Character: Single Women as Immigrant Settlers in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand* (1990). She highlights the scrutiny that single women and women in general were subjected to as their morality was questioned and they were looked upon suspiciously by wider society. Macdonald points out that although single women were encouraged to immigrate due to the shortage of women in New Zealand at the time, once they arrived they were scrutinised to make sure they were of good moral character.

Like Macdonald, Gael Ferguson also discusses the surveillance of women during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in her text *Building the New Zealand Dream* (1994). She outlines the introduction of the "charitable aid system" in the late 19th century consisting of "indoor relief" referring to institutional care, and "outdoor relief" referring to assistance given to people in their homes. Ferguson believes both were given grudgingly by the state and there was a stigma associated with those receiving assistance. She points out that women were held primarily responsible for upholding the moral order of the home and "outdoor relief" was a way of surveying the home to make sure women were maintaining this morality. Like Fairburn, Ferguson points out the importance given to home ownership throughout New Zealand's history.

Barbara Brookes also discusses the morality of the home in her book *At Home in New Zealand: Houses, History, People* (2000). She points out that during the 19th and 20th centuries the internal order of the home was seen to reflect the external order of society and women were often blamed for the breakdown of family life. She highlights that in the early 20th century when poverty became recognised as a social problem, it was linked to overcrowding and disease. In the earlier book *Women in History: Essays on European Women in New Zealand* (1986) that Brookes co-authored with Macdonald and Tennant, emphasis is given to the impoverishment of women who were excluded from participating in the labour force and consequently tied to the home. They were often stigmatised and blamed for a number of issues that included their husbands leaving them, children out of wedlock, children to more than one man and not running their home in orderly ways. Brookes et al. point out that this

stigmatisation was particularly evident in the case of solo mothers who were often labelled "immoral" and "deviant".

Like Tennant, Macdonald, Ferguson and Brookes, Ben Schrader and Victoria Birkinshaw, authors of *We Call it Home: A History of State Housing in New Zealand* (2005), discuss the classification of poor people. They point out the "deserving poor" were those who were poor because of misfortune or coincidence, whereas the "undeserving poor" were those whose immorality or behaviour was seen to have caused their situation (2005:227). This distinction between "types" of poor people reflected attitudes that ranged from sympathy and understanding to blame and vilification. Schrader and Birkinshaw identify that individuals were increasingly held responsible for their circumstances. While they discuss attitudes towards the poor, they highlight the impact that housing, particularly state housing, had on the local population (also refer to Duff, 1998). In documenting the history of state housing they record the role of the state, the political climate and the housing market during the 20th century. Schrader and Birkinshaw conclude that state houses were built for poor people but the rent was so high that few people could afford to live in them and certain people, such as families or couples, were favoured over single people or solo parents. State houses were predominantly built for the "nuclear"[12] family and this criteria reflected broader societal beliefs and values about morality and citizenship. Schrader and Birkinshaw draw attention to the emphasis given to home ownership which was the measure of security and success, and seen to strengthen the community.

Reports on Homelessness in New Zealand

While there has been no systematic study of homelessness in New Zealand there have been a number of reports written. The data on homeless people that was compiled in the early 1980s is taken from quantitative regional studies designed to enumerate homeless people. The only article I found that alludes to the emergence of homelessness in New Zealand is written by David Thorns and is titled *The production*

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[12] The "nuclear" family refers to a heterosexual couple who are married and produce one or two children.

of homelessness: from individual failure to system inadequacies (1989). He points out that the first studies of homelessness were conducted in Auckland (Percy, 1982) and Christchurch (McClintock, 1982). Thorns states that unlike the Auckland study which found little or no difference in the structure of households experiencing homelessness, the Christchurch study found that "the homeless were predominantly low income single parent (37.%) and single person households (31.9%)" (1989:260). He points out that the studies also found the Maori population over-represented with 14% identified as of Maori descent, emphasising the link between ethnicity and inadequate housing that had not been officially acknowledged before (1989:260).

In their study titled *Homelessness in Christchurch* (1983), Pamela Lea and Janet Cole identify that although there were a number of women seeking help, there were few services for homeless women. They point out that during the early to mid 1980s there were a significant number of Pakeha or European women as well as Maori and Pacific people, experiencing homelessness. Lea and Cole believe that the combination of high rent, low incomes, increased unemployment, overcrowding and the high cost of obtaining accommodation meant more people were on the verge of becoming homeless.

There were also a number of other studies carried out in the 1980s, particularly during the early 1980s, that were quantitatively based. These include a report funded by the Department of Internal Affairs on youth homelessness in New Zealand (Smith, 1983)[13] and a report written in the same year for the Anglican Social Services on homeless families in the Hutt Valley (Jacobi, Coventry, and Waldegrave, 1983)[14]. A report written on homelessness in Hamilton funded by The Hamilton Diocesan E.J.D. Commission (De Jong, 1987) was written for parishioners and focuses on the Christian responsibility for helping those in need. There is also a report written on the emergency housing needs of women, which is based around questionnaires that were

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[13] This quantitative report does not include the perspectives of the youth themselves, instead focusing on the perspectives of the Working Group on Youth Homelessness. As such, it does not provide much useful information.
[14] While this report is based on responses to a questionnaire and is presented in a quantitative way, it does highlight the disproportional representation of Maori and Pacific families amongst their participants.

distributed to homeless women who used particular agencies (Panaho, 1985). While this report - one of the few to focus on homeless women - identifies various issues and presents some recommendations, it seems these have been largely ignored[15].

Nonetheless, there seems to have been little research into homelessness carried out since the 1980s. The only two I could find are a study of homeless people in Auckland (O'Brien and Haan, 2000) and a two-part study of homeless people in Christchurch (Mora, 2002). Both reports combine quantitative and qualitative analysis to draw attention to the diverse needs of homeless people. They make a valuable contribution to the study of homelessness in New Zealand and are a starting point for further research not only because they are the most recent studies I could locate but because they focus on the needs of homeless people from their own perspectives. However, they do not focus specifically on homeless women. These regional studies indicate that homelessness has only been addressed at the local level as there does not appear to have been a national study of homelessness conducted in New Zealand. While the earlier reports provide some insight into homelessness in the 1980s when there was a housing crisis, there are huge gaps in the research as most of them are not qualitatively focused, longitudinal or anthropological. With the exception of O'Brien and De Haan, and Mora, most of the reports are fragmented and outdated as they do not address homelessness in contemporary New Zealand society.

The texts and reports I have outlined show there is a lack of research on homeless people and a lack of research on the history of homelessness in New Zealand. However, as I have shown, there has been literature written on homelessness in other countries. While much of it is not written from an anthropological perspective, theorists from different disciplines have made valuable contributions in their ethnographies, some of which have resulted in in-depth accounts about homelessness and street life. Compared to the texts written on male homelessness it seems there are relatively few written on female homelessness, globally. I have not covered all of the literature on homelessness as that is impossible but I have endeavoured to choose

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[15] Their recommendations include acknowledgement of this problem at a Government level and that a night shelter for women be established in Christchurch (1985:29).

texts which are meaningful for this research. My research approach, which I will outline next, partially stems from the literature I have presented.

My Research Approach

Objectives

My aim is to draw attention to the lack of literature relating to female homelessness in New Zealand and to provide a starting point for further research. I aim to highlight that there are a significant number of homeless women in terms of the definition proposed by the "Task Group on Homelessness". In acknowledging the gendered nature of homelessness, I intend to identify and discuss experiences and needs that are specific to homeless women. I am interested in analysing and comparing the ways in which different groups in New Zealand represent homelessness, particularly the media and service providers as well as the women who were willing to share their life experiences with me. Through this research I hope to understand why homeless women find it difficult to transcend or overcome their circumstances and end up being caught in a repetitive cycle. This research is undertaken from an anthropological perspective with the objective of providing a holistic and culturally sensitive discussion about female homelessness in Christchurch, New Zealand. As such, the methodology used to carry out this research is qualitative and is framed by participant observation.

Research Methodology

Fieldwork and Interviews

My fieldwork was carried out over a total period of nine months in order to understand life on the street from homeless people's own viewpoints. Participant observation was used involving one night a week with an outreach team who drove around the city in a mobile canteen giving out food and drink that had been donated from various bakeries to those people on the streets in central Christchurch. These "street people" included sex workers and their minders[16], homeless people, lonely people, street cleaners, tourists and even people on their way home from partying in

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[16] The women who work as prostitutes prefer to be called "street workers" but due to the ambiguous nature of this term, I will refer to them as "sex workers". "Minders" is the term the women used to refer to people, mainly men, formally known as "pimps".

town. In addition to food and drink, they also received emotional support as the volunteers and employees were there to listen as well as give information about various services they could access for help with accommodation or addictions for example. Although the mobile canteen was run by a church-based organisation, the team leader emphasised that religion came secondary to helping people and that their organisation was there to help and not to "preach". While I got to know some of the "regulars" reasonably well, there were many others I only saw a few times and others I did not get to know because they kept to themselves. This service provided the opportunity for casual as opposed to in-depth conversations as the canteen was driven on a route around the central city and had designated places that it stopped[17]. The street people knew it was going to be there at particular times and waited for it to arrive. It stayed at each place for a short duration before it moved on to another place.

My other fieldwork site provided the opportunity to get to know many of the women better. It was suggested by the team leader of the mobile canteen that it would be a better place to have longer and more in-depth conversations with the women. The "drop-in" centre was established specifically as a place where sex workers in central Christchurch could get food and drink, and feel safe from the street. It was open from 10pm until 1am and I spent one night a week there for about eight months. It was at the "drop-in" centre that I got to know many of the women because they felt comfortable sitting down and engaging in conversation while they were taking a break from working on the street. Thus, four out of the five women involved in this research were sex workers that had experienced being homeless. The "drop-in" centre also provided a safe, familiar and neutral place for the interviews to take place. It was here one night early on in my fieldwork that one of the employees of the centre highlighted the lack of accommodation for homeless women in Christchurch. This was the beginning of my focus on homeless women[18].

I began the interview process with people who worked for organisations that provided resources for homeless people. There were seven interviews with nine people from six different organisations as well as an interview with a police officer and one with a

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[17] While it had designated places it stopped, the canteen also stopped for sex workers when they indicated that they needed something to eat or drink or for "supplies" (condoms).

[18] Initially I had planned to research homeless *people* but when the employee highlighted the needs of homeless *women*, I decided to focus specifically on them.

council employee, most of which were tape-recorded[19]. While the interviews were being carried out with service providers, I began building up relationships with women who had experienced homelessness and were considered potentially interested in taking part in this research. However, this took longer than anticipated because developing trust was a major issue for these women. In addition, many of them could not see an immediate reward for taking part, and therefore, some of them were reluctant to participate. It took months of persistence to carry out life history interviews with three of the women and another couple of months searching for two more women to interview. When I approached women I thought could be interested in taking part, I briefly outlined my research to them using "everyday" language as I was aware they would have been easily put off participating if they could not understand what the research was about. During this time I tried to contact a number of women for an interview, many of which did not eventuate for various reasons. An employee of the organisation that ran the "drop-in" centre was aware of my struggle to find participants. He approached some women he knew had experienced homelessness and encouraged them to participate in my research even though there was no "reward" for doing so. It was through the assistance of people like him who worked for this organisation that I was able to find my participants and conduct interviews with them.

Building up the trust of the women took varying amounts of time in order to procure an interview. "Hanging out"[20] for drugs meant they felt too sick to go through with the interview, being too high on drugs meant they were incoherent, and childminding issues were problematic. I had to make a number of appointments with most of my participants before the interviews went ahead. At one stage an interview was organised with a participant that had an intravenous drug addiction who arrived for the interview so "high" she could not stay awake. She got upset with me when I accidentally gave her a fright and she walked out of the interview. Consequently, I had to compile her life history from the many informal conversations that we previously had about her life. On another occasion, I turned up to interview a woman who I found hiding in the café next door because she was scared someone was "out to get her". In the case of another woman, I ended up conducting the interview in her

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[19] The information sheet I gave service providers at the beginning of the interview is included in Appendix One.
[20] "Hanging out" is a term the women used when they were having physical withdrawals from drugs.

garage while she sniffed her bag of glue the whole time. Some women kept cancelling and others agreed to be interviewed but were then very hard to locate. I ended up interviewing three women but I also spent time with many more who had experienced homelessness.

Before I began the interviews, I gave my participants an information sheet about this research and a consent form to sign. I had to write this in non-academic language because it was imperative that the women understood the project they were agreeing to participate in. I was aware that some of the women did not have high literacy levels and in one instance, I read the information sheet to a participant who did not feel confident reading it herself[21]. Because of the difficulties in carrying out the interviews, two of the five narratives have been compiled over the nine-month period through chance meetings with the women rather than being tape-recorded as the other three interviews were. My female participants vary in age from 21 to 38 years, three of them have children and two of them told me they are of Maori descent[22].

How the women perceived their own circumstances and the parts of their lives they were willing to share was of particular interest to me. This is why I used the life history approach to frame the interviews with my female participants. Morris states, "a life history is an account of one person's life told to another" (2002:140). This approach recognises the subject as the central author of their story and the researcher as the facilitator of the process (ibid). It is a way of allowing people to speak for themselves and tell their own 'story'. Because these women are seemingly insignificant to others, many of them have not had the opportunity to discuss their lives in this way before. As homelessness is a sensitive issue, the life history method was useful for "breaking the ice" and easing the women into the interview before we discussed some sensitive issues. It not only helped the interview to progress "naturally" but it gave the women a sense of control over the interview and provided the opportunity for reflecting on their own situation or, as Tomas and Dittmar term it, a means of "evaluating" their situation (1995:498). Above all else, life history narratives gave the women a sense of empowerment as they retold their lives. While I used the life history approach to frame the interviews with the women, their

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[21] The information sheet I gave my female participants is included in Appendix One.
[22] The three other women did not inform me of their ethnicity.

narratives about homelessness emerged rather than their full life histories as there were often large gaps that they did not fill. I ended up having to piece aspects of their lives together so their stories in chapter four are *my* reconstruction of *their* narratives.

Media Analysis

In combination with the qualitative interviews and fieldwork I conducted with homeless people and service providers, I also gathered newspaper articles, reports and letters to the editor as well as documentary films to gain a picture of how the media[23] represent homelessness. These are listed in "Part Two" of the Bibliography. The 44 media articles, reports and letters to the editor were sourced from 10 different New Zealand newspapers that include: The Christchurch Press, Timaru Herald, The New Zealand Herald, The Nelson Mail, The Dominion Post, The Dominion, The Sunday-Star Times, The Evening Standard, Hawkes Bay Today, Otago Daily Times and some are sourced from The New Zealand Press Association. They date from 3 October 2001 to 11 August 2005. I have limited myself to data covering four years because of time constraints. While these pieces were published in various newspapers, they were sourced from a University of Canterbury database and selected for content relating to homelessness in New Zealand.

In combination with the newspaper data that was gathered, I analysed four documentary films dating from 1997 to 2005. These were sourced from the National Film Archive database and are summarised in Appendix Two. They are: *The Street is my Home* (1992), *A Caravan Called Home* (1997), *Te Whanau O Aotearoa: Caretakers of the Land* (2003) and *Life on the Street* (2005). I selected them as they were the only New Zealand documentaries on homelessness found on the database[24]. It will be insightful to compare the way in which these documentaries portray homeless people to that of the newspapers to see if, and how, they differ. I will use Blommaert and Verschueren's (1992) pragmatic approach as a practical way of framing the content analysis of the media data. Their approach focuses not only on what is explicitly stated but also on what the data implies. They use this approach to reveal the taken-for-granted and subconscious views/opinions/beliefs in newspaper

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[23] By "the media" I am referring to the data I have gathered from the newspapers and documentary films.

[24] The database is particularly difficult to negotiate if the exact title is not known. These documentary films were found with the assistance of the archivists who could also not find any other ones.

articles about minority groups in Belgium. Their approach will be useful for this research, which is about a current social issue, because it will highlight the media's dominant position and attitude toward homeless people. Klein acknowledges that people are inclined to take what the media says as "social fact" which is often misleading (2000:417). He argues that in order to have a more balanced understanding of the bigger picture, empirical research should accompany a textual analysis (ibid). This is why in my own study I include the perspectives of not only the media but also service providers and my female participants.

Theoretical Context

I am not intending to provide a structural (political-economic) "explanation" of homelessness nor do I pursue a line which regards the individual as universally responsible for his or her situation. Rather, I endeavour to look at mechanisms which keep people homeless and are inscribed into the social relationships of homeless people. Besides looking at modes of representation which also work as a social force on those who are represented, I take up issues relating to "normalisation" and "abnormalisation", dichotomy and classification, responsibility or control and self-control, and of social networks or social capital involved in discussions around homelessness. I have carefully chosen theoretical models that provide insight into such concepts and themes. They include a Foucauldian concept of discourse (refer Hall, 2001 and McNay, 2001), Foucault's (1967) understanding of dichotomisation which I will apply alongside Mary Douglas' (1984) interpretation of binary and classificatory systems, Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality and Nikolas Rose's (1990, 2000) application of it, and Robert Putnam's (1995, 2002, 2004) understanding of social capital.

CHAPTER TWO

Media Representations of Homelessness

The media, in all of its various forms, has a significant impact on society. Daly points out that language, both spoken and written, and visual images are powerful communicators of ideas, values and social norms (1996:9-10). Klein argues that people assume media text is as reliable as data gathered through "conventionally empirical means" (2000:404). Thus, the media significantly affect society's thoughts, knowledge and opinions about certain issues and groups of people. I hope that by uncovering the dominant ways in which the media portray homelessness, broader social values and norms relating to the home will also become evident. By "the media" I am specifically referring to the 44 newspaper articles, reports and letters to the editor as well as the four documentary films that I introduced in the last chapter. The data from the newspapers will be contrasted with the data from the documentary films to see how their depictions of homelessness compare.

I will employ Blommaert's and Verschueren's (1992) linguistic "pragmatic" approach as a way of sorting the data and uncovering both the explicit and implicit meanings. As I indicated in the last chapter, they use this approach to reveal the taken-for-granted and subconscious views/opinions/beliefs in newspaper articles about migrant groups in Belgium. Blommaert and Verschueren argue that a pragmatic approach is useful for their study because it reveals the manner in which migrant groups in Belgium are stigmatised and categorised by majority groups. They argue that a

pragmatic approach is useful for highlighting and dealing with social issues associated with this (1992:506). While Blommaert and Verschueren are interested in what is explicitly stated, they are more concerned with the implications of these statements and the underlying meanings behind them that reveal particular worldviews. Exposing the worldview about homelessness as it is represented through the media will highlight how homeless people are perceived and treated by wider society.

Blommaert and Verschueren's analysis is about uncovering systems of representation. The pragmatic approach not only reveals meanings, assumptions and generalisations but it also questions them (1992). They apply the approach to three different text genres: media reports which are mainly newspapers, social scientific analyses and policy statements (1992:504). Blommaert and Verschueren believe it integrates "methodological insights … into a strongly developed descriptive and interpretive framework" (1992:507). The first step involves gathering a wide variety of data, which I endeavour to do by focusing on both newspapers and documentary films. The second step involves carrying out a content analysis by focusing both on what is explicit and what is implicit in the data. Blommaert and Verschueren begin their analysis by drawing out the aspects that are represented as "normal" and "acceptable" to uncover the majority views which often go unnoticed because they are ingrained in people. However, it is important to recognise that the researcher can read too much into the data. I try to be aware of my role in analysing this data and am conscious of how far I take the analysis. The third step involves looking for an emerging coherent picture. While there may be some minor anomalies, there will be a dominant way in which the media, at a certain point in time, represent homelessness. Blommaert and Verschueren argue that these "principles" must be strictly adhered to in order for the approach to be a "scientifically justifiable framework" (1992:506). They sort their data thematically and analyse key sentences as I will do. However, I will also highlight key words that are relevant to this analysis. Because of the volume of the data, much of it is presented in tables which I have set out in appropriate places throughout this chapter.

Blommaert's and Verschueren's (1992) pragmatic framework will be useful for its practical way of uncovering many of the implications and underlying assumptions

present in the data. While their approach relates to the power the majority group holds over the minority (both explicitly and implicitly), this is something they do not directly discuss in their article. Consequently, Michel Foucault's theory on discourse will be useful for analysing the implications and underlying assumptions of the overall picture that the pragmatic approach will expose. His theory will uncover the media's dominant discourse on homelessness that will reveal various positions within it, which will highlight certain social norms. In doing so, dichotomous categories or binary oppositions will be exposed, highlighting the normalisation of some members of society and the abnormalisation of others. I will begin with the newspaper data.

NEWSPAPERS:

Rough Sleeping Homeless Men

The newspapers overwhelmingly portray homeless people as rough sleeping males. This is evident in both the terminology used to refer to homeless people and the dwelling places recorded. Their living places fall into three categories: "on the street", "marginal shelter" and "formal shelter", which are set out in table 2.1.

Table 2.1.

Dwelling Places of Homeless People

On the Street	Marginal Shelter	Formal Shelter
Bushes	Porches	Boarding houses
Trees	Abandoned buildings	Backpackers
Alleyways	Garages	Hostels
Gateways	Cars	Motels
Public gardens	Vacant properties	Caravans
Benches	Couches/sofas	Night Shelters
Parks		
River bank		

Homeless people are primarily reported as living "on the street" and in "marginal shelter" as opposed to living in "formal shelter". Thus, they are portrayed as frequenting dangerous, marginal and undesirable living areas. These places range

from being either highly visible such as a bench in the middle of the city, or very secluded like a graveyard. The newspapers use metaphors such as "the red light district", "Auckland underworld", "fringes of the city" and "living on the margins of society" to refer to places that homeless people live. These metaphors imply the people that frequent them are as marginal, dangerous and undesirable as the areas themselves are portrayed as being.

It is important to identify these living places because they indicate how homelessness is experienced which can influence how homelessness is understood by wider society, particularly in relation to "degrees" or "types" of homelessness. The data implies that homeless people are not only deviant but also mobile, peripatetic and transient, signifying they have no permanent home. The newspapers emphasis on rough sleeping reflects a narrow approach to homelessness and this type of representation can have far-reaching effects, implying that most homeless people are rough sleepers. Because they overwhelmingly portray rough sleepers as males, the implication is that homelessness is a male issue. This is further perpetuated by the terminology the newspapers use to refer to homeless people.

The terminology is either "overtly negative" or "predominantly neutral". Refer to table 2.2 for my classification.

Table 2.2**.**
Terminology Used to Refer to Homeless People

Overtly Negative	Predominantly Neutral
Undesirables	Dwelling deprived
Invisibles	Couch surfers
Homeless outcast	Hidden homeless
Vagrant	Homeless man
Gutter dweller	Homeless person
Low-life glue sniffer	Streeties
	Transient types

The context of the terminology, which is not present in the table, is very important because while some terms may appear to be neutral they may actually be used in a negative sense. For example, "transient type" does not initially appear to be a negative term but it takes on a completely new meaning when the full sentence is revealed:

> *Holiday parks could also attract transient types who preyed on children* (Hume, 28 June 2004:1)[25].

In this context, the term implies that transient people are more inclined to molest children. It is also an example of the emotive use of language. Likewise, "vagrant" is not necessarily a negative term but the context in which it is used is negative:

> *Vagrants befouling central Wellington* (NZ Press Association, 9 November 2004).

This text links "vagrants" to inappropriate behaviour implying they are dirty and disorderly, a theme that I will discuss further on. In contrast, "streeties" is used in a more neutral way:

> *Christchurch "streeties" say they hope moves to establish a drop-in centre for inner-city homeless come to fruition soon* (Hume, 8 June 2004:2).

Unlike the "neutral" terms, the "overtly negative" terms – "outcast", "undesirables", "low-life glue sniffer" - conjure up images of people that are ignored, set apart and excluded from the rest of society. They indicate that homeless people are not worth acknowledging and are essentially worthless and unacceptable; they are non-people or non-citizens. While the "neutral" terms do not have the negative implications the "overtly negative" ones have, their use can detract from the seriousness of homelessness.

The most frequently used terms "homeless person" and "homeless people" are used 16 times in my newspaper sample. "Homeless person" refers to a category rather than the individual as do other terms such as "homeless population", "homeless community" and "homeless people". They imply homeless people are members of

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[25] For media references, see "Part Two" of the Bibliography.

one homogenous group that look and behave in similar ways. It is interesting to note that the term "homeless man" is used 13 times and "homeless woman" is not used at all. While most of the data focuses on the stories of homeless men, a couple of articles do focus on homeless women but they are referred to as a "homeless person" (see Paterson, 11 June 2005 and Wall, 22 August 2004). The term "hidden homeless" is only used once and is used in reference to those who sleep in cars and "couch surf". This type of homelessness is described as "a new phenomenon in homelessness" (see Thomas, 19 February 2005) which is significant because many of the people considered as homeless by "Task Group on Homelessness" fall under this category yet they are significantly "under-represented" in the newspapers.

Dysfunctional and Deviant

Newspapers predominantly portray homeless people as socially dysfunctional through the attention given to physical appearance, health and behaviour. While there is not as much information recorded on the physical appearance of homeless people, the aspects mentioned are those that are socially unattractive. They include: "upper front teeth missing", "face grey and drawn" and "hands physically maimed". Interestingly, these descriptions relate to two homeless people who were murdered on the street. The only positive physical description found relates to a woman who remembers a homeless woman's "bright blue eyes". She recalls that she looked "worn and tired" but her eyes stuck in her memory (see Wall, 22 August 2004). The homeless woman is described as "once a stunning part-time fashion model" (ibid). These characteristics imply that homeless people are generally not attractive and that there is something physically wrong with them, suggesting "otherness" and positioning them as "outsiders". The newspapers do not comment on the physical appearance of homeless people who are still alive other than referring to health-related issues indicating that they assume the public know what a homeless person looks like.

The health issues of homeless people, both physical and psychological, are set out in table 2.3.

Table 2.3.

Health Issues of Homeless People

Mental Illness	Addictions	Other Health Issues
Schizophrenia	Glue addiction	Epilepsy
Depression	Alcoholism	Brain injury
Post-natal depression		Heart and liver damage
Eating disorders		

Health issues like "depression" and "epilepsy", and addictions like "alcoholism" position homeless people as defective or damaged in some way, implying an inability to cope with life. They seem to be connected to the person's "fall" into homelessness suggesting the health issue or addiction caused the person to become homeless or were caused by the person being homeless. It is not uncommon for a homeless person to be reported as having "multiple needs" suggesting they suffer from an addiction as well as a mental illness and maybe other health problems as well (see Hume, 21 August 2004). Alcohol is the substance most frequently referred to while glue and gambling addictions are mentioned infrequently (see Thomas, 19 February 2005). Addictions in general are alluded to but often it is not specified exactly what type of addiction the person has. These health issues indicate homelessness is not an acceptable lifestyle and the reported behaviour affirms this.

The newspapers predominantly report the behaviour and state of homeless people as uncontrolled, volatile and anti-social. Refer to table 2.4.

Table 2.4.

Behaviour or State of Particular Persons

Individual Behaviour	Individual State
Threatening	Boozy haze
Wetting herself	Passed out
Crying	Out of her mind
Regularly drunk	Soaking wet
Argumentative	A mess
Screaming her head off	Collapsing
Abusive	Frothing from the mouth
Frothing from the mouth	
Self harm	
Bizarre behaviour	
Extremely anti-social behaviour	

Words and phrases like "argumentative", "passed out" and bizarre behaviour" conjure up images of people who have lost control of themselves and imply homeless people are threatening, dangerous and deviant. This is evident in the description of the state of a homeless woman who was murdered as commented by her ex-husband:

> *"Sheryl would have whole days of being in a trance-like state. I'd see her at times when she was frothing from the mouth and she would sometimes just collapse on the ground"* (in Wall, 22 August 2004:4).

While this statement refers to one particular person, many of the comments relate to the collective as the next statement taken from a letter to the editor shows:

> *They urinate – often on themselves – vomit, smoke pot, light fires, litter, beg, fight and drink till they pass out* (Chamberlain, 4 June 2004:4).

This member of the public is very explicit in his or her view about the behaviour of homeless people who are portrayed as uncontrolled, volatile and irresponsible. By using "they" the text implies all homeless people behave in this way. In an article called "Attacks on homeless stretch Mission" the author comments:

> *The homeless population consisted of a volatile mix of people with mental problems and addictions. The deprivations of life on the streets built up resentment and anger in many, which sometimes led to attacks on the wider population* (Hume, 20 May 2004:4).

This text implies the homeless are dangerous, can "lose it" at any minute and are likely to take their frustrations out on other members of the public. The newspapers also highlight homeless people's behaviour in public places. One report states:

> *Police and Rotorua District Council have begun banning homeless people, drunks and vandals from Kuirau Park to clean up the park's image. Mr Lawrence [Sergeant of the Rotorua Police; K.M.] said police were trying to get the message through that Kuirau Park was not the place for "undesirables" to hang out. "We are trying to clean up the park and make it more friendly for the general public"* (NZ Press Association, 18 August 2004).

This is only one of many articles that attack homeless people for frequenting public places in what one journalist calls the "inappropriate use of public places" (Jacobson, 16 April 2004:6). The implication is that the homeless are presented as disorderly and irresponsible people who pollute the landscape and create chaos. These examples of "deviant" behaviour are directly linked to the depiction of homeless people as criminals.

In linking homelessness to crime an analysis of the data reveals that the offences reported as committed by homeless people are of a different nature to those committed against homeless people. These are shown in table 2.5.

Table 2.5.

Homelessness and Crime

Crimes committed by homeless	Crimes committed against homeless
Vandalism	Savage murder
Assault	Manslaughter
Theft	Assault
Wilful trespass	Fracturing skull
Drink driving	Hit over head causing brain injuries
Fraud	Bludgeoned
Burglary	Repeated unrelenting attacks
Intimidation	Beaten, stabbed, stomped, bashed

With the exclusion of "assault" and "manslaughter", the crimes allegedly committed by homeless people do not involve physical harm and are relatively minor offences. The most serious crime committed by a homeless person relates to a man found guilty of manslaughter after killing a television celebrity (see New Zealand Press Association, 16.09.04). With this exception, all of the other crimes include deeds such as "vandalism", "theft" and "burglary". This indicates the crimes committed by homeless people are of a significantly less brutal nature compared to the crimes committed against them, which include "savage murder" and "fractured skull" (see Hume, 20 May 2004). The later are serious "physical" offences that target a person rather than a business for example. They result in horrific injuries because of the force and level of violence used as the victim is overpowered and unable to escape. This is evident in the following excerpt about Shannon McCombs who was murdered by a two adolescent males:

> *His teenage killers beat him, then returned four times to bash him and stab him before finishing him off by stamping on his fractured skull* (Courtney, 2 October 2004:21).

Texts like this conjure up images of complete helplessness and total subjugation to the attacker. Nonetheless, homeless people are still portrayed as dangerous, violent and out of control. Although it is clear the homeless are more often the victims than the perpetrators, in many cases they still seem to be perceived as the attacker. This type of

contradiction is also evident in the way their past and present lifestyles are compared. This newspaper excerpt clearly illustrates this point:

> *He is also an alcoholic, whose habit and subsequent drink driving charges precipitated his fall from family man to gutter dweller* (Thomas, 19 February 2005:4).

Table 2.6 compares homeless people's lives prior to becoming homeless to their current lifestyle as reported by other people through the newspapers.

Table 2.6.

Descriptions of the Former and Current Lives of Homeless People

Life Prior to Homelessness	Homeless Life
Did lucrative earth moving work	Not really living
Had respectable job	Existing day to day
Had hopes and dreams	Eaten away
Ran a restaurant	Struggle
Family man	Drugs, alcohol and debt
Promising life	Gut-wrenching agony
Ward of the state as a child	Suffering
Mental health facilitator	Personal tragedy
Once mother and wife	Gutter dweller
History of family violence	Unbelievable pain

The descriptions of their backgrounds by family members and others strongly depict the former life as being more desirable and homelessness being far less desirable (see Wall, 22 August 2004 and Thomas, 19 February 2005). Table 2.6 shows that homeless people once participated in society in socially acceptable ways such as having a job and a family. However, the overwhelmingly negative descriptions of their homeless life indicate that once they became homeless they fell apart and could not cope with life.

Table 2.7 presents the personal viewpoints of homeless people in regards to their backgrounds.

Table 2.7.

Homeless People Commenting on Their Own Backgrounds

Wards of the state

History of family violence

Build up of anger and resentment

No meaning in my life

Lived in boys home

I had a family, I was a good guy

History of abuse

Forced to live on the street

Drinking problem

Only six out of the 44 texts discuss the personal views of homeless people. The other texts include the perspectives of the public, the authorities and people providing services for the homeless. Kevin states that he used to be like everyone else:

> *"Nine months ago I was just like you. I had a family. I was a good guy"* (Kevin in Thomas, 19 February 2005:4).

His statement implies he no longer regards himself as a "good guy" and considers himself to be different from other people. At the same time, he is also emphasising that he has not always been this way. Newspapers preference for recording other peoples comments about the backgrounds of the homeless could infer that homeless people are difficult to find, are unwilling to divulge personal information about themselves or that they favour the opinions of others over the homeless. It is no surprise that there is little from the perspectives of the homeless themselves as this is in line with how newspapers seem to focus on groups rather than individuals, preferring an outside perspective to an inside one. The collective way they are often referred to can result in homogenisation, perpetuating stereotypes that surround homelessness.

Viewpoints on Homelessness

Aside from homeless people themselves, newspapers draw on the alleged opinions of representatives from local and state authorities, service providers and the public. "State and local authorities" refer to government agencies such as Child, Youth and Family (CYF)[26] and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ)[27], regional councils such as the Christchurch City Council (CCC) as well as Members of Parliament (MPs). Their attitudes to homelessness are shown in table 2.8.

Table 2.8.

State and Local Authorities Views on Homelessness

Problem to be fixed
Inappropriate use of public space
Timely to address the matter
Vagrant problem
Social issue
Homeless by choice
Vagrants befouling the city

Authorities use particular words to refer to homelessness, such as "problem" and "issue" and they seem to focus on finding a solution. The repetitive use of these words implies that homelessness needs to be addressed so it can be remedied, suggesting it is not normal or acceptable.

Within this group, there are a couple of different perspectives. One perspective reflects a concern for homeless people which is evident in the first statement, while the other reflects a condemning perspective and is shown in the second statement by ACT MP Stephen Franks:

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[26] "Child, Youth and Family is the government agency that has legal powers to intervene to protect and help children who are being abused or neglected or who have problem behaviour. We work with the Police and the Courts in dealing with young offenders under the youth justice system. We provide residential and care services for children in need of care and protection and for young offenders" (Child, Youth and Family, http://www.cyf.govt.nz/AboutUs.htm).

[27] "Work and Income is a service of the Ministry of Social Development…Work and Income helps job seekers and pays income support on behalf of the Government" (Work and Income New Zealand, http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-us/index.html).

> *A Wellington councillor has attacked colleagues for their hands-off attitude to the homeless. David Zwartz … criticised the council for its "laid-back" attitude and urged policy advisers to show more enthusiasm* (Jacobson, 16 April 2004:6).

> *"I have a win-win proposal – the Wellington City Council must include some non-transferable, one-way bus tickets in the package it's developing for the vagrants befouling central Wellington. It [Auckland] has more businesses for them to prey upon"* (Franks in NZ Press Association, 9 November 2004).

Zwartz is trying to encourage his fellow councillors to help homeless people while Franks is blatantly condemning them by explicitly linking homelessness to disorder and crime. In another report, it is claimed that Christchurch Mayor Gary Moore said homeless people are "homeless by choice" and that homeless people in Christchurch are "well looked after" (Thomas, 26 January 2005:3). This implies Christchurch does not have many homeless people. It could also bias attitudes of the public; if the Mayor thinks that then it must be true. This kind of statement has important ramifications in the perception and treatment of homeless people.

The newspapers suggest the public have a mixed reaction to homelessness ranging from anger and fear to compassion as set out in table 2.9.

Table 2.9.

The Public's Views of Homeless People

Urinate, vomit, smoke pot, light fires
Beg, fight and drink until they pass out
Homeless invade stairwells
Homeless not given much respect
Need attitude change to homeless
Homeless need compassion, tolerance

The letters to the editor reflect particularly disdainful attitudes toward homeless people as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> *Wellington is becoming a very strange place indeed, much to its detriment. Recently, while strolling along Cuba St, I saw…homeless outcasts leering at*

passers-by...I do wish that some sense of normalcy could resurface in this city once more (Smythe, 28 May 2002:6).

This letter implies homeless people are angry and anti-social, and make Wellington look unappealing. Of the two members of the public who were found to express compassion toward homeless people, one believes that current attitudes towards homeless people are not as understanding and empathetic as they should be (see Scott, 3 July 2004). Other members of the public complain about homeless people and their behaviour (see Chamberlain, 4 June 2004 and Jacobson, 24 July 2004). The negative statements shown in table 2.9 imply that homeless people's behaviour is dirty and unacceptable. Most of these comments and letters to the editor portray the public as fearing for their safety, implying homeless people are dangerous and intentionally try to frighten others (see Jacobson, 24 July 2004).

"Service providers" refer to people from agencies/organisations such as the Salvation Army, the Auckland City Mission, church-run organisations like the Methodist Mission and rehabilitation centres. They focus on the needs of the homeless using emotive words such as "desperate", "significant" and "urgent" to highlight the gravity of homeless people's situations. This implies their needs are not being met and that this must happen quickly (see New Zealand Press Association, 8 October 2004 and O'Sullivan, 28 August 2004). Their opinions on homelessness are shown in table 2.10.

Table 2.10.

Service Providers View of Homelessness

Significant and urgent need
Desperate situation
Disenfranchised
Poverty of opportunity
Homeless are destitute
They are easy prey
Women with children easier to accommodate

One spokesperson in particular is portrayed as believing that homeless people have little choice about becoming homeless. She argues that they might decide to become homeless but only because it is their "best option" at the time (see Price, 2005). Many service providers maintain homeless people are prevented from leading a "normal" life. This indicates that homeless people miss, and are excluded from, the opportunities everyone who is not homeless has access to. Unlike the authorities' and the public, service providers highlight the vulnerability of homeless people intimating they are prone to becoming the victims of violence. Essentially, service providers seem to have a view opposing that of the authorities and the majority of the public as they humanise homeless people. Not surprisingly, they seem to be closely aligned to the ways homeless people understand their own situation.

Statements made by homeless people as set out in table 2.11, infer that they do not feel like full members of society and are unable to participate as fully as others because they live differently and do not have as much money.

Table 2.11.

Homeless Peoples View of Their Own Situation

Inability to cope

Ostracised

Treated like rubbish

Homeless are the have-nots

People standing above me

Create trouble, throw a match

Homeless upset, scary, angry

Instructed to move on

Questioned and searched

Forced into homelessness - no choice

Essentially, they see themselves being at the bottom of the class structure with those further up looking down and judging them. This is evident in the following statement by Johnny:

> *"In this world there are two types of people: the haves and the have-nots, and I'm with the have-nots and I love the have-nots"* (in Warren, 5 February 2005:4).

Not only are homeless people represented as feeling excluded but they are also portrayed as feeling singled out. The reports indicate they feel they are harassed and treated with suspicion by others, particularly police. They are also depicted as believing those in authoritative positions do not understand the reality of homelessness and point out that being homeless is very different from what others think. Homeless people are predominantly reported stating they have little choice and have been forced to live on the street. Essentially, homeless people are portrayed emphasising the difficulties and complexity of homelessness.

The picture that seems to emerge from the newspaper data indicates the newspapers do not acknowledge the existence of homeless women as they portray homeless people as rough sleeping males who behave in anti-social, volatile and uncontrolled ways whose appearance is unattractive and abnormal. Homeless people are understood to suffer from various health issues that include mental illness and addiction which are connected to their homelessness. Their current life is portrayed as socially dysfunctional and while the newspapers include different views of homelessness, the predominantly uncharitable attitudes of the authorities and the public seem to outweigh the more empathetic views of the service providers and individual members of the public. It is interesting that homeless people's thoughts about their own situation are represented far less than the views of the other groups. Let us see how this compares to the way in which the documentary films portray homelessness.

DOCUMENTARY FILMS:

Rough Sleeping Homeless People

Unlike the newspapers which overwhelmingly portray homeless people as rough sleeping *men,* the documentary films portray them as rough sleeping *people*. While most of the documentary films have a male like Johnny, Ben or "Blueboy" as their central focus, they all include homeless women to varying degrees, indicating that

homelessness is not just a male issue. The documentary films are summarised in Appendix Two.

In relation to the living places of homeless people, the documentary films allude to all of the places in the "on the street" category in table 2.1 as well as "footpaths", "railway carriages" and "graveyards" that the newspapers do not. The documentaries also mention "abandoned buildings" and "caravans" as the newspapers do which come under "marginal shelter" and "formal shelter". The visual images in the documentary films means that homeless people are not labelled in the same way that the newspapers, who rely on written text, label them. Documentary films tend to refer to homeless people by their names rather than as a "homeless person" through a narrator or by letting them speak for themselves. Therefore, the terminology used in the documentaries is less negative than in the case of the newspapers.

Nonetheless, the images used to represent homeless people can have negative implications. These images include homeless people smoking marijuana, sniffing glue, drinking alcohol, fighting with one another, looking unclean, verbally abusing people walking past them and exhibiting erratic behaviour such as talking to themselves and swearing loudly. In contrast, they also portray other images such as homeless people washing themselves, shaving, wearing clean clothes, being concerned about their appearance, helping other people, and having a coherent and intelligent conversation with others. This shows a different side to homelessness. While the documentary films portray many of the later images, they also show the former ones which confirm and reinforce the stereotype of the homeless person as dirty and uncontrolled.

Rejected and Vulnerable

The dirty appearance of homeless people in the documentary films portraying an unhealthy lifestyle raises concerns about health issues and addictions. These are shown in table 2.12 and are similar to the newspapers portrayal.

Table 2.12.

Health Issues and Addictions

Glue addiction – sniffing

Poppy seed addiction

Chronic alcoholic

Compulsive gambler

Depression

Breathing problems

Lack of hygienic facilities

Rust under bridge detrimental to health

"Alcoholism", "glue addiction" and "depression" feature in both sets of data and are the most frequently mentioned addictions and illness. An addiction to poppy seed drink is only mentioned in *Life on the Street*. While the films do not report as many of the health issues as the newspapers, they highlight some of the conditions that are detrimental to their health such as "rust under the bridge" that the newspapers do not. However, concern for homeless people's health and safety seems to mask an underlying motive regarding concern over the use of public places (see Oomen and Te Kata, 1992). While the documentary films portray homelessness as an unhealthy way to live, they seem to present it in more of a sympathetic way than the newspapers.

The behaviour and state of homeless people is portrayed in two ways; one being threatening and destructive and the other being helpful and caring, both of which are set out in table 2.13.

Table 2.13.

Behaviour and State of Homeless People

Individual Behaviour	Individual State
Bludge money off people	Flaked out
Prostitute themselves	Drunk as a skunk
Throw up and pee in doorway	Get depressed
Threatening	
Feed ducks	
Sings karaoke	
Hangs out at an internet café	
Helps others with addictions	

Being helpful and caring is portrayed by Johnny who says:

> *I now spend a lot of my time helping people with addictions – I get clothes for them and when I can, I get food from foodbanks* (Kentish-Barnes, 2005).

Johnny's willingness to help others illustrates social responsibility and reflects a constructive representation of his lifestyle. The documentary films show a more human side to homeless people portraying them as participating in "normal" activities such as feeding the ducks and going to an internet cafe. Nonetheless, homelessness is also portrayed in a destructive way. "Throwing up and peeing in the doorway" is a negative comment from a business owner who feels threatened by the homeless. While this statement is similar to the newspaper representation, the documentary films only include the opinions of two members of the public.

The documentary films depict homeless people as less threatening and dangerous than the newspapers and while many homeless people state they no longer commit crime, they still feel perceived as criminals. The documentary films show that homeless people seem to commit less serious crimes than are portrayed and crimes like "vandalism" are the same as the ones set out in table 2.5. The documentary films emphasise the danger of street life and the vulnerability of homeless people as in the case of Shannon who was brutally murdered while living on the street (Kentish-

Barnes, 2005). The documentary films also link their current situation of homelessness to their backgrounds which are portrayed as dysfunctional.

While the newspapers focus predominantly on the authority's, the public's and service providers' views of homelessness, the documentary films focus primarily on homeless people's views of their own background as set out in table 2.14.

Table 2.14.

Homeless People Commenting on Their Own Backgrounds

In social welfare custody

Fall outs with family

Estranged from family

Lost my son

Never had a stable home

Second son died of cot death

Father of my children in prison

Foster parents

Fathers partner did not like kids

Committed crime

Lost family ties

Divorced

Abuse

Taken away from family and put in family home

Thoughts of suicide

Burnt in fire and maimed hands

Easy victim of violence

Couldn't afford rent

Got depressed

Felt unloved and rejected

Thought I was worthless

Did not have a very good life

While these comments indicate homeless peoples upbringing has contributed to their current situation, their present life does not seem to be compared to their life prior to becoming homeless as overtly as it is in the newspapers. Many homeless people in the documentary films are in their late teens and early twenties and it seems that they

experienced homelessness from a young age. In this sense, one could argue that they have not really had a life prior to becoming homeless when compared with those who experienced homelessness later in life. This is where their comments about their childhoods are important because they indicate that life on the street is better for them than living in a family home. This is illustrated with Kele:

> *Got taken away from my family because of all the abuse at home. Got put into a family home and didn't want to be there cause they weren't my family so I just took to the streets* (Kentish-Barnes, 2005)

Their comments about their background indicate they have had what could be considered a "dysfunctional" childhood. Many of them "spent time in family homes", have "low self-esteems" and feel "worthless". This suggests they are disconnected from not only their biological family but also from society. The documentary films also include the views of some service providers who emphasise the complexity of homelessness, the vulnerability of homeless people and the hurt many homeless people have suffered throughout their lives. This is evident in the following statement from Canon David Morrell of the Christchurch City Mission:

> *You find great personalities…and some very sad ones and a great number of very sad stories. A lot of people carrying around lots of baggage of a level that I don't think I could cope with it if I were carrying it around, so why should I expect that they would be able to cope with it* (Kentish- Barnes, 2005).

Viewpoints on Homelessness

The different perspectives of the authorities, service providers, members of the public and the homeless that are portrayed in the documentary films are similar to those in the newspapers. However, unlike the newspapers that predominantly portray the authorities as having an overwhelmingly unsympathetic approach towards homeless people, the documentary films indicate that while many of them do take this approach there are some who are concerned for homeless people. This is evident with Green MP Nandor Tanczos who says:

> *We have a massive problem with homelessness in this country. We are not going to solve the problem by arresting people – we actually need to sort it out. These people are some of the most destitute in the country – they have*

nothing – there is very little available to them (Wright and King-Jones, 2003).

An uncharitable attitude is evident in the ways police move homeless people on from various locations and the manner in which some politicians and councillors complain about them. The mixed reaction of local and state authorities reveals that some take a more sympathetic and understanding view of homelessness. Therefore, not everyone in positions of authority condemn homeless people.

While the opinions of members of the public are not the focus of the documentary films, they portray many of them as feeling threatened by homeless people. This is evident in the following excerpt from a female business owner in central Wellington:

> *They come and throw up in your doorway...they flake out on the chairs and tables. If you kick them out what you're really scared of is that they'll come and break your windows when you're not here or...do some damage and they will or they threaten to* (Oomen and Te Kata, 1992).

This statement implies all homeless people are badly behaved, threatening and dangerous as this woman feels fearful of homeless people and believes they will harm her or her business. The other member of the public who comments about homelessness is angry the police and the council decided to move a shipping container onto an empty section in his street to accommodate homeless people. He states:

> *I thought absolutely fantastic, about time they did something with this land... I come back from work and my next door neighbour has been informed by the police that they're going to be sticking a big steel shipping container here to house street kids. I mean, I wasn't told. You can't just stick them in a society and say society's gotta accept them, its not fair especially when they've got the law on their side this time* (ibid).

This man is very explicit in his views of homelessness. His view that society should not have to accept homeless people indicates they will always be outsiders because of those who believe they do not, and will not, fit in. While the views of these two members of the public are very explicit in their message, they are the only ones that are included in the documentary films.

The views of service providers are represented in similar ways to the newspaper's portrayal of them as caring, empathetic and concerned about homeless people's wellbeing. Spokespersons from various service organisations emphasise homeless people's lack of choice, which is evident in another statement from Canon David Morrell:

> *People don't generally go on the streets because the streets are a great place to live. They're there because it is the least tolerable place for them for usually a whole host of reasons* (Kentish-Barnes, 2005).

His statement infers that homelessness is complex and many reasons contribute to a person becoming homeless.

The perspectives of the homeless themselves are closely aligned to those of the service providers. While homeless people's views are similar to those reported in the newspapers, I have set them out in table 2.15 because their experiences and opinions are the central focus of the documentary films. These comments indicate that homelessness is the last resort for them and their current situation is due to a number of reasons, such as lack of money.

Table 2.15.

Homeless People's Views of Their Own Situation

Stuck here cause can't get a job or a cheap place to rent

Basically it's a money issue because I can't afford to get the money together

Don't want to be here but don't have anywhere else to go

Used to be an addict but have changed my life around - hard to get organised again

Get to the stage where you don't really care

I just want to relax and enjoy life now

I spend a lot of my time helping people with addictions

I choose to be an alcoholic – you get robbed a lot when you're an alcoholic

The graveyard is the safest place to sleep - I feel safer on the street

Normality is a glue bag, I'm working as a prostitute now, I get myself into some strife

I'm on the streets and I've gotta make the most of being there cause that's my option

Karaoke is a form of release from the stress I have during the day

Some people like sleeping in groups but I like sleeping by myself

I'm just doing it to survive – I could be anyone's brother, sister, cousin

I dream of getting my own place – I keep hold of that

I relate to Jesus because he didn't have an address

I don't like living here, its very depressing and the kids have lost their childhood

We tend to keep to ourselves as a family unit - you have to be a strong character

We know we can do much better than this (living in the caravan park)

No meaning in my life

People think homelessness is not a problem in New Zealand

Deemed a criminal - people give us homeless a weird look – we're just normal people

Treated like animals by men in suits but women a bit nicer

Am told to "get a job" – some shops feel sorry for us so we get the "chuck-outs"

Sick of the rules in society - always told to move on

Have to survive on nothing but don't have any bills to pay like other people do

Wherever I lend my neck is my home and my friends are my family

We all stick together – they're my family now

Survive day by day – I take each day as it comes

Thinking about sleeping in a real bed is scary

A recurring issue for some homeless people seems to be their perception of what people think of them. One person talks about getting "weird looks" and he reiterates that homeless people are "normal people" and "could be anyone's brother, sister or cousin" (Kentish-Barnes, 2005). He feels as though he is treated abnormally and

differently. Another person believes that men are more judgemental towards homeless people than women. Like the newspapers, the documentary films indicate that many homeless people do not enjoy being homeless. They feel judged and discriminated against by members of the public and authorities who move them on from place to place. Some people admit to not enjoying their circumstances and others seem to be resigned to a life on the street. One person admits not liking rules and that life on the street means he does not have to work because he has no bills to pay. This reflects the day-to-day survival of many homeless people.

A number of homeless people highlight the importance of their street family emphasising that many of them stick together and support one another. One issue that is mentioned in the documentary films and not the newspapers is that homeless people can find the transition from homelessness to home very daunting. This highlights the difficulties some homeless people face when they try to change their circumstances and is evident with Johnny who states:

> *It's quite scary actually you know, sleeping in a real bed and that sort of thing, you know, you've got a place where you can go to the toilet, it's quite frightening aye* (Kentish-Barnes, 2005).

Johnny's statement suggests that homeless people seem to lack some learned behaviours that non-homeless people take for granted, such as being used to sleeping in a bed. The inference is that homelessness is not just about housing but is much more complex, requiring social and cultural skills.

The picture that emerges from the documentary films implies homelessness relates primarily to "rough sleeping people" who are often, but not always, represented as dirty and suffering from various health issues. Contrary to the newspapers, homeless people are depicted not only behaving in threatening ways but also in caring and compassionate ways. They are also portrayed in less criminal ways than the newspapers depictions. The documentary films show that while local and state authorities tend to be predominantly unsympathetic, some are concerned about homeless people's well-being. Similarly to the newspapers, the documentary films portray the public as predominantly unsympathetic towards homelessness while the service providers are depicted as empathetic. The major difference between the two

media portrayals of homelessness is that the documentary films focus more on the perspectives of homeless people than the newspapers do. Using Blommaert and Verschueren's (1992) pragmatic approach as a way of sorting the media data, it becomes evident that the newspapers predominantly reflect a more critical and condemning approach to homelessness while the documentary films largely reflect a more empathetic, compassionate and charitable approach.

Dominant Discourse: The "Abnormalisation" of Homeless People

The data reveals a dominant homelessness discourse that is comprised of two opposing positions that reflect different understandings of homelessness, one being charitable and sympathetic and the other being uncharitable and unsympathetic. Foucault's concept of discourse is useful to apply because it is a way of making sense of these polarising positions. For Foucault, "discourse" is about language *and* practice; what one says is connected to what one does (Hall, 2001:72). Discourses become ingrained in members of society to such an extent that they appear to be natural or taken-for-granted and often go unquestioned (McNay, 1994:112). Discourses produce knowledge about certain people and issues through the production of particular categories. As a result, they often normalise some people and practices while abnormalising others (McNay, 1994:94-95). Within the discourse on homelessness there is a dominant "normal" category of person which represents the position of mainstream society. There is also an "abnormal" category that refers to the position of homeless people or those who are excluded from society because they are deemed "deviant". The two opposite categories frame the way homelessness is talked about in the media by different groups who all seem to be aware of this discourse and the different categories within it. The authorities and the public tend to reflect an intolerant and condemning approach where they seek to ensure that homeless people remain excluded and abnormal. Service providers and the homeless themselves reflect a humanitarian approach emphasising homeless peoples similarities with the majority as they seek to include and normalise them.

The dominant discourse seems to involve a power struggle between the "normal" and the "abnormal" or the "haves and the have-nots". This reflects the dichotomy between the "good" and the "bad". The public and the authorities are represented as

perpetuating the negative perception of homeless people maintaining the gap between the two categories while the service providers and the homeless try to lesson the gap between them. This clear distinction between the "normal" and the "abnormal" is not only a distinction between the "good" and the "bad" but also between the "responsible" and the "irresponsible", the "orderly" and the "disorderly", and the "sane" and the "insane". The two dichotomous categories evident in the dominant homelessness discourse indicate that homeless people are outside various social norms, particularly those relating to the home. The positioning of homelessness as "abnormal" and "dangerous" indicates that home is "normal" and "safe". Homelessness is presented as lack of home and in this sense, "home" and "homelessness" are portrayed in dichotomous ways. The theory of Mary Douglas will be used to further discuss this dichotomy in chapter five.

While there is a dominant position that abnormalises homelessness, there is a hint of a different discourse that one might call "humanitarian" which is evident in the position of service providers, homeless people, some of the authorities and some members of the public. However, it is not strong enough to be considered a counter-discourse because most members of these groups try to normalise homeless people. This does not mean that service providers condone the abnormalisation of homelessness but that they realise how and why homeless people are positioned as abnormal and emphasise they are human just like everyone else. They seek to bridge the gap between the "abnormal" and the "normal". By trying to reintegrate homeless people along normative lines they are actually reinforcing the dominant perception that homelessness is "abnormal" and "deviant". This results in many of them working *with* the dominant discourse rather than *against* it as a counter-discourse would.

The distinction between the two discourses shows continuities with the contrast between "deserving" and "undeserving" poor that were particularly evident in the late 19th and early 20th centuries where poor people were seen to bring their own situation upon themselves or their situation was seen to be beyond their control. The "deserving" attitude is evident in the normalising and humanising position of the documentary films while the "undeserving" attitude is apparent in the largely abnormalising and dehumanising position of the newspapers. Essentially, the two categories demonstrate different worldviews as one favours those who do not need

any assistance and are largely self-sufficient whereas the other is empathetic and endeavours to help those in need. While the two positions are evident in the media data, the media reinforce and perpetuate the dominant discourse through its overwhelming representation of homeless people as "abnormal".

CHAPTER THREE

Service Providers' Representations of Homelessness

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Those who provide services for homeless people are valuable participants in this research because of their "hands-on" knowledge of homelessness in Christchurch. This chapter focuses on seven interviews involving nine people from six different organisations that provide services for the homeless in Christchurch. Included are representatives from church-based as well as independently run organisations, involving one specifically for homeless men, four specifically for homeless women and three for both homeless men *and* homeless women. Between them they provide: street outreach, emergency accommodation for women, a "drop-in" centre for sex workers, a night shelter for men, a housing advisory service for men and women, a day "drop-in" centre for men and women, emergency and short-term accommodation for single women and one for women with children, and an organisation that assists women into medium to long-term housing. The two places providing emergency housing for women differ as one is for women with children and does not allow women with "unmanaged"[28] addictions or illnesses. The other allows women with addictions but does not allow women with children. The latter place does not have a live-in staff member but has a "key holder" in a separate house on the property whereas the former place has a staff member who lives on the property.

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[28] According to the service provider, a person's addiction or illness was "unmanaged" if they had not acknowledged it, if they were using drugs on site and if it was affecting other women staying there.

While some organisations are managed by qualified social workers, others are run by community workers or people that have extensive experience in the field[29]. They range in age roughly from 27 to 65 years and include one man and eight women. Table 3.1 shows the organisations involved with homeless people and their particular roles.

Table 3.1.

The Organisations and Their Roles in Providing for Homeless People

Organisation	Role
Christian-based Organisation	
- Street outreach	Food, company
- Emergency accommodation for single women	Emergency shelter
- Women's late night "drop-in" centre	Food, safe area
Men's night shelter	Emergency shelter
Housing advisory	Advocacy, information
Day centre for men and women	Company, resources
Emergency/short term accommodation for women with children	Emergency shelter children
Medium to long-term housing for women	Permanent Shelter

I have also included excerpts from interviews with a police officer and an employee of the Christchurch City Council (CCC) and I will include these at various stages throughout this chapter. While all of the participants talk specifically about female homelessness, they also offer thoughts on homelessness in general. I will begin the chapter with the main themes that emerge from the interviews and conclude by employing Foucault's theory of discourse, as I did in the last chapter, to expose the dominant way in which service providers represent homeless people and any counter-discourses that may emerge.

Holistic View: Making the Invisible Visible

All of the participants, other than the police officer, believe that homelessness is more complex and constitutes a much larger group of people than is generally perceived by

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[29] One participant has had nine years experience working with street people.

the public. Five of the participants interviewed were involved in the "Task Group on Homelessness". They believe that homelessness includes rough sleepers as well as a number of people in emergency, temporary and insecure accommodation. Unlike the service providers, the police officer[30] equates homelessness to "rough sleeping". When asked if there were many homeless people in Christchurch, he replied that New Zealand does not have the homeless problems other countries have. He is alluding to the visibility of homeless people and essentially assumes that because they cannot be seen, they do not exist. The police officer went on to compare Christchurch to London and pointed out that Christchurch does not have beggars on the street as London does and consequently reasoned that comparatively speaking, New Zealand does not have very many homeless people. A service agency representative also made this comparison. However, she is not claiming that New Zealand does not have a "homelessness problem", instead she highlights the need to combat homelessness believing that homeless people need to be acknowledged more than they are. Another service provider argues that comparing New Zealand to Britain is like comparing "oranges and apples" but if homelessness were compared per capita, homelessness in New Zealand would be more obvious.

When asked how many homeless people there are in Christchurch, one agency employee said it is not known but the numbers, whatever they are, are increasing. They believe it is impossible to put an accurate number on the homeless. Another service representative agreed but pointed out that some of the numbers can be found on the waiting lists for council housing and those using night shelters, which would give a partial indication of the size of the problem. However, many of the spokespeople repeatedly highlight that it depends on how homelessness is defined. One person acknowledges that they need to quantify the homeless women who access their services so their organisation is eligible for funding. Nevertheless, they admit they did not like doing this and only follow the set procedure to enable them to continue to provide their services.

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[30] It is important to note that while this person is a representative of the police, this is only his opinion about homelessness and it does not necessarily reflect the views of everyone within the police.

Individual vs. Social Responsibility

Two of the service providers in particular blame central government for not doing more to help homeless people or doing more to prevent homelessness. One employee states that by focusing on central government, the onus has been taken off the local council to do anything about the issue. This employee believes local councils should start taking more responsibility for homelessness in their region. She also talks about housing being a "basic right" and part of the problem could be attributed to the government selling many of its state houses and leaving housing up to the private sector. Consequently, the high rents charged by landlords are too high for many people to afford. For many of the service representatives, this is a reflection of the money-driven society they believe New Zealand had become. The council employee points out that Mayor Gary Moore and the CCC are addressing homelessness having formed the "Task Group on Homelessness". They recommended that a "homelessness directory" that listed all of the services provided for homeless people in Christchurch be compiled[31].

A number of spokespeople believe that homelessness is a structural issue and one said that it is a reflection of the value system in New Zealand and the emphasis on "the dollar". However, this person also acknowledges that there is an element of self-responsibility as does another who believes many people are on the streets because they choose to be there, particularly those who do not like rules and prefer the freedom. This person argues that homelessness is a choice or a decision people make and that while it may be the lesser of two evils, it is still a decision. While this initially sounds somewhat uncharitable, the representative also emphasises that homeless people make the decision to become homeless based on the options available to them at that particular time. He points out that when making decisions, often they do not think about the consequences and subsequent effects on their lives. He used the example of those who "burn bridges" with others because of their anti-social behaviour causing them to be banned from accessing particular services. This person acknowledges that "choice" may not be the best term as it implies that homeless

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[31] This directory, titled *"No Fixed Abode: A Directory of Christchurch Accommodation and Services for People Without Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing"* (2006), has been completed.

people freely choose to become homeless, which in turn suggests that it is easy for them to withdraw from homelessness. This employee points out that while there are some people who prefer being homeless because they genuinely enjoy the lifestyle[32], there are also some people for whom homelessness is the last option. Not having much support and not being raised in the right ways are two aspects he suggests contribute to people becoming homeless. This representative also recognises that homelessness is often related to economics and people not being able to manage their resources properly. He points out that some homeless people find it "economically viable" to live on the street.

Many of the service providers express frustration that they cannot do more as most of them feel passionately about assisting homeless people. They also feel frustrated about the mechanisms put in place to help homeless people because the agencies designed to assist them are fragmented with some providing similar services while there are large gaps in the system with no provision at all. They point out that many organisations do not work with people for long enough, which they believe, reflects the "quick-fix" approach in a fast-paced society where people are not given the long-term assistance that many of them need. Thus, the complexities of homeless people's situations are not acknowledged; while one aspect of their life is being attended to, the other parts are not and this is of major concern to many service providers.

One representative emphasises the difficulties that homeless people often face when dealing with government agencies such as Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). One person points out that there is an attitude that homelessness should not exist in New Zealand because of the social system that is set up to support those who are marginalised. This belief also emerged in the interview with a service representative who had recently moved to New Zealand. Until she understood the complexity of homelessness, initially she thought there could not be homelessness in New Zealand because of state benefits that provide money to pay for the cost of living. The majority of service providers seem to believe that homelessness is predominantly a failing of the state and society as a whole while only one explicitly states that it can also be an individual failing.

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[32] I did not meet anyone who told me they were homeless because they preferred the lifestyle. However, some volunteers and employees indicated that there are some who do prefer being homeless.

Complex Social Issue: Not Just "Bricks and Mortar"

A recurring theme many service representatives raise is how they think other people view homelessness. One person comments that New Zealand needs to come to terms with the fact that there are increasing numbers of vulnerable people in society. This person does not think homeless people are very well looked after in New Zealand and that many people pretend homelessness does not exist and essentially ignore it. Another representative believes there are many lonely people in Christchurch and there is a lack of connectedness between people. She sees homelessness as a manifestation of this.

One service worker comments that, for most homeless people, homelessness is a "symptom" of a problem rather than being the problem. She points out that if homelessness could be cured with money and housing then it would not exist in New Zealand but because it goes deeper than that "all the money in the world is not going to fix it". Another service worker firmly believes the underlying theme with homelessness is unresolved grief. In her experiences of dealing with homeless people or those on the verge of becoming homeless, she identifies grief or a strong sense of loss as being one of the main causes of homelessness.

Service providers recognise that combating homelessness involves more than securing accommodation. Two of them emphasise that many homeless people move off the street once they find accommodation only to find that keeping up with the bills is too much for them and they become homeless again. They identify this as one of the reasons why homelessness is often episodic or intermittent and also attribute it to the lack of support and communication between different agencies. One representative mentions that many agencies require so much information from homeless people that it is a very daunting task for them to receive a state benefit.

All the service providers acknowledge that homeless people are a marginalised group and even though there are many services available it is often difficult for them to gain access to them. It is even more challenging once they become homeless because each

organisation focuses on only one issue such as finding suitable and affordable housing, providing a state benefit, mental health or budget advisory. They also acknowledge it is daunting for homeless people to know where to go for help and that it is overwhelming to go between all of the different places they need to visit. For example, getting to an interview with WINZ on the right day at the right time can be an ordeal for many people and if they miss an appointment their benefit may be terminated and they may have to wait – sometimes weeks – for another interview to regain their benefit.

In this sense, service providers reject the "bricks and mortar" approach to homelessness, particularly one representative who points out that "bricks and mortar" do not stop the isolation and do not teach people literacy skills or how to manage the stress of paying the bills. Emphasis is given to the complexity of homelessness; getting out of it means relinquishing everything they know which is very scary for them. Some representatives recognise the enormity of this and point out that homeless people cannot be expected to change their circumstances overnight, which is why the homeless need long-term support.

Vulnerable People

The vulnerability of homeless people, particularly homeless women, is a recurrent theme the service providers raise. Homeless people are regarded as particularly susceptible to violent attacks and unable to defend themselves. One service provider points out that while members of the public are often scared of homeless people, it should actually be the other way round; homeless people should be more afraid of being attacked by others. This person believes homeless people are often attacked because they are misunderstood and people fear what they do not know or understand. Another service provider points out that it is very common for homeless people to have their few belongings stolen. Security of homeless people's possessions presents a major difficulty because they cannot carry them on their backs all the time, although some do. As a result, one of the "drop-in" centres offers lockers so they could securely store their belongings.

The issue of safety and security is particularly important when service providers talk about homeless females being more vulnerable than homeless males. One spokesperson points out that women do not usually live on their own and commented that:

> *The streets are a pretty dangerous place and you've gotta be a pretty hard character to foot it with all the people who frequent the streets, especially if you're female.*

The issue of safety was one of the main issues that I encountered in my fieldwork as both service workers and the women themselves were always concerned about their safety due to the many assaults that appeared to be part of these women's lives. This was illustrated when a sex worker was murdered in Christchurch the night before my fieldwork began and another was murdered towards the end of my fieldwork. In the latter case, no one knew the identity of the woman at the time of the murder and everybody was on alert to see who was missing or who had not come home. The employees of the organisation that I did my fieldwork through kept reminding their employees and volunteers as well as the people on the street, particularly the women, about staying safe.

All the service providers see women as being particularly vulnerable, not just on the street but also when living in accommodation. One representative stresses that *where* a woman lives is important and another accommodation provider is very choosy about those she gives tenancies to. This accommodation provider has specific rules that the women are required to adhere to for the safety of the other women living in close proximity. For example, if a man is to visit, the woman has to tell the other women first, highlighting that safety within the home is just as important as safety on the street.

Discrimination and Stigmatisation

All the service providers believe that homeless people are discriminated against which often prevents them from getting into stable and secure accommodation. It is a vicious cycle where one has to have money to rent a house but they also have to look

respectable, be responsible and act like "good tenants". In order to get money, they need to either have a job or be on some type of state benefit and in order to receive a benefit they need to provide WINZ with their bank account number. In order to get a bank account they need an address and some identification. "No fixed abode" does not count as an address and many homeless people have either never had identification, they lost it or it was stolen from them. This suggests that homeless people seem to lack the ability, knowledge and/or resources to participate fully in society. One service provider feels very strongly about the need to express to others how difficult it is for homeless people to change their circumstances and that it is not as easy as other people think with discrimination only adding to their stress.

A service provider points out that many people struggle to find accommodation because of prejudice based on physical appearance including skin colour, gender and physical markings, such as tattoos. She comments that in her experience, sole parents often find it hard to secure a tenancy because landlords assume they cannot afford the rent. According to one representative, discrimination against Maori and Polynesian people is particularly apparent. All of these factors, in combination with the high rents, make it difficult to get into and sustain housing. Another service provider highlights the stigma of being a benefit recipient. She points out the frequent discrimination by landlords who know the women are solo mothers and on a benefit. As a result, they are often given rundown flats. However, if they have a male with them, they are more likely to secure the tenancy. In this sense, women are represented as a liability, and if they do not have a male partner landlords assume they cannot look after themselves and manage to pay the rent as well. Tennant identifies that this type of discrimination has been evident since the mid 19th century and throughout the 20th century in New Zealand where women were stigmatised for being single mothers, particularly if they had children with multiple partners (in Brookes, Macdonald and Tennant, 1986:42). Service providers also point out that women are stigmatised for using certain services. This is illustrated by a service provider with a story of a woman that approached her looking for a flat. The applicant wanted a written reference but she told the service employee not to name the organisation she had been living with as she was concerned that people would assume she had multiple problems because of the stigma that went with staying there.

Two service providers believe there is a stigma specifically attached to homeless women because women are expected to have a home, to hold everything together and to have accomplished certain things by a certain age. One of these representatives believes that older homeless women are more stigmatised than younger homeless women because of the social expectation that older women should already have their lives organised.

Classification: A Person's Place

Service providers point out that homeless people are often classified and labelled. A service employee told of the stigma associated with accessing one of the night shelters, which led to some men being classified by others as "the night shelter men" even if they were not using their services. She received a phone call from the hospital and was told they had one of her "guys" there, illustrating the judgements and classifications people make on a daily basis based on physical appearance, often in intentional ways.

The classification of homeless people is also evident in many service providers being required to gather information about the people who use their services. One representative points out that this is daunting and upsetting for homeless people and because of this, her organisation does not ask for names. Two others also highlight that their street outreach team and staff at the "drop-in" centre do not ask for names or personal information. However, they do require some information about the women using their emergency accommodation because they need to know any medication they are on and any medical or mental health issues they have for the safety of the other women in the house. While they believe it is necessary, they acknowledge it is difficult to obtain such information at times. One reason is that it is sometimes difficult to get the information from the women who are either reluctant to tell them, are unable to coherently impart the information or lie about their circumstances. Another reason is that some organisations who refer women to them cannot give out personal information such as medical conditions because of the Privacy Act, which the manager of the house finds very frustrating. Another service provider explains the criteria she has to meet to ascertain who are "suitable" tenants. Her selection process

involves identifying both need and suitability which is a process that includes some people while excluding others.

The issue of classification is also raised in relation to how service providers believe the media represent homelessness. Not all of them raise this but those who do believe the media portray homelessness "shockingly", stereotyping homeless people and frequently sensationalising and distorting issues. One representative uses the example of the media coverage the Cashel Chambers fire received as the media implied that homeless people "squatting"[33] there had purposely started the fire. Another representative points out that while the media do report "true issues" they do not necessarily reflect the reality of the situation often reporting issues in a particular light to sell their papers.

The Gendered Nature of Homelessness

The service providers all highlight the differences between homeless men and homeless women in the way they experience homelessness and in the services that are available to them. The first major difference is that women are less likely to rough sleep than their male counterparts. One service provider estimates that there are three homeless men to one homeless woman while another estimates that there are roughly 95% homeless men and 5% homeless women. As discussed previously though, the number of homeless people can only be estimated and an accurate figure is not possible.

Service providers represent women as having different options to men; they have other places to go to which means they do not have to resort to rough sleeping. Some of them point out that women have stronger support networks than men so they have more people they can ask for help, sometimes bringing family or friends with them when accessing services. In addition, some of the representatives believe it is more socially acceptable for a woman to ask for help than a man as men should be able to provide for themselves. This sounds contradictory to the discrimination by landlords that service providers mention women face but the discrimination seems to be largely

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[33] "Squatting" is a term used to describe people staying in empty properties.

in relation to long-term housing or tenancies rather than short-term accommodation where women can stay with family or friends.

A couple of service providers also present women as being more likely to take the first step to access services than men. Two providers comment that women take the necessary step sooner than men, particularly if they have custody of their children as they are responsible for the well-being of someone other than themselves. However, they also point out that if a woman is by herself she might let the situation go on for longer before seeking assistance. A couple of service providers believe homeless women with children are often seen as more "deserving" than homeless men and are prioritised on waiting lists for council housing. This suggests there are different levels of "deservedness".

A number of service providers represent women as "nesters" emphasising that women like to have a place of their own. One points out that in his experience, women are less likely to put up with the "rigours of winter" than men. One of the representatives believes that males can "put their heads anywhere" whereas women are more particular about where they sleep. While one woman argues that males also need a place they can call home, she indicates that in her experience women have higher expectations and need to feel more secure than men. Another representative recognises that women expect more. Instead of "holding out" for the ideal house, she believes women often need to be more flexible about the decisions they make. One service provider stated that she does not believe women have a more emotional attachment to home as everyone has a sense of home but expresses it differently.

The issue of women being more difficult to work with than men is one that is consistently raised throughout many of the interviews with service providers. One representative who has worked with street people for nine years comments that homeless women are "shrewd, cunning, sly and more untruthful than the male" and very often move from place to place because nobody will put up with them. Another spokesperson believes that women are more adept at "emotional blackmail" which indicates that women are more likely to manipulate the situation to suit themselves and are less honest than men. The fact that women are also characterised as wanting more could be why service providers often find them so difficult to work with.

However, one participant believes that others are more likely to help women and while people are still fearful of homeless women, they are less intimidating than homeless men. She believes there is less empathy shown towards homeless men and that attitudes are more closed towards men than they are towards homeless women.

Through the interviews with service providers it emerges that homeless women are catered for differently to homeless men. In Christchurch, there are two dormitory-type night shelters with wooden bunks for homeless men. One accommodates around 30 and the other around 70. They open at teatime and then close again after breakfast so the men cannot access them during the day. One service provider points out that there were no facilities for men to access during the day until a "drop-in" centre for street people was opened in 2005 which is available for both homeless men and women. However, it is predominantly homeless men who access it. Another service provider acknowledges that unlike the services for homeless men, there are numerous "drop-in" centres for women open during the day but the gap for them is at night. Many places do not have the resources, such as a live-in staff member, to accommodate people like homeless sex workers and those suffering from an addiction and/or mental illness. Women's Refuge only accommodates women escaping from violent situations while many other places require women to go on a waiting list for short-term or longer-term accommodation. However, this is more difficult to get into because there are fewer places available and priority is given to women with children. In contrast, homeless men have access to emergency accommodation which is reasonably easy to get into but it is only for the night and they have fewer places to access during the day. Many of the service providers point out that there is only one place in Christchurch that caters for single women with addictions but it can only accommodate four women comfortably. This shows that the gap for women is at night and the gap for men is during the day.

While in agreement over most of the other issues discussed, service providers have differing opinions about how homeless women should be catered for. Essentially, the participants are divided over whether or not the type of night shelters provided for men should be provided for women. One representative believes women need to be catered for differently to men because women are "nesting creatures" and need a more home-like atmosphere rather than a boarding house atmosphere like the night shelters.

She acknowledges that there needs to be emergency "crash accommodation" because there are women who sometimes just need somewhere to stay for a night or two. However, she believes there are many more women who need a place to stay in a "home-like" environment. Two other women who manage organisations which help women find medium to longer-term accommodation, believe that emergency accommodation like night shelters would only exacerbate the growing problem of homelessness and would not fix it. While they have differing opinions on what services are needed for homeless women, all seem to agree that while not necessarily a solution, there is a place for emergency accommodation for homeless women in Christchurch.

Mediating Role of Service Providers

Service providers all see themselves as support for homeless people or those on the verge of becoming homeless. Many of them reiterate that their role is not to find accommodation for them but to give homeless people the information they need to find their own accommodation and to support them in doing that. Most believe that homeless people need to be autonomous; they need to be able to make their own decisions. One person in particular emphasises that they also need to be responsible for the consequences. At times, they wrote references to landlords in relation to tenancies their clients were applying for. However, one representative comments that he no longer does that because the woman he wrote the last reference for fell behind in rent and the landlord rang and tried to hold him responsible because he had recommended her. It seems that service providers mediate between homeless people and others such as WINZ, CYF or the CCC for example. They are concerned with issues of justice, equality and human rights relating to homeless people and Cloke (2005) refers to this as "going-beyond-the-self" (in Cloke, Johnsen and May, 2005:387). A couple of the service providers express frustration towards CYF who they believe often do not support women when they need it.

It became evident, particularly during my fieldwork, that while service providers are essentially mediators, they also take somewhat of a "tough love" approach to the people they interact with. This involves teaching them about respect for others and social etiquette or manners when taking food. During my fieldwork, I witnessed some

employees reprimand a couple of women for not being respectful of them or of others through being too demanding and taking more than they needed. They also gave praise where necessary, often noticing the small things such as someone having had a haircut, remembering a birthday or asking about an appointment they had during the week. This shows how much they care about these people. One service provider told me that he has one woman over for Christmas lunch every year, seeing his role as caring for and loving those people that mainstream society largely ignores. He takes a "tough love" approach to homeless people as he believes they need to learn to take responsibility for the decisions they make and they need to want to help themselves. This is the same service provider who believes that ultimately becoming homeless is a decision homeless people make. He told me that he encourages and supports them to make changes but that he will let them know when they are not behaving in acceptable ways. This "tough love" approach shows that this particular spokesperson has taken on a supportive "family-type" role as do many of the other people who work for this organisation[34]. In taking on this role, they acknowledge that homeless people have less support than others in society as they have fewer social networks, they often have no address or no permanent address, they have no job, they are often in financial debt, some have been in prison and many have low levels of education. Essentially, the service providers highlight homeless people's lack of participation in, and exclusion from, all aspects of society. This indicates that they do not have the same opportunities that other people have to forge relationships and enduring social networks.

Humanitarian Approach: A Counter-Discourse?

The attitudes of service providers both reflect and react to the dominant discourse I outlined in the last chapter. They exhibit an ethical approach as they tend to humanise homeless people, having continuities with "deserving poor" attitudes. The service providers primarily see homelessness as a reflection of wider society rather than a direct individual failing, believing that homelessness is the symptom of other issues rather than the problem. They emphasise the complexity of homelessness and that

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[34] While some of the other service providers do exhibit aspects of the "tough love" approach towards those who use their services, they did not address it as directly as the people in the organisation that I did my fieldwork through. Their approach was also an observation of my own that I raised with them during the time I spent carrying out my fieldwork.

homeless people require long-term support. Their "deserving" attitude towards homeless people is underpinned by morals and values and the message that came through numerous times during the interviews is that members of mainstream society need to treat homeless people as they want to be treated themselves. This type of approach or position is what Cloke et al. refer to as "discourses of ethos" (2005:385). This is because individuals and organisations who work with homeless people often have an ethical or moral base for their involvement (ibid). Essentially, many of the service providers demonstrate that they seek to reintegrate those who have been excluded. Cloke et al. support this as they argue that service providers seek to include the excluded, train the untrained, give voice to the voiceless and help the dependent become independent (2005:398).

Service providers' attempts to reintegrate homeless people and actively promote a change of circumstances suggest that they work with the dominant homelessness discourse as they try to normalise homeless people. This is evident through their attempts to reintegrate them back into society along normative lines, which includes going into rehabilitation for drug and alcohol addictions, finding secure accommodation, and getting out of sex work and finding employment. Normalisation happens at a largely sub-conscious level reflecting the ingrained nature of social norms, which I will discuss in more depth in the last chapter. This means that when service providers encourage normalisation, they are not necessarily fully aware that this is what they are doing. It is also important to note that service providers can encourage homeless people to change their circumstances not because they are consciously trying to normalise them but because they are worried about their health for example. Through processes of normalisation, service providers try to lesson the gap between the "abnormal" and "normal" or between homeless people and mainstream society.

Nonetheless, just as there is a hint of another position in the media data, there is also a hint of another position with service providers. Horsell argues that social workers who work with homeless people are in a position to facilitate and promote a counter-discourse that challenges the hegemonic discourse by:

opposing the normalcy of seeing homeless people as some kind of underclass and creating spaces where they are seen as real people having an agency and stake in society (2006:222).

Three service providers from two different organisations, both of which run "drop-in" centres, emphasise they have "no agenda". While it could be argued everyone has an agenda or a goal of some sort, what they mean is they do not expect the people who use their services to change. One person states that their organisation encourages others to not only be non-judgemental towards homeless people but to accept them. This person believes acceptance goes a step further because it means there is less expectation. The team leaders in the mobile canteen whom I did my fieldwork with, constantly reiterated that it is important to separate the people from their behaviour and Cloke et al. (2005) argue that this is part of the "discourse of ethos". The employees and volunteers highlight that it is important to be supportive and non-judgemental. Although the mobile canteen is run by a Christian organisation, one way they showed their support for sex workers was by providing them with condoms. Although their religion does not condone prostitution, the employees of the mobile canteen believed that giving the women condoms was a way of demonstrating care and concern for their health. While they believe prostitution is morally wrong they also believe it is morally wrong to judge someone on their behaviour, emphasising it is the person within who matters. They were not persuading female sex workers to conform to social norms or to internalise their own Christian beliefs by encouraging them to find another occupation but accepted them where they were at. Thus, they were not trying to normalise them. They were also aware that their opinions were in opposition to mainstream perceptions of homelessness as are most of the service providers I spoke with. This indicates that they actively work against the dominant homelessness discourse and actually reflect a counter-discourse that could be considered more accepting and humanitarian.

My research suggests that some service providers oscillate between working with the dominant discourse and working against it while other service providers like the one I did my fieldwork through, seem to predominantly work against it. Nonetheless, all service providers emphasise the humanity of homeless people reflecting their charitable approach to homelessness.

CHAPTER FOUR

Women's Experiences of Homelessness

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Women who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness are central to this thesis and this chapter focuses on five such women who live in Christchurch. I interviewed these women over a seven-month period in order to obtain their stories and as I indicated in the first chapter, I used the life history approach to frame the interviews because of its focus on how people make sense of, and attach meaning to, their own experiences (see Bell, 1988; Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991). A life history usually begins at birth and is comprised of, or is punctuated by, narratives, which are stories about particular events (Morris, 1992:140-151). The life history approach has been widely used by anthropologists and as Morris states, "the life stories of particular people are the hidden foundation on which much traditional ethnography is based" (2002:141). While this approach has been criticised for being under-theorised, under-analysed and under-contextualised, Morris argues that it faces issues common to all ethnography, that is, "how to provide an adequate representation of the lives of the people being studied, and where analysis and theory should sit" (Morris, 2002:142). The ongoing problem of representation is one that is partially resolved by the participants telling their own stories. However, while this approach recognises the subject as the primary author, the role of the researcher in presenting their stories has been questioned. How do researchers go about editing their participants' stories? And is the final version an accurate description or representation of the participants experiences? Morris states:

> a life history is inevitably, through the process of translation and editing, an interpretation – it is not the same thing as the life history interview itself   or the actual life of the subject (2002:144).

As I pointed out in chapter one, the life history approach was particularly useful for my participants because often they did not know where to begin their stories. Starting at birth and narrating events leading to the present gave them a more fluid way of recounting their lives. This approach also made the interview flow more naturally and enabled the women to "warm up" before recounting painful or difficult events in their lives. While the life history approach can never cover all aspects of participants lives, the narratives and statements of the women I interviewed were particularly interrupted, fragmented and "piece-meal". In the case of two of the participants, I had to assemble fragments of narratives from a number of encounters with them. As a result, rather than being integrated life history accounts given by the participants, they are *my* reconstruction of *their* narratives.

As I outlined in chapter one, the interview process was for the most part, long and arduous requiring persistence in my attempts to locate the women, and in arranging and rearranging the interviews because they cancelled appointments or did not turn up. It required an approach that was context sensitive when listening to their stories as well as an awareness of the contribution upbringing had to the choices they made in their life journeys. While an empathetic understanding of their reasons for not being able to make the appointment or not being able to do the interview at all was required, I also needed a firm approach regarding when I had to have the interviews done by and behaviour not permitted during the interview. This included no glue sniffing at the "drop-in" centre and not being so "high" on drugs they were incoherent when sharing their stories.

Timing was vital when inviting the women to take part in my research. I had to rely on my own intuition and the advice of the "drop-in" centre employees to ascertain the "right" circumstances to approach the women. In one case a women was sleeping in her car and was not in a position, both emotionally and physically, to discuss her situation. Relationships with employees and volunteers in the organisation I did my fieldwork through were extremely important because they often pointed out women

they knew had been homeless at some stage or they asked other women if they knew of anyone who would be interested in taking part in this research. Their trust legitimised my role as a researcher and because of that, the women using their services were more open to being approached by me. The women were given pseudonyms to protect their identities and these are their stories.

WOMEN'S NARRATIVES:

Samantha

Samantha, a 33-year-old woman with a glue addiction, is the first female interviewee that I approached through the street outreach mobile canteen. I saw her almost every Sunday throughout my fieldwork and she stood out initially because she had beautiful blue eyes and a fantastic smile. One of the outreach employees who had known her for a while and knew that she had experienced homelessness approached Samantha to tell her about my research. She introduced Samantha and I, and I outlined my research to her. She agreed to take and offered her cell phone number to arrange an interview time. I left numerous messages but she did not return the calls. When I approached her again, she had forgotten about the initial contact and I had to introduce myself and re-explain my research to her. It was hard to find her in a coherent state as she was always huffing[35] on her glue bag. Eventually she made a time and arranged for the interview to take place at the "drop-in" centre. On the day of the interview when I arrived at her house to pick her up, she stated that she could not do the interview as she had arranged to meet her father. After talking with her for a few minutes and trying to arrange another time, she offered to do the interview immediately in her garage, which was actually her flatmate's bedroom. It was difficult conducting the interview because Samantha huffed on her glue bag the entire time. At one stage, I asked her to pull it away from her mouth when she was talking because the Dictaphone was not picking up what she had to say. This is Samantha's story.

Samantha's biological mother was physically abusive so she lived with her father whom she loved dearly and her stepmother whom she did not get on with. When she was 12 years of age, she was placed into a foster home and was moved from one family home to another over the next couple of years. At age 14 she was moved from

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[35] "Huffing" is a term used to describe people inhaling fumes from a glue bag.

Nelson to Christchurch where she was put into Kingsley Girls Home[36]. She started sniffing glue before she went to Kingsley Street Periodic Detention Centre (known as Kingsley) but stopped once she was placed there. At 16 she became too old for Kingsley and with nowhere to go and no money, she began sleeping rough on the streets of Christchurch. Samantha believes that she had no choice in becoming homeless and it was at this point that she started sniffing glue again. She mixed with a group of people, one of whom became her boyfriend, who did "smash and grab" burglaries to get money and food for them.

At 19 years of age and still living on the streets, Samantha became pregnant to her boyfriend. She stopped sniffing, gave birth to her daughter and things began to get better for her. However, in 1992 seven of her friends burnt to death in a house fire. She started sniffing again to deal with her pain and consequently ended up signing over the custody of her daughter to her father. Samantha commented that she has more friends' dead than alive and proceeded to talk about 21 of her friends who had died and the causes of their deaths which ranged from suicide to overdosing on drugs to car accidents. She then said: "Now you know why I sniff". While she admits that she would like to "get off glue" she also said it helps her deal with her pain. This became glaringly obvious when she talked about her friend who was brutally murdered on the street. Samantha became agitated at the mention of his name and began almost growling. She then grabbed her bag and started furiously huffing on it. It took her about 30 seconds to calm down after which she proceeded to talk in graphic detail about how he was murdered.

After her friends died in the fire, she spent two years in and out of different flats and found the transition from the streets to a house very hard. Her flatmates also found it difficult and she was often thrown out for sniffing or being too loud. She eventually found a place with her boyfriend and has managed to retain a roof over her head ever since. She was not with the same boyfriend throughout and her current boyfriend is due to be released from prison two weeks after this interview. Samantha believes that being homeless is more difficult for women because they have nowhere to go unlike men who have night shelters. She believes that women are judged more harshly than

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[36] This was in the 1980's when Kingsley was still a girls home. However, it is now for troubled girls *and* boys.

men for being homeless being called "sluts" even if they do not sleep around. She admits she has had a hard time with abusive partners, an abusive mother and living on the streets but she believes God has been there with her through all of it. Samantha has a strong belief and considers herself a Christian. She spends most of her day going to church and visiting her partner in prison.

Maree

Maree is a 26-year-old female of Maori descent who solicits herself to get money to pay for her morphine and glue addictions. She lived rough on the street for many years until her health got so bad that her doctor encouraged her to move into a house. Maree is well known by the organisation that my fieldwork was conducted through and she was around almost every night throughout the fieldwork.

When I first approached Maree she was very suspicious. Although she weighed less than 45 kilograms, she presented herself as someone that was not to be "messed" with. Maree worked[37] at the "drop-in" centre on the nights that my fieldwork was being carried out and I approached her about doing a tape-recorded interview. We arranged a time for the interview which was to be conducted at the "drop-in" centre during a period when it would not be open for other visitors. When I went to pick her up from her house for the interview, she shuffled to the door looking unwell and apologised that she could not do the interview that day because she was "hanging out"[38]. She had also had an argument with the supervisor of the "drop-in" centre who had suspected that Maree was "high", breaking her agreement that she was not to be on drugs while working at the "drop-in" centre. Maree said she was not "high" and was upset and offended that the supervisor would not believe her. This was my first attempt at an interview with her.

After speaking with the supervisor of the "drop-in" centre and being informed that Maree was due to go into a rehabilitation centre for her drug addiction, we (the supervisor and I) decided the interview could wait until she came out. This was one of

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[37] Theoretically, Maree was a volunteer but she referred to it as "work" even though she was not paid for it.

[38] "Hanging out" is a term that many people with drug addictions use when they have not had any drugs for a while and their body is going through withdrawals which are physically painful.

many attempts to rehabilitate her and it was Maree's last chance because the centre had refused to admit her again if she did not stay there for the full two weeks. Maree managed to stay for three days and then discharged herself, much to the dismay of those supporting her. I arranged another interview time with her and my hopes that the interview would go smoothly were significantly raised when she turned up ten minutes early with a huge chicken sandwich (she did not usually eat very much). She seemed talkative and happy and said her last shot of morphine had been at 11am (it was now 2pm). Maree told me she felt "onto it" which meant she was not too "high" but also not "hanging out". However, within five minutes of beginning the interview she was nodding[39] kneeling with a full cup of hot Milo in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Knowing that she became frightened easily I waited until she "woke up" a few minutes later to continue the interview but she fell asleep again. This process of waking up, asking the question, falling asleep and repeating the question, continued for the next thirty minutes. Finally, when the Milo was almost tipping over the side of the cup and her cigarette burnt down to the butt and nearly burning her fingers, I gently corrected the cup. She got a fright, spilt the Milo and started yelling. When I pointed out to her that there was a need to get the interview done, she responded in a sarcastic manner that she was sorry for wasting my time and went on to say things like, "you just think my life is so shit, don't you Kate!". Maree stormed out and slammed the door. Our relationship became fragile after that and the tape-recorded interview was never completed. However, her narrative emerged out of the numerous conversations about her life over the period of the research. This is her story.

When Maree was two years old her biological mother left her and her twin brother at a party and never came back to get them. Separated from her brother, Maree was placed into Child, Youth and Family (CYF)[40] foster care where she was sent to live with a racist family who changed her name to make it sound European. She was physically and sexually abused from a very early age and when she told her foster

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[39] "Nodding" is a term that the women used to describe a person on intravenous drugs that had dozed off – they were not asleep but not fully awake either.

[40] Prior to 1999, CYF came under the wing of the Social Welfare Department. In 1999, the Children and Young Persons Service combined with the Community Funding Agency to form CYF. When my participants refer to being in CYF care themselves, they would actually have been in Social Welfare care. However, like them, I continue to refer to the organisation as CYF to avoid confusion. CYF is now being merged back into the Ministry of Social Development as it has had a number of criticisms in the ways that it has handled various cases (Welham, 2006:A13).

mother about the abuse, she did not believe her. The abuse continued until she ran away from home and began sleeping on the streets of Christchurch around the age of 10 or 11 years. After she was found on the streets, she was put into Kingsley and was in and out of this institution for the next five years. She said that she felt the safest she had ever felt when she was in the secure unit at Kingsley because no one could get to her there. When she was released from Kingsley into family homes, she did everything she could, such as physically assaulting police officers, to make sure she was sent back to Kingsley. Maree talks about her time at Kingsley and her time on the street fondly. She thought of her street friends as her family because they looked out for her as she was the youngest person living on the street at that time. She began sniffing glue, then moved on to heavier drugs and began working as a sex worker in order to pay for them. She often slept in the cemetery in central Christchurch as she felt safe there because it was a place other people avoided at night.

In her early 20's, Maree entered into a physically abusive relationship with a fellow "streetie" who beat her so badly that she was hospitalised six times. He ended up going to jail three times for the abuse. In order to escape her abusive partner, Maree began a relationship with a homeless man old enough to be her father. They lived on the street together until Maree was forced to move into a house due to her bad health. At one stage, the doctor told her she only had a year to live if she continued living the way she was. She ended up marrying this older man who was not using drugs when they first got together. However, he too became dependent on them and relied on her income to feed his drug habit. During the later part of my fieldwork, Maree found out that her husband was committing bigamy because he was still married to a woman overseas. Maree wanted to separate from him but was carefully choosing her time.

Maree emphasises that she believes in God and that while she does not classify herself as a Christian, she calls herself a "believer". She told me that she has been going to church every Sunday for the past few years and has some good "church friends". Maree considers these people, as well as a couple of the people that are employed by the organisation I did my fieldwork through, as some of the only people that really care about her. She commented that she is not ashamed of anything that has happened in her life as she believes these things have made her the person she is.

Pearl

Pearl is another woman who was extremely hard to locate. Unlike some of the other participants, Pearl does not have a drug addiction and the only drug she uses is marijuana. She is 38 years of age with six children, is of Maori descent and has been married three times. Pearl came to my attention early in my fieldwork as she is a sex worker who often frequents the "drop-in" centre. While Pearl has not rough slept, she has struggled to maintain affordable and secure accommodation. According to Pearl, she has moved about 73 times in the past 15 years and seemed to be in the process of shifting every time I saw her on the street. She was always on the move or looking for another place for her and her children. There was no opportunity to tape-record an interview with Pearl but she had recounted much of her life over the period of the research and this is her story.

Pearl saw her battle with insecure housing begin when her first husband died. He was a member of a gang and she believed that he was murdered by gang members for a reason unbeknown to me. He was the father of her two eldest boys and at that stage they lived in the North Island, and owned a house of their own. After her husband died, she sold the house to move to Christchurch to start a new life for her and her children. Pearl repeatedly emphasised that everything she did was for her children and that she had their best interests at heart. She then married another man and had four children to him. He sexually abused her youngest daughter when she was two, causing her to become incontinent and having to be home-schooled because other children teased her. Pearl was reluctant to take her to the doctor because she believed that her daughter had already been through enough. Pearl empathised with her because she too had been anally raped and knew how awful it was. Pearl said that if her first husband was not already dead and her two eldest children were not emotionally scarred from that, she would have murdered the other one for what he did to her daughter.

Pearl worked as a sex worker to pay for the things her children needed. However, she said that they did not know she was a sex worker because she told them she had a night cleaning job. She recounted the many occasions where landlords had

discriminated against her because she was a single Maori mother with six children. On one occasion, one landlord knew that she was a sex worker and tried to make her give him sexual services in return for cheaper rent.

While Pearl had a very tough exterior, she softened up when talking about her children. She was very proud of her eldest boy who was studying a pre-law course and was doing well academically. Pearl was having problems with the second eldest boy who was 17. She encouraged him to spend time with his rugby coach thinking he would be a great male role model not realising that the coach and his family were dealing and using the drug P[41]. In Pearl's opinion, the coach turned her son against her and he began living with this other family. Her son called her names such as "whore" which indicates that he was aware of her occupation. Pearl believes in God and told me that her mother, who lives in the North Island, is a Christian. Her mother's husband had died about a year earlier and Pearl was concerned about her and about how she was coping. Pearl talked about going to see her at Christmas but did not make it for a reason she did not disclose to me.

Pearl recounted numerous times when things went wrong in her life. She frequently mentioned the time when she took a male boarder in to help with the rent because she thought he would be a good male role model for her children but he turned out to be a "P" addict who threatened to kill her. Again, she said that she had her children's best interests at heart. Pearl dreams of owning her own home again and regrets selling her house which would have been mortgage-free by now. Pearl did not turn up to the final interview appointment because her babysitter let her down.

Mary

Mary, a 25-year-old mother of three, is homeless and living in a caravan park with her youngest son because she has nowhere else to go and no money. When she is desperate for money, she solicits herself.

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[41] P is the abbreviated form of class A drug, Methamphetamine, also known as speed or meth. It is a mood-altering drug that is known to induce psychosis as it keeps the user awake for days on end (Foundation for Drug and Alcohol Education, n.d., http://www.fade.org.nz/alcohol-and-drug-info/methamphetamine/).

I saw Mary on and off during my fieldwork when working on the mobile canteen and occasionally at the "drop-in" centre. She was quiet and kept to herself but was always very polite. One of the people who worked for the organisation I did my fieldwork through found out through talking with her that she was living in a caravan park. He asked her if she would be willing to participate in the research, she readily agreed and I made an appointment with her. I received a text message from her 10 minutes before the interview and expected the worst. However, she had sent the message merely to say that she was running late. She arrived with her three-year-old son 10 minutes later and the interview progressed smoothly. This is Mary's story.

Mary lived with both of her parents until she was 10 when her mother moved to Australia and left her and her sister in the care of their physically abusive alcoholic father. Mary admitted her and her sister into CYF care at the age of 15 because she was tired of the abuse. She was discharged at the age of 16 years. One of the major events in Mary's life that she attributes to her "downward spiral" was when she was attacked after moving out of CYF care. This occurred after she moved into a flat with a male friend. She was at a party where she was hit over the head with a beer bottle and then stabbed in the neck with the broken glass. The attacker, her flatmate's ex-girlfriend, proceeded to burn her under a hot tap in the bath and tried to drown her in the water. When she did not succeed, she began kicking and punching Mary. This resulted in Mary suffering a head injury, a spinal injury and scarring from the wound in her neck. It was very traumatic for Mary and she went into elaborate detail about it.

After the attack, Mary moved to her boyfriend's place to find that he had re-united with his ex-girlfriend. She then moved in with one of her ex-boyfriend's friends in Kaitaia whom I will call Amber. Mary got into a relationship with Amber's son Henry, and Mary, Amber and Henry all moved to Auckland together. Mary and Henry began having problems and then Mary found out that she was pregnant. When she told him that she wanted to leave him he tried to throw her over the balcony railing from the second storey almost causing her to miscarry. Mary was given a protection order against Henry. She continued to live with Amber who she believed had a hold over her. As a result of the head injury, Mary felt less in control of decision making and "more easily led". She followed Amber's orders and Amber ended up taking Mary's son with her when she moved to Christchurch. When Mary found out there

were firearms in Amber's house she applied for custody of her son. However, she did not get custody and he was taken away from Amber and put into CYF care. Mary shifted to Christchurch and moved in with Amber because she felt she had been manipulated and made to feel dependent on her once again.

Mary became pregnant for the second time and gave birth to a daughter. Amber wanted to adopt her daughter but Mary was opposed to this. Mary let some of Amber's friends look after her daughter for a while but they rang CYF and said that she was an unfit mother. Mary's daughter was taken out of her custody. Mary had been working as a sex worker on and off for a few years and said that Amber sent her out to work to bring money home for her. She began soliciting in a backpackers and then moved to solicit on the street. Mary became pregnant for the third time and had a son whom she was determined to bring up herself. She entered into a relationship with a man who physically abused her and sought shelter with Women's Refuge. Mary declared herself bankrupt in 1993 due to her chequebook being stolen and the cheques being dishonoured. Mary then met another man and got a tenancy with him. He stole money from her bank account and did not pay rent which led to her current situation of living in a caravan park.

Mary has been in the caravan park for four weeks and is currently battling to retain custody of her youngest son. She feels negatively judged by other people because she is on a benefit and accesses places like the Salvation Army and City Mission. She finds rent expensive and believes that landlords discriminate against her because she is a solo mother. Mary dreams about owning her own home.

Alyse

Alyse is a 21-year-old whom I recognised from early on in my fieldwork because she worked as a sex worker but I was not officially introduced to her until this interview. Alyse has worked on the street for the last three years and has been intermittently homeless often couch surfing at friends' houses. Not really knowing Alyse I had no expectation as to how the interview would unfold. On my arrival at the "drop-in" centre I found one of her friends waiting outside. She said that Alyse was hiding in the shop next door because she was scared someone was "out to get her". As I

unlocked the centre, Alyse appeared and told me to lock the door behind her. She rang the police and after giving a statement and being informed that they could not do anything as they did not have enough evidence, she sat down and the interview finally began. This is her story.

Alyse's father physically abused her mother because she drank alcohol and smoked marijuana. Consequently, her mother left Alyse with her father when she was two and a half years old. Alyse stayed living with him until she was 13 when she was placed into CYF care because her father got caught physically abusing her. She moved from one family home to the next and saw the move away from her father as one of the major factors that caused her to spend time in Christchurch's central city, which she constantly referred to as "hanging out in town". When she was 14 and staying in a family home she went drinking with one of the other foster children who raped her. This is how she lost her virginity. Alyse began frequenting town more and began drinking and using drugs such as marijuana and "P". She blames her current situation on "hanging out in town". The friend she started frequenting town with was killed in a car accident which Alyse talked about in detail: accident details, funeral details, details of the accident as reported in the media and what she was doing when she found out about the accident. She felt that no one understood what she went through.

Alyse began living on the street when she ran away from CYF homes and often slept in abandoned buildings. The longest period she spent away from a family home was a couple of months during which time she got money for food by begging. She would often move from one friend's house to another sleeping on their couches. Alyse also stayed with friends in a motel but that became too expensive. At this time, she considered herself homeless. The process of running away, being taken back to the family home and running away again, continued until she was released from CYF care at the age of 17 when she moved into a flat with a friend. Alyse was introduced to the Manchester Street "red light" area when she was 18. Initially she started working in a massage parlour and then moved out onto the street to make more money. Trouble began when some gang-affiliated people began stealing the money she made and then forced her to continue soliciting while they took her earnings. These were the people she feared were "out to get her" at the time of the interview.

Alyse has a lot of anger towards CYF and blames them for taking children away from "good" parents. Even though her father was abusive, she said she would have preferred to live with him than in the family homes. She does not get along with her father or the woman he remarried and does not have a relationship with her mother who lives in Dunedin. While Alyse had a hard childhood, she said that she is looking forward to having children of her own. She told me that she got pregnant when she was 19 but she miscarried. Alyse now lives with an older friend who, she believes, has put her on the right path. She believes that this home is the first real home she has ever had. As the New Year approaches, Alyse hopes for a completely new life. She is tired of her reputation as a sex worker and says that she would love to pursue her dream job of being a nanny but believes that studying is too expensive.

Synopsis of the Narratives

While each woman has a story that is unique and individual to her, their narratives also have many similarities. Severance of biological family ties, experiences of foster care and motherhood, difficult relationships with men, loss of loved ones and experiences of homelessness are all issues the women have in common.

Their narratives begin at birth, early childhood or where they see their paths into homelessness beginning. They are often punctuated by trauma of some sort, particularly their mother leaving them at a young age. None of the women seem to know both biological parents at a deep personal level and few are in regular contact with either parent. The lack of familial ties has left them struggling with feelings of abandonment and worthlessness.

Four of the five women were placed into foster care or youth detention centres at some stage in their lives and most of them, excluding Mary, despised being there. They frequently talked about hating CYF because of their childhood experiences in family homes. Many of them believe that CYF takes children away from good parents. Two of the three women who are mothers despise CYF for the experiences their children have had in CYF care and the ways that they (the women) have been treated by CYF as mothers.

The women's narratives show similarities in their relationships with men. The main points concern abuse, addiction and volatile behaviour. Almost all of the women's relationships with their partners seem to be characterised by abuse. However, they continue to attract, and be attracted to, the same kinds of men. Their relationships are not long lasting and they often entail financial and/or emotional loss of some sort. Many of the women seem to be deeply affected by the deaths of family members which is evident in their inability to cope in difficult situations and their lack of support networks to help them cope during those times.

While all of the women have experienced homelessness, they experienced it in a number of different ways that include rough sleeping, couch surfing, staying in a caravan park, living in substandard housing and having a history of insecure accommodation. Maree is the only woman preferring to live on the street because she feels safer there as she is not restricted by four walls and can run away if someone is after her. This stems from the abuse she sustained at home. The women's narratives indicate that they have no home or that they have difficulties in sustaining a home but that they need to feel protected, secure and supported. While they (largely) express homelessness in a physical way emphasising the lack of affordable and secure housing, their narratives indicate that (for them) homelessness and home also involve Somerville's "signifiers" that include security, support and stability. The women's attitudes towards their homelessness range from blaming themselves to blaming others for their situation or feeling as though they had no other choice.

Repetitive Cycle: The Generational Pattern

The women's' narratives highlight the importance of socialisation and the role of parents as teachers of social values. Their narratives emphasise the significant impact their parents had on their lives. This has influenced the way they raise their own children or the way they plan to raise future children. The women's narratives highlight the dysfunctional nature of their biological and/or foster families which is evident in CYF intervention. The women seem to be ambivalent towards CYF. Although they know CYF intervened to take them out of a dangerous situation, some of the women felt that leaving them with their biological parents would have been a better option. It seems that some of the foster families chosen by CYF were at least as,

if not more, detrimental to the women's wellbeing than their biological families. Alyse believes that she would have a relationship with him now had she not been taken out of his care and would have preferred to stay in his custody even though he was physically abusive. This ambivalence is also obvious in the women's interactions with Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) who they all rely on for a benefit but despise dealing with. During my fieldwork, the women often expressed frustration about dealing with their case managers at WINZ who they usually believed were doing a poor job of getting them the right amount of money to pay for things like bond. Their ambivalent attitude to Government agencies reflects the institutional background in which the women were brought up in and the one that frames their present circumstances. This is evident with not only CYF and WINZ but also with other institutions such as the Courts and Police as the women all seem to be constantly fighting the "system".

The institutional framework, so depended upon to provide the resources they cannot provide for themselves, reflects the difficulties they have faced throughout their lives. By abandoning them and abusing them their parents failed to socialise them in socially acceptable ways. They did not teach them about trust, loyalty and responsibility but taught them how to hurt their children. In some cases, the women's parents continue to hurt them and work against them even in their adult lives. Debbie, a sex worker who has an addiction to morphine, is someone whom I frequently talked with during my fieldwork. She told me that her mother does not care whether she dies and that would she actually prefer her dead. Debbie's mother invited her to her house where she had drugs waiting. Her mother told her to overdose on them because no-one wanted her around. Debbie did overdose and when her brother was resuscitating her on the floor of her mother's house, her mother told her brother not to bother because she was not worth it. Debbie's story really brought home to me the obstacles that these women have been, and still are, up against, particularly in relation to their lack of familial support highlighting the many factors of their lives that essentially work against them.

Although their parents essentially failed them as did CYF who often did not place them in safe care, the women expressed the desire to raise their children differently to how they were raised themselves. While they emphasised that they had their

children's best interests at heart, at times it appears as though they did not fight for them and were somewhat resigned to having them taken out of their care. This is what happened to them as children so it is a familiar cycle. Mary is the only woman who admits she made a number of bad decisions throughout her life, which she attributed to her head injury. Pearl also exhibited similar patterns of decision making through her narrative. She tried to socialise her children in socially acceptable ways by teaching family values but did not know how to go about it and put her and her children's lives at risk. Although both mothers were aware of their children's needs, they seemed to continue making decisions that hurt them. This was also evident in my conversation with a woman who refused to have any contact with her sons because of her experiences with men; she believed that her boys would turn out like all of the other men in her life so she did not want to have anything to do with them. In this sense, she was letting her experiences affect her relationship with her children, perpetuating the cycle.

Maree and Alyse state that their current environment is not a suitable one for raising children and they want to wait until they have "got themselves sorted out" before having them. Likewise, Debbie commented that she will not have any more children because she does not want to bring them up in the environment that her daughter was brought up in. The women seem to oscillate between feelings of shame for not providing for their children as well as they think they should and feeling proud of what they achieved against so many odds. They were also aware they were not as financially secure as other members of society. This is obvious with Mary who used to get cream buns and pies from the "drop-in" centre for her young son to take to kindergarten. One day, one of the teachers said to her "don't you know that your son likes fruit?". This upset Mary because she was aware that fruit is nutritionally better for her son and she knows that he loves bananas. However, they are too expensive and she did not want to tell the teacher that she could not afford to buy them.

This pattern is evident in all of the women's narratives as they talk about their relationships with men, aside from Alyse who does not discuss her relationships with males. While the other four women admit to having had volatile relationships they seem to continue to choose the same type of partner, resulting in the abuse of both women and children. This is evident in Pearl's narrative, which indicates her children

are emotionally and physically scarred from some of the decisions that she made when she thought she was doing the right thing for them. Mary also commented that her youngest son has behavioural problems and learning disabilities but I was not clear about how they were caused.

The women's narratives indicate that they have a pattern of choosing men who behave in similar ways to their fathers; men who are violent, have an addiction and are untrustworthy and irresponsible. The decisions they have made and continue to make, indicate that their childhood had a significant impact on their lives and it is now having a significant impact on their children's lives as the pattern travels through the generations. Their narratives highlight the role that parents have in shaping their children's worldviews as well as the role of the state to prepare children in their care for a life they can lead on their own. The generational cycle highlights a pattern of disconnectedness with others and a lack of meaningful support networks.

Social Networks: Unsupported and Disconnected

The women's lack of strong social relationships is evident with not only their biological and/or foster family who they do not really know or relate to but also with other people in society. While they interact with many people on a daily basis, they do not seem to have many relationships that are built on trust. Instead, many of their relationships seem to revolve around what they can get off the other person, such as drugs or cigarettes. One of the reasons they were so difficult to interview is because they could not see anything tangible in this research for themselves. While this could be construed as selfish, it reflects the "survival of the fittest" attitude they need in order to live. While this kind of attitude works in their favour on the street where they need to be tough, resilient and confrontational, it can work against them when they try to forge relationships outside of that space. This is evident in their various arguments with service providers where they came across as demanding and selfish. As a result, their attitude enables them to survive on the street but it also keeps them on the street because many of them have lost the ability or have never learned to forge and maintain relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

Their narratives indicate that many of the networks they have with one another are fragile. They can be friends with someone one day and then hate them the next. One night I witnessed a verbal confrontation between Samantha and Maree that confirmed this. I am still not sure what triggered the argument, which was close to getting physical, or at least that is how it appeared to the other volunteers and I. They were personally attacking one another and I heard Samantha yell at Maree that no wonder her mother left her when she was young. However, the next week they were "friends" again. This illustrates the fragile nature of their networks.

There also seems to be a hierarchy on the street where some women are more dominant while others are more submissive. Although Maree does not weigh very much she is left alone and people seem to be wary of her. She knows and is known by a large number of people and has "street credibility" as she has been frequenting the streets since she was very young. Other women who are not as verbal as Maree and Samantha or as physically threatening as Debbie and Pearl seem to be targets for theft and general vilification. Mary and Alyse seem to have a tougher time on the street because they do not have as much "presence" as many of the other women.

The women's difficulty to forge meaningful and enduring friendships means their interaction with others is largely limited to those within their "street network". This means they do not have the opportunity to get to know people outside of their "street circle" and end up with a limited pool of people with whom they can socialise. Those they do seem to socialise with are in competition with one another, particularly those working as sex workers because they are in similar situations to themselves. This limits the possibilities of friendship, something that became evident to me when talking to a homeless woman who had left her brother's place because she was sick of getting up in the morning and seeing syringes lying everywhere. She then moved in with a friend only to find that she was also using drugs and, having only recently been "clean" from drugs herself, this woman became homeless because she did not want to live with others who were "using" (drugs). Her story demonstrates the limited circle of people that she had to interact with.

My participants who worked as sex workers indicated that their networks with their clients are important. Many of them seem to have "regulars" or clients that have been

paying for their services for a long time. For example, Maree has seen one client for 12 years. While they appear to be commercial relationships, some of them are stronger than that. Maree talked very openly about her experiences. She considered going to stay with one client when she was homeless and went out for dinner with one client and his parents. She considers some of her clients to be "very nice men". However, this does not stop her from carrying a knife on all of her "jobs"[42]. Maree told me that she uses her intuition when accepting or rejecting a "job" which has kept her safe a number of times but has also failed her at times, such as being raped by a client she thought she was safe with. The women's relationships with their clients are based on a degree of reciprocity as they rely on the men for an income while the men rely on the women to provide their services. There is some ambiguity though because while the women trust many of their clients to a degree, they also seem to have a general distrust of not only their clients but people in general. Through the women's narratives and my observations, it is apparent they that they are aware of the need for trust, responsibility and respect. However, it is difficult for them to both implement and maintain these aspects of friendship when their relationships with others are primarily self-centred.

Many of the women encountered in my fieldwork told me that the people who work for the organisation I did my fieldwork through, are some of the few people that have shown genuine care for them. The women frequently said they do not know what they would do without their support, which they expressed, was more than just material but also emotional, and at times spiritual. Interestingly, many of the women such as Pearl seemed to respond better to service providers when service providers had clear boundaries about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. While Pearl sulked after being reprimanded for her behaviour, she eventually came round. At one stage she told one of the employees that she needed a male role model like him for her son, clearly revealing the respect she had for him. Maree knew the employees and volunteers cared about her because they have been there for her consistently over a number of years. She is reliant on them to show her love and support as well as setting boundaries for her. Her relationships with some of the employees and volunteers of the "drop-in" centre and the mobile canteen are similar to a child's relationship with

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[42] "Job" is a term used by the women to refer to the work they are paid by their clients to do.

their parent. This type of relationship, which centres on support and guidance, is one that Maree did not have with her biological or foster parents.

The support the women receive from service providers is something they do not seem receive from CYF. Instead, they indicate that they feel monitored by CYF to ensure they are raising their children properly. This seems to result in many of the women feeling as though they are fighting to retain custody of their children. During my fieldwork I heard many stories of women losing custody of their children but one in particular relates to Lilly who lost custody of her children when she had a breakdown. She signed the custody of her children to CYF for a month because she could not cope. However, at the end of the month CYF would not resign custody back to her. I was not clear about how long the children had been in CYF custody but by the way Lilly talked they appeared to have been out of her care for a number of years. At the time of our conversation, Lilly had reapplied for custody of her children and CYF said that she had to prove she was drug-free stipulating she participate in a rehabilitation programme. Lilly was given until December to do this (it was September when we were talking) or she would never regain custody of her children. Because she was not currently using drugs the programme would not accept her. Lilly felt angry, upset and unsupported by CYF. She considered herself a "good mother" with her children's best interests at heart when she signed them over to CYF. Now she regrets doing that and believes CYF are only there to take children away from their mothers. Lilly felt betrayed by the "system".

The women's narratives highlight a particular worldview that has been profoundly influenced by the ways they have been socialised. Their understanding of their own experiences suggests that lack of support and guidance has had a significant impact on their lives. While many of the women express their homelessness explicitly in a physical way, their narratives indicate homelessness is not only about lack of housing but also encompasses a sense of isolation, loss and disconnectedness from wider society. The desire of two women to own their own home and their desire for a "proper" family seem to be symbolic of their need for support, trust and stability. Their narratives highlight that homelessness is the result of a number of complex factors, and in the case of my female participants, is characterised by lack of family and supportive social networks.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Social Exclusion of Homeless Women

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The positions, representations and understandings of the media and service providers as well as the experiences of the women, raise a number of theoretical issues relating to the social exclusion of homeless women. I will begin by discussing the dominant homelessness discourse which highlights various social norms that are evident in modern New Zealand society. Because of the "failure" of homeless women to fit into these norms, they are classified as the "other" with the perception that they lack self-control and are unable to forge and maintain strong social networks. I will show that once they are positioned as "abnormal" it is difficult for them to transcend their circumstances. Using the theories of Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault, Nikolas Rose and Robert Putnam, I will explore how homeless women are excluded from wider society and why they find it so difficult to become reintegrated, often remaining on the periphery.

Normative Discourses: Abnormalising Homelessness

The findings from the last three chapters indicate there is a dominant or mainstream discourse surrounding discussions about homelessness, which involve the dichotomy between a "normal" category and an "abnormal" one. As I have already pointed out, the mainstream homelessness discourse has continuities with the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor that were particularly apparent in discourses on charity in the late

18th and early 19th centuries, particularly in Europe (Schrader and Birkinshaw, 2005:26). These attitudes are evident not only in how homelessness is talked about but also in the treatment of homeless people. In this sense, discourse is not only about modes of speech but it also affects how people react to, and treat, individuals and groups. Foucault's understanding of discourse is useful for identifying the different positions or representations of the various groups and uncovering their understandings of homelessness, as well as identifying various social norms.

Foucault believes that discourse is constitutive of practices and modes of knowledge so that everything one knows is a product of the discourse in which one is ingrained. This means that, according to Foucault, discourse is difficult if not impossible to escape from. As a result, a Foucauldian understanding would be that homeless people, who are the object of discourse, have difficulties transcending their circumstances because they are somewhat trapped or limited by discourse. They are constrained by the dominant discourse because wider society is informed by this discourse and applies it to homeless people. The restrictive understanding of discourse which prevailed for a time in Foucault's writing (see McNay, 1994:69-74) would make it difficult to imagine that one might think or work outside the currently dominant or hegemonic discourse. However, my findings show that service providers do challenge the dominant discourse and that homeless people themselves may not have fully lost the potential to transcend their situation, at least imaginatively. This is why, in the context of the current research, discourse needs to be understood in a more flexible way than Foucault uses it. By seeing discourse in a less constraining way and reckoning with the possibilities of alternative discourses, I attempt to keep in view homeless women's potential for agency and autonomy.

The dominant homelessness discourse highlights social norms that I mentioned in chapter two, particularly the way society constructs "home". The dominant discourse seems to idealise or romanticise home as a place of safety, warmth and love[43] which suggests certain normative assumptions society holds about home. This includes the notion that home is based around "bricks and mortar" or the physical structure and that it centres around the family which is often portrayed as being founded on love

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[43] This includes Somerville's "signifiers of home" (1992:532-533).

and marriage. Central to this is the concept of the "nuclear" family that reflects the expectation or presumption that a man and a woman will marry because they love one another. It involves the premise that people's lives will evolve in a sequential order and that people will take up particular familial roles. Within this understanding, families are regarded as the nucleus of society on whose foundation and reproduction the stability of society and the state depend. This type of assumption has the danger of abnormalising and "othering" people who are deemed to be outside of these norms. This has ramifications for homeless women when they are perceived as being outside of their traditional role as the nurturing mother who is the centre of the home. In this sense, homeless women could be perceived as more deviant than homeless men.

While one can convincingly argue that this ideal type corresponds less and less to New Zealand social reality or that of many contemporary Western societies (Baker, 2001:6-7), the women's narratives indicate that they are enmeshed in normative discourses about home and family and that their narratives are informed by these norms. They (largely) disagree with how they are treated by wider society but some of them also try to modify their behaviour so that they are seen to fit in. In this sense, they (unconsciously) internalise social norms showed by mainstream society. Those who are seen to challenge them or go against them are often ostracised and as Golden states: "the social norms…are so taken for granted that for most people violating them is unthinkable, and those who do are perceived as bizarre and frightening"(Golden, 1992:216). In a Foucauldian sense, certain rules and behaviours are the result of discourse which dictates what is normal and abnormal or acceptable and unacceptable (Hall, 2001:72). Thus, the dominant homelessness discourse reflects beliefs about home that appear to be "natural" and include not only ways of speaking about home but practices associated with home, such as raising a family. This means that certain practices, such as a two-parent family are normalised while others, such as domestic violence are abnormalised. The dominant discourse is so strong that once someone has been positioned as abnormal, it is difficult for him or her to regain his or her normality, if they were ever considered "normal". In this sense, they are not just superficial ideologies but they exhibit deeply ingrained social norms which guide discourse and social life in New Zealand.

While these social norms seem to go largely unquestioned by mainstream society, service providers challenge them with their humanitarian approach, which could be considered a counter-discourse. As I pointed out in chapter three, while service providers work with the dominant discourse at times, they also work against it through their non-judgemental treatment of homeless people and their acceptance of homeless people as fellow human beings. In this sense, they do not necessarily try to normalise homeless people or integrate them into mainstream society by encouraging them to internalise social norms. The differences between the "normal" and the "abnormal" positions that are evident in the dominant homelessness discourse, and the struggle between the mainstream discourse and the counter-discourse, reflect the polarised ways in which homelessness is portrayed.

The "Others": Classification and Dichotomisation

As this research shows, homeless people are often positioned as the "other"; as abnormal, deviant and as outsiders, being compared and contrasted with those who fit the norm. This is evident in the ways that my participants have been discriminated against in relation to their gender, their appearance, their income or lack of income, the number of children they have and their marital status. Homeless people are ostracised because they are perceived as dirty and disorderly even if some of them are not. While the media perpetuate this classification, service providers point out that not all homeless people look the same or behave in the same ways. They indicate that some homeless people create order and structure in a world that often appears to be disordered and unstructured. This is evident with Debbie, a woman I mentioned briefly in the last chapter, who makes sure she is home everyday after school to help her daughter with her homework. Although she is extremely difficult to locate at times[44], she is proud that she makes this time of her day available for her daughter.

The labelling of homeless people as "deviant" has continuities with Foucault's theory of the "madman". Michel Foucault believes that during the Middle Ages it was the "leper" and not the "madman" who represented "the greatest threat to the social order" (McNay, 1994:18). However, during the Renaissance the "leper" was replaced with the "madman" and the "vagabond" who symbolised disruption to the social

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[44] I tried to contact Debbie a number of times to arrange an interview but I eventually gave up because she was so difficult to locate.

order[45] (Foucault, 1967:7). The fact that they engendered fear as well as fascination meant that they were neither entirely included nor fully excluded from society. Thus, they occupied a "liminal" position (Foucault, 1967:11). While those who were seen to deviate from the social norm had been previously banished to another place, this period symbolised a change in the ways that the "mad" and "deviant" were treated (McNay, 1994:10-20). They were confined and incarcerated if they were seen as failing to comply with, or assimilate into, the moral order of society (ibid). Foucault argues that madness has an ambiguous function (1967:36) because the mad were not only positioned as lazy, disorderly, immoral, unnatural and "the other" but members of society were classified as either sane or mad, included or excluded, responsible or irresponsible, orderly or disorderly, and moral or immoral, similarly to how homeless people are portrayed in modern society. This reflects society's tendency to distinguish between those who are seen as part of a population that can be managed or governed and those who fall outside this category.

Like Foucault, Mary Douglas is interested in dichotomies and she would refer to the two different positions within the dominant discourse as being binary opposites of one another, illustrating the classificatory systems evident in modern society. Foucault uses the madman as a symbol of abnormality and Douglas uses dirt. While Foucault's "madman" relates to a particular historical period, Douglas' theory is more general and does not apply to one specific point in history. Nonetheless, they can both be used to explain the dichotomies evident in contemporary society. Douglas argues that dirt is a symbolic category and is an analogy for anomalies in society or people who are outside social norms or in opposition to the norms. My findings show that homeless women and homeless people in general are often understood in this way. Douglas comments that "[t]here is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder" (Douglas, 1984:2). By this, she means that people, animals and objects deemed dirty are not dirty in themselves but the dominant group in society construct them as dirty as a way of classifying them. Dirt for Douglas is "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1984:35). This highlights the discrimination experienced by homeless people because they live outside what is socially normal; they do not have a home in

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[45] Although Foucault has been criticised by Midelfort for his historical method in his theory on madness (see McNay, 1994:24-26), his theory is still useful to explain "certain tendencies in the modern treatment of madness" (McNay, 1994:26).

the "bricks and mortar" sense or in the socio-cultural sense that society seems to understand "home". Dirt is constructed as synonymous with impurity, disorder, non-being, formlessness, abnormality and death while cleanliness is constructed as synonymous with purity, order, being, form, normality and life. The disordered are largely excluded while the ordered are included. This has direct correlations with homeless people who are "othered" and "abnormalised", opposite to non-homeless people who are "familiarised" and "normalised".

Douglas points out that those who do not fit into the dominant classifications in society can be dealt with in a number of ways which include being redefined or reclassified, being eliminated, being avoided, being stigmatised and labelled as dangerous or being elevated through ritual (Bowie, 2000:50-51). Foucault also indicates that "abnormal" people are often excluded from society. Their theories are useful for not only exploring how homeless people are classified in dichotomous ways but also for making sense of their exclusion and how it is socially acceptable to exclude people. Their emphasis on classificatory systems indicates that mainstream society need to have others to compare themselves to and to distinguish themselves from. Therefore, it is not enough just to say that homeless people are pushed to the side because they do not measure up. Instead, it looks as if they are required to be there because majority society needs to have people such as homeless people who are deemed "insane" and "abnormal" so that other people can be positioned as "sane" and "normal".

Social Control: The Failure to Self-Govern

Homeless people are often perceived as failing[46] to be "normal" and failing to fit into normalised discourses. While it seems the newspapers predominantly blame them for this, service providers and the documentary films are less inclined to hold homeless people directly responsible for their situation. They believe that they are largely failed by others rather than failing themselves. This is evident through a number of factors[47] such as not having a job, not having any money, not having a home in the physical

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[46] It is important to note that homeless people may not view themselves as "failures" or see their lack of self-governance as a "failing" but this seems to be the dominant understanding of mainstream society.

[47] It is important to note that these factors are not true for all homeless people. For example, Simon, a rough sleeper, used to be employed by a company who paid him a large salary. As such, he did not become homeless because he had no money.

sense, not having a close kinship and friendship network, not having an education, not having a partner, not providing adequately for their children and not receiving adequate support from society or the state. These contributing factors indicate that they do not organise and direct their lives in socially expected ways. This raises various questions relating to issues of control. Foucault's notion of "governmentality" enables us to explore why homeless people are perceived as "unmanaged" or "uncontrolled".

Governmentality stems from the problem of who is to be governed, how people are to be governed, why they are to be governed and where they are to be governed (Foucault, 1991:87). Forms of governance have always existed but a new modality emerged in the 16th century when "the problem of government finally came to be thought, reflected and calculated outside of the juridical framework of sovereignty" (Foucault, 1991:99). A new type of society that focused on individual responsibility emerged. This meant that control over the population occurred not just at the external level of the state but also at the internal level of the individual, highlighting individual responsibility and the idea of self-governance. Modes of both state governance and individual governance have relevance for this research.

While the concept of governmentality originated with Foucault, he does not discuss it in a comprehensive way (see Foucault, 1991), unlike Nikolas Rose who developed the concept in some ways that are applicable to this research. Rose refers to self-government as "the government of subjectivity" (1990:10-11). He is interested in the ways individuals monitor their own behaviour, believing that it involves power that "act[s] at a distance" (Rose, 1990:10). In this sense, it is not just a concept but is also a process and a practice as it works through people in various ways. Like Foucault, Rose recognises that modern forms of governmentality emphasise the individual, highlighting individual responsibility and the moulding of individual conduct. He argues that governmentality involves control strategies that seek to either include people or exclude them (Rose, 2000). What is interesting for this research is how individuals control themselves or how they fail to control themselves. Self-governance requires the knowledge of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and altering it accordingly (Rose, 1990:10). While Rose (2000) focuses predominantly on how individuals control their own conduct, he does not really

address how they fail to do that. It appears that he believes everyone is controlled in some way and that no one is outside the mechanisms of control and self-control. Nonetheless, his emphasis on self-management is still useful for exploring the ways that homeless women fail to govern themselves or are regarded as not governing themselves adequately or appropriately.

My research indicates that homeless women are seen as unable or unwilling to live according to social norms as they behave in "abnormal" ways. Their "failure" to normalise their behaviour results in their exclusion, discrimination and classification by other members of society. It also seems to make them prone to being externally controlled which is evident in the ways that they are managed and surveyed by various institutions such as CYF. Rose is interested in "networks of surveillance" where people's identities are governed by control practices that do not necessarily involve the direct influence of the state (2000:326). He indicates that these are mostly invisible and as a result, people are largely unaware they are being surveyed. However, I argue that this is only true where people succeed in governing themselves. When they fail to do so, the "networks of surveillance" become more visible and they become very aware of the surveillance. The struggle to control or govern homeless people is impeded because of the difficulties in enumerating them. As my research shows, it is difficult to gather data on homeless people which Statistics New Zealand experience when they undertake the Census[48]. While they attempt to enumerate homeless people, they only really end up counting those who use various services for the homeless or those homeless who are visible. Accurate quantification of homelessness is not only difficult but also impossible because homeless people are often hard to find and many of them do not want to be found. Rose argues the Census is a form of social control because the population is required to give personal information about themselves (Rose, 2000). My research suggests that homeless people are largely outside of this control.

The use of public space is a recurring theme because homeless people live in places that other people do not. As a result, they are often presented as using these places in

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[48] The Census is designed to enumerate every person and dwelling in New Zealand. It is carried out ever five years on a particular date and all those in New Zealand on that date are required to give information about themselves for statistical purposes.

inappropriate and disorderly ways. These places are often monitored, controlled and surveyed to make sure that the "right" people use them in the "right" ways. Overt or direct surveillance is evident in the people who survey these areas, such as police officers and security guards, as well as the more covert or indirect surveillance that is evident through the video cameras used to monitor certain places. Because homeless people, particularly rough sleepers, are often in public view and appear to be uncontrolled, they seem to be more open to overt forms of surveillance. However, many of them also go undetected and seem to (largely) avoid the surveillance. Take the example of Simon who regularly sleeps in the public gardens under a large tree where he is hidden from the security guards that survey the area. In this sense, control is attempted but is not always effective. Essentially, rough sleepers could "slip off the radar", particularly if they do not receive a benefit from WINZ and lead a largely anonymous life where, for the most part, they do not have to answer to anyone. This suggests that homeless people who are rough sleeping can be subject to less surveillance than those homeless people who are not rough sleepers. It could also be argued that the surveillance is not fully effective highlighting the limitations of the control strategies.

The susceptibility of non-rough sleeping homeless to overt forms of state control is evident in the ways that my female participant's lives seem to be bound up within an institutional framework. Institutions such as CYF, WINZ, the justice system and police seem to have a huge influence and impact on their lives. Essentially, these institutions seek to control the uncontrolled, manage the unmanaged and govern the ungoverned. Because homelessness indicates that homeless people have failed to govern themselves, these institutions try to govern them through various means of surveillance. This includes putting them into "reform" schools, overseeing the upbringing of their children, taking their children out of their care, enrolling them in rehabilitation programmes and stopping them on the street to ask them what they are doing. These are just some of the many ways that homeless people are monitored and subjected to state control. During my fieldwork, Maree indicated that many of the police officers knew her by name and stopped her only to ask what she was doing. She felt harassed by them. Some of the other women also indicated that they felt singled out by police and that police were not as respectful of them as they appeared

to be of others. This suggests that once known to these agencies, it is difficult for the women to become un-surveyed and un-monitored.

These institutions try to help homeless women regain their self-governance or self-control in the effort to reintegrate them back into society. This seems to involve meeting various requirements. In order to regain custody of their children the women have to regulate or govern their own "subjectivity" as Rose refers to it, so they endeavour to conform by behaving in appropriate and acceptable ways. State intervention and the implementation of rules and regulations surrounding parenting, the family and the home, "assist" them to change their behaviour. This is evident with Pearl. After I finished my fieldwork, CYF took Pearl's children out of her care because they had been truant too often. CYF told Pearl that she could regain custody of them if she took part in a parenting course. Essentially, CYF endeavoured to mould Pearl as a "good parent" in the hope of reintegrating her back into "normal" society. Pearl resisted this because she thought she was already a good mother and did not need someone to show her how to look after her children.

According to Rose, this idea of "good parenting" producing "good children" is one way the state tries to create the "right" kind of citizen. Beginning at childhood through to the age of 18 the legally recognised age of adulthood[49], citizens are "trained" to know right from wrong (Rose, 1990:122). Three of my five female participants were identified by the state, when they were younger, as children who did not know how to behave appropriately so they were put into "schools" for delinquent children/teenagers. Essentially, these were places for "bad" children or those who did not act in socially acceptable ways. While they were forced to behave in particular ways within the institutions, they could not be forced to become self-responsible or self-governing. This made the transition from a place of direct control (Kingsley) to one of indirect control (the street) difficult. Further perpetuating this was the gap in their release from CYF care and their legal recognition as adults making them ineligible for most state benefits.

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[49] Teenagers are legally recognised as adults when they turn 18. They are then considered legal to vote, get married and consume alcohol without a guardian.

While my research suggests that the women are often encouraged to become self-governing or to regain their self-governance through outside intervention (by institutions or service providers), it also indicates that some of them are aware of the need to self-govern to retain custody of their children for example. Their attempts to self-monitor are evident when those with children carefully selected what they thought were the "right" kinds of houses for their family. However, the women's narratives show that they often made decisions that hurt them and their children even when they thought they were making the right choices. This is particularly evident with Pearl who was conscious of the need for self-governance because she was aware that her children could be taken away from her if she did not look after them in socially acceptable ways. However, Pearl continuously failed because of decisions that backfired on her. This indicates that she did not know how to go about self-governing even though she made various attempts. It also suggests that she did not learn how to self-govern from her parents.

While all homeless people are perceived as uncontrolled, one could also argue that they are required to be this way by mainstream society because they demonstrate what happens when people fail to self-govern; other people will step in and govern their lives for them. It appears that the emphasis placed on self-governance which includes individual choice and responsibility, stems from the demand for social control. That is, the need for everyone to look and behave in ways that are socially acceptable through conformity to social norms. Modes of social control occur at both the internal level of the individual and the external level of the state, and governmentality highlights the contestation surrounding control. Homeless women's "failure" to fit into social norms means that they are either prone to increased levels of state control which seem to step in when something happens, or to decreased levels of control as many of them seem to be largely anonymous. In this sense, they are either strictly controlled or they are largely outside control mechanisms. This highlights the fragmentary nature of control. Even though they may attempt to govern themselves, they often end up failing to do so because they do not know how to go about it. This can be partially attributed to their lack of connectedness with others.

"Street Networks": Weak Social Capital

Homeless women are consistently portrayed as disconnected from, and having few social networks with, mainstream society. Their social networks seem to revolve around those who are in similar situations to themselves and are largely based on what they can get from other people. While this could be construed as "selfish", as I discussed in chapter four, it relates to the "survival of the fittest" mentality that many of them seem to have had from a young age. This could be attributed to the family breakdowns that are evident with my female participants. As my research shows, they often had no relationship with their biological family, particularly their mothers which had a significant impact on their lives. This illustrates their "failure" to fit into normative categories, such as the concept of the "nuclear" family that I have already mentioned. The women's parents failed to socialise them in socially acceptable ways and the women then failed to socialise their own children in socially acceptable ways. They end up repeating the cycle which suggests a lack of parental and familial guidance as well as a lack of assistance from society. This hints at a failure especially on the part of the mother to provide this[50] as mothers seem to be held primarily responsible for fostering the "signifiers" associated with the emotional attachment to home as identified by Somerville (1992:532-533). The women's lack of connection with their families is symbolic of their general disconnection from wider society, indicating that they do not participate as fully as other members do. "Social capital" is a concept that can help us explore this lack of connectedness.

"Social capital", a concept initially coined by Hanifan in 1916, has been employed by many theorists (see Baron, Field and Schuller, 2000; Field, 2003; Halpern, 2005) over the late 20th and early 21st centuries to explain social participation. However, it is the approach of Putnam that has significantly contributed to scholarly debates and generated new ones regarding the level of connectedness in modern societies. He defines social capital as the "features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (1995:665). Putnam links social capital to social relationships and participation in

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[50] The family has been linked to the home, which was promoted as a site of moral order, and the breakdown of families and the home was frequently linked to disorder and chaos, for which women were held responsible (Tennant, 1989).

society or to what he calls "civic engagement". He believes that there has been a significant decline in civic engagement in America through many factors such as time pressures and the increased mobility of individuals (Putnam, 1995). Putnam points out that social capital comes in many forms: ties to family and friends, education, leisure activities, political parties, and civic associations (1995, 2002). He argues that citizen engagement in these areas influences the performance of government and other social institutions. While Grootaert views Putnam's understanding of social capital as somewhat narrow (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001:10), the concept of social capital is useful for exploring the social ties that homeless people seem to lack and their "failure" to participate fully in society.

Putnam (2002) acknowledges social capital is difficult to quantify and as a result, he is more concerned with the *quality* of social capital. He believes it is not that some people have more social capital than others but that some people have stronger social capital[51]. Putnam points out four forms of social capital that can be distinguished from one another, acknowledging that while the four categories are not exclusive, they provide a way in which social capital can be evaluated. They include: "formal versus informal" which relates to the organisation and formalisation of relationships; "thick versus thin" which relates to the strength of social ties; "inward-looking versus outward-looking" which relates to the promotion of self as opposed to the promotion of public benefits; and lastly, "bridging versus bonding" which relates to dissimilar people coming together as opposed to similar people coming together (Putnam, 2002:9-11). My findings suggest that homeless women seem to have informal, thin and inward-looking social capital. Their social networks seem to be primarily based around associates rather than strong meaningful friendships and while there are many homeless people who do have good friends, their overall social network seems to be comprised of many people that they do not know very well. I have purposely omitted the last category as homeless women seem to have little of both bridging and bonding social capital. They are part of a group of similar people that come together, however, my research indicates they do not have many deep and bonding friendships. Generally speaking, looking after themselves is their priority and everyone else is secondary.

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[51] It could be argued that strong social capital does mean more social capital but this is not the way Putnam proposes it should be understood.

The form of social capital that benefits homeless women on the street has some negative ramifications on relationships with service providers. This is evident in the case of a woman who stole an employee's bag at the "drop-in" centre because she was used to looking after herself and doing what she could to survive. It is an example of when inward-looking social capital had the negative effect of service providers not wanting to go out of their way to help her after she had stolen from them. This highlights how one form of social capital can work positively in one situation (on the street for survival) and negatively in another (at the "drop-in" centre with service providers). The majority of the women who frequented the "drop-in" centre were respectful and grateful for the service, which indicates that many of them knew what form of social capital to employ in various situations (like the "drop-in" centre) and others did not. However, this could also suggest that some women misuse their social capital to suit their own interests.

The kind of social capital employed to maintain networks on the street also seems to be detrimental long-term. Homeless people seem to be in an ambiguous position as they need their "street networks" to survive but these networks limit them from surpassing their situation. This is evident with drug and prostitution circles where the women continue to keep the same networks, continue to reproduce the same types of behaviour and continue to make the same choices that led to drugs and prostitution in the beginning. Networking with people in similar situations reinforces their choices and behaviour and make it more difficult for them to transcend their situation. In order to change their circumstances, they have to leave behind all of their "street friends" who are often the only group of people they know and often the only people with whom they share similar experiences. It is difficult for homeless people to accumulate social capital because they do not associate with many people who can strengthen it. This highlights the importance of strong social capital and the cliché, "it is not what you know but who you know" because the key to accumulating social capital is social contact. Those that have strong social contacts or networks are in stronger positions within society (Putnam, 1995 2002, 2004). This indicates that

contrary to what Putnam believes, strong social capital means not only more social capital but also more power [52].

Putnam acknowledges that social capital is the necessary link to making other kinds of capital, such as physical capital (equipment) and human capital (skills), useful (Putnam, 2002). For example, one can have the clothes and the skills needed for a job but without some form of social interaction or social networks, those skills are (largely) redundant. That is not to say that other types of capital are not important but those other types need social capital in order to be fully utilised. Many homeless people lack material possessions as well as the skills needed to know how to acquire them which suggests they have weaker forms of not only social capital but also of physical and human capital.

The media perpetuate homeless people's difficulty to alter their circumstances through representing them as lacking social, physical and human capital, often implying they have no capital at all even though Putnam would argue that it is not possible to have no capital. The media present homeless people's mobility as unstable and unpredictable, indicating that moving around in the ways they do results in less enduring bonds with others. The media influences many people's opinions through reaching a wide audience. Their dominant portrayal of homeless people as anti-social, low-skilled, dangerous and unpredictable can influence how people treat them in reality. It can also validate how they have treated them in the past. For example, if someone has crossed the road to avoid a homeless person, media representations of them as dangerous and criminal justify them crossing the road. Similarly, for a member of society who does not think that homeless people are dangerous, after they read or see the media representing homeless people as dangerous and deviant, they may start to avoid them. By influencing or validating behaviour of others towards the homeless, homeless people do not have the chance to accumulate social capital.

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[52] Homeless people are often positioned as less powerful than other members. However, Foucault would argue it is not that homeless people have no power at all; rather they do not occupy powerful positions in society. This means that power is not linear as it is not held by an individual, rather it is fluid and circular which means that everyone is caught up in it. Essentially, power for Foucault is relational as it works between people (McNay, 1994:12). As Danaher, Schirato and Webb state "certain people or groups have greater opportunities to influence how the forces of power are played out" (2000:73). This means that homeless people are not completely powerless, but they have much less power and agency than people who occupy other positions within society.

Therefore, the media, particularly the newspapers, further polarise homeless people making it more difficult for them to accumulate social capital.

The media position homeless men as lacking in all three kinds of capital but where do homeless women fit in? Does their lack of representation result in them having stronger or weaker social capital than homeless men? Some service providers believe that people seem to be more willing to help homeless women but also that women are likely to be more manipulative than men. This indicates that homeless women may have the potential for stronger social capital than men because they are perceived as being less threatening. It also suggests that they significantly weaken their social capital through burning bridges with people who can help. As a result, it seems that homeless women have a stronger *virtual* social capital than homeless men. However, their inability to use it and maintain it by translating it into sustainable, working/functioning relationships often leads to weakening their social capital. Their "use and abuse" of services available to them and the resultant perception that they do not want to be helped, makes people less likely to want to help them again. This idea of taking responsibility for oneself reflects mainstream society's emphasis on autonomy and responsibility; something that homeless people are frequently portrayed as lacking.

Concluding Thoughts: Responsible and Autonomous Individuals

The representations of the media and service providers, and the narratives of the women, highlight the complexity of homelessness. Out of these different understandings a dominant homelessness discourse with two contrasting categories involving the "normal" and the "abnormal" became evident. The dominant discourse reveals social norms relating to the home and the family in contemporary New Zealand. Homeless people are portrayed as failing to live up to these norms. They are classified as "abnormal" and "deviant" in relation to mainstream society who are positioned as "normal", demonstrating the dichotomous ways people are represented and the classificatory systems that exist in modern society. It appears that society needs "abnormal" people such as homeless people to feel "normal". In this sense, they are required to be deviant.

In a similar way, homeless people are also required to be uncontrolled or un-governed so the rest of society knows how to govern themselves. Essentially, they are used as examples of "bad" governance. The perception that they fail to self-govern either seems to result in their being more susceptible to external modes of state governance or (largely) eluding control mechanisms. The difficulty in organising and managing their lives is evident in their weak social capital which works for them on the street but often works against them when interacting with others such as service providers. It also appears that they have little human and physical capital making it even more difficult for them to transcend their situation and maintaining it. In a society that favours those who take responsibility for themselves, homeless people are consistently positioned as social failures; people who have failed to live their lives in socially acceptable "normal" ways.

One could argue that they have failed to conform implying that they actively resist social norms. However, the women's narratives indicate that they internalise these norms and try to conform to them but do not know how. This means that as other people in society move forward with their lives, the women stay where they are or they repeat the cycle that so many of them seem to be caught within. This does not mean that homeless women can never transcend their situation but it highlights the difficulties they face when they try to rejoin mainstream society. They not only have to leave their "street network" behind which often consists of the majority of people they know but they need to be offered a place in society. This includes not only employment and accommodation but also having mainstream society accept them, highlighting that the label, classification and stigma of homelessness is difficult to leave behind.

I applied the theories of Foucault, Douglas, Rose and Putnam to my findings and while they have some limitations that I identified, they have been useful tools for exploring the experiences, conditions and representations of homelessness. In doing so, they were also useful for framing discussion around how homeless people remain on the periphery of, and are socially excluded from, society. Horsell believes that "homelessness has been profiled as one of, if not the, most significant form through which individuals are excluded socially" (2006:213). However, to what extent is the notion of social exclusion useful for framing discussions and debates on

homelessness? Horsell believes that within the context of policy and practice, the term "social exclusion" is of limited use. He states that social exclusion is "incapable of addressing the personal and structural components of people's experiences of disadvantage" (2006:220) because it is often used to identify the outcome rather than the process of how they came to be socially excluded (Horsell, 2006:216).

Does the concept of social exclusion enable one to address both the structural and personal components of homelessness? It is difficult but necessary to achieve this balance because if too much emphasis is placed on personal factors, homeless people can be understood as having chosen to be in their situation which then suggests they can also choose to get out of it. Alternatively, this could also result in their backgrounds being seen as the cause of their homelessness which could take the onus off central government or local councils to address the issue. However, if too much emphasis is placed on structural factors, then homeless people can be perceived as having little agency and autonomy; as having no voice and not being able to speak for themselves. As I have reiterated throughout this research, it is important to listen to the experiences and opinions of homeless people to represent them as unique and autonomous individuals. If a balance between structural factors and personal ones is achieved, then I believe social exclusion is a useful way of framing discussions on homelessness and the processes leading to, and reproducing it. Furthermore, highlighting issues of representation and identifying the perspectives of various groups in the community may result in a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness and the various ways to approach and address it.

I have attempted to take this approach within this relatively small piece of research which highlights a number of issues. The first one being that for many homeless people, home is not the solution or homelessness the problem as they are often perceived to be. Instead, it seems that homelessness is more about mainstream society and its social norms than it is about homeless people themselves. Mainstream society's positioning of home as "normal" and homelessness as "abnormal" indicates that society predominantly reduces homelessness to its physical dimension: bricks and mortar. Perhaps there needs to be a broader understanding of home that encompasses some of the "signifiers" that Somerville identifies. However, one needs to be careful of the extent to which the ideology of home is taken because if home is perceived as

anything a person wants it to be, does homelessness cease to exist? In addition, allowing for the co-existence of different understandings of home, one risks normalising homelessness. If homelessness is normalised, would it cease to be perceived as a problem? If so, would this mean that people would stop trying to assist homeless people? How home and homelessness are understood also affects how homelessness is defined because as this research shows, the dominant homelessness discourse positions homeless people primarily as "rough sleeping men". As a result, those in emergency, temporary and insecure accommodation, predominantly women, are often not acknowledged as "homeless". My research shows that homeless women have been and still are under-represented in New Zealand. This suggests that mainstream society needs to have a broader understanding of homelessness that is similar to the definition proposed by the Task Group on Homelessness (2005) but also one that links homelessness to wider society as Caplow does when he states:

> [h]omelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterised by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures (Caplow in Bahr, 1973:17).

This type of understanding is relevant for this research because it indicates that homelessness is the symptom, or the result, of more complex issues and does not simply tie it to accommodation/housing or the notion of the "nuclear" family.

The complexity of homelessness means that a "quick-fix" and "piece-meal" approach is insufficient. A long-term programme that co-ordinates the many different facilities that homeless people need to access in order to address their issues would mean they would feel more supported. In turn, this would mean they would create more enduring support networks. Thus, leaving their street network behind may be less daunting for them and they would learn how to build up stronger forms of social capital while also strengthening their physical and human capital. This indicates that an integrated approach where all of the services are more connected with one another is required. My findings also suggest that due to the gendered nature of homelessness, gender-specific research needs to be conducted in New Zealand because homeless women have different needs and experience homelessness in ways that are different to homeless men. My research also highlights the value of ethnography and the

anthropological approach, which centralises the experiences of homeless people and seems to be a sensitive way of framing research into homelessness.

The "failure" of homeless people to fit into social norms indicates that a certain type of person is favoured and accepted as "normal" in contemporary New Zealand society. That is, one who is responsible, autonomous and self-reliant who does not need to depend on others for resources and is able to fend for him or herself. This suggests that majority society values those who can do this and those who cannot look after themselves, such as homeless people, seem to be left behind and excluded. Ultimately, it seems that homelessness is a reflection of the individualist and capitalist nature of New Zealand society. Through modernisation and capitalism, individual choice has been posited as a right and a duty, and the consequences of these choices have also been highlighted (Elliot and Lemert, 2006). A contemporary capitalist society holds its citizens more accountable for their actions and the choices they make. This idea of accountability is evident throughout history in relation to "undeserving" attitudes towards poor people who were blamed for their own situation (Schrader and Birkinshaw, 2005).

While capitalism positively affects the lives of those who have strong social, physical and human capital, it seems to exclude those who have weaker forms of capital and who are unable to fully participate. The emergence of the "modern individual" shaped by capitalist society leaves little room for people with weak social capital to keep up. In some ways, homelessness represents a threat to individualism as it shows there are people who cannot, or do not know how to, help themselves and who need assistance. One could argue that homelessness questions the ideology of capitalism and individualism, particularly the individualist attitude of looking after oneself and making it without the help of others. On the other hand, one could also argue that the very existence of homelessness confirms the importance of self-responsibility and self-governance.

Homeless people, particularly homeless women, do not conduct their lives in socially acceptable ways resulting in their stigmatisation and social exclusion from mainstream society. They dominantly represent the disordered, the uncontrolled or un-governed and the disconnected. My research suggests they are often understood as

"failures" of modern New Zealand because they do not fit into normative discourses. Their position on the periphery of society reflects the social exclusion they experience and while it is not impossible for them to transcend their situation, it is very difficult. Essentially, this thesis highlights that homeless women are dominantly represented as "people out of place".

Epilogue

Having begun my fieldwork in April 2005, I finish writing this thesis for submission in September 2006. The following is an update on the female participants involved in my research.

Maree

Maree has been rough sleeping again for a few months now. I saw her at the "drop-in" centre a few weeks ago and she looked as though she had aged ten years. Maree was surprisingly pleased to see me and gave me a hug when she arrived. She is back with her "husband", is still addicted to morphine and glue, and has had no teeth for the past six months or so (she had to get them all taken out because they were rotting and does not have false teeth yet). One employee of the "drop-in" centre said that she has made huge improvements in her relationships with other people. This person told me she is more open, is making more friends and maintaining these friendships, and she is finding new ways of dealing with issues that arise. This person commented that the change in Maree is in her "attitude and personality, not necessarily her circumstances".

Samantha

According to Maree, Samantha has broken up with her partner and is still living at the address that I interviewed her at. When I talked to the two employees of the "drop-in" centre a week before I submitted this thesis they had not seen Samantha for a long time. The employees I spoke with said it is generally a positive sign if they do not see a person on the street because if they do not need to access their services then it indicates life is getting better for them. The day before I was due to submit my thesis, one of the employees rang to inform me that Samantha went to see him the day before and asked him to be the celebrant at her wedding! Her fiancé is her boarder that she had when I interviewed her. He is supporting her to recover from her glue addiction and she is supporting him with some issues that he has. The employee told me that Samantha chose him as the celebrant because she feels that she can really talk to him.

Pearl

Pearl is still fighting for custody of her four youngest children who were put into the care of her ex-husband who sexually abused the youngest but are now in a children's home, or, at least that is where Pearl thinks they are. She was allowed to see them for an hour a week at first but now she is not allowed to see them at all. Pearl said CYF thinks that she is not being very helpful and that she is unwilling to co-operate with them. However, Pearl sees the situation very differently. She told me that she is launching an official enquiry into CYF's handling of her case. Pearl is still working as a sex worker and told me that she recently moved into a four-bedroom house that is big enough for her and her children. Pearl proudly told me that her eldest child is now at University and her second eldest son is doing a preparation course so that he can go on to further study.

Mary

One of the employees of the "drop-in" centre saw Mary recently when she was working on the street and said that she was looking "painfully thin". She also appeared more quiet and withdrawn than usual and he knows that she has a lot of health problems but is not sure exactly what they are. The other employee said Mary had not been to the "drop-in" centre for a long time.

Alyse

The same employees have not seen Alyse for a long time, although one employee told me she heard from someone else, perhaps one of the other women, that she is doing well and is sharing a house with a friend in Christchurch. She moved from the house that she was living in at the time of the interview because her friend, who was the tenancy holder, went to jail. The other employee told me that he has not seen her for a long time and that she has not been working on the street.

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Part Two: Media Sources

a) NEWSPAPERS – Articles, Reports and Letters to the Editor

Articles

Booker, J. (28.10.04) "Killers jailed for 17 years", *The Christchurch Press*, p.1.

Burgess, J. (04.07.02) "Appeal of home ownership on decline in NZ, survey", *Timaru Herald*, p.10.

Collins, S. (01.03.05) "Homeless welcome ID cards", *The New Zealand Herald*, A02.

Courtney, D. (02.10.04) "The 'Ultimate loss" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.1.

Courtney, D. (02.10.04) "Brutal death for homeless man" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.21.

Courtney, D. (09.06.04) "Vacant houses at risk from vagrants" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.4.

Goodger, K. (30.08.04) "Camps under pressure to house the homeless" in *The Nelson Mail*, p.3.

Hume, T. (21.08.04) "Support lacking for injured" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.9.

Hume, T. (29.06.04) "Winter drives more homeless to seek help" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.4.

Hume, T. (28.06.04) "Parks turn away city's homeless" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.1.

Hume, T. (08.06.04) "Homeless keen for drop-in centre" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.2.

Hume, T. (20.05.04) "Attacks on homeless stretch mission" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.4.

Jacobson, J. (24.06.04) "Residents despair at homeless invasion" in *Dominion Post*, p.17.

Jacobson, J. (16.04.04) "Do more for homeless urges Councillor" in *Dominion Post*, p.6.

McCurdy, D. (03.10.01) "Banking on a handout?" in *The Dominion*, p.15.

O'Sullivan, M. (28.08.04) "Homeless man left to sleep on street" in *Dominion Post*, p.8.

Paterson, S. (11.06.05) "NZ struggling to cope with women in crisis" in *New Zealand Herald*, A23.

Price, A. (01.06.05) "Home for 'invisibles" in *The Christchurch Mail*, p.1&3.

Reilly, K. (12.12.04) "Struggling in a land of plenty: how do we help New Zealand's poor?" in *Sunday Star-Times*, p.11.

Reilly, K. (16.08.03) "Housing dreams" in *Evening Standard*, p.6.

Saunders, A. (31.03.05) "Homeless study rejects stereotypes" in *Dominion Post*, p.6.

Thomas, K. (26.01.05) "Homeless 'by choice" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.3.

Thomas, K. (19.02.05) "Street dweller Kevin used to be 'one of us" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.4.

Wall, T. (22.08.04) "Catwalk beauty who ended life in the gutter" in *Sunday Star-Times*, p.4.

Warren, A. (05.02.05) "Homeless 'have run out of choices" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.4.

Reports

APN New Zealand Ltd. (11.08.05) "Prudent to pay off your mortgage" in *Hawke's Bay Today*, C18.

Independent Newspapers Ltd. (23.11.04) "Teens to appeal" in *The Christchurch Press*, p3.

New Zealand Herald. (26.12.04) "On a mission to spread Xmas cheer", p.5.

New Zealand Herald. (23.04.05) "Jim hopkins' top 10", B10.

New Zealand Press Association. (12.07.04) "Released prisoners sleeping on streets".

New Zealand Press Association. (18.08.04) "Police ban homeless from Rotorua park".

New Zealand Press Association (16.09.04) "Man jailed for manslaughter death of TV celebrity".

New Zealand Press Association. (08.10.04) "Night shelter supporters sick of having nowhere to go".

New Zealand Press Association. (09.11.04) "Wellington should send its vagrants to Auckland, MP says".

The Daily News. (23.01.03) "Home ownership dreams dim", p.5.

Otago Daily Times. (04.01.05) "At home on the street…Mike Lee parks up in Wanaka".

The Nelson Mail. (02.03.05) "Homeless man sentenced to community work", p.4.

Letters to the Editor

Allen, J. (30.04.04) "Let's give them facilities" in *Dominion Post*, p.6.

Browne, S. (04.07.02) "Interest rates" in *The Dominion*, p.8.

Chamberlain, C. (04.06.04) "Pitiful and shameful" in *Dominion Post*, p.4.

Keating, D.M. (05.07.04) "Homeless children in Christchurch unacceptable" in *The Christchurch Press*, p.8.

Scott, M. (03.07.04) "What the capital needs" in *Dominion Post*, p.4.

Smythe, R. R. (28.05.02) "A reader's plea for normalcy" in *The Evening Post*, p.6.

b) DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Kentish-Barnes, C. (Director and Producer) (2005). *Life on the Street.* Production Line: New Zealand.

Millar, J. (Director) and Kingsford-Smith, I. (Producer) (1997). *A Caravan called Home*. OK TV: New Zealand.

Oomen, M. and Te Kata, W. (Directors) and Burke, V. (Producer) (1992). *The Street is my Home*. Top Shelf Productions: New Zealand.

Wright, E. (Director) and King-Jones, A. (Producer) (2003). *Te Whanau O Aotearoa: Caretakers of the Land*. Te Whanau O Aotearoa Cutcutcut: New Zealand.

Appendices

Appendix One: Information Sheets

a) Participants from Community Organisations

Thesis Title:
No Fixed Abode: Representations of Homelessness in Christchurch (working title)

Contact Details:
Kate Marsh
021 0658616
kma70@student.canterbury.ac.nz
Supervisors: Martin Fuchs (3642987 ext 4975) and Patrick McAllister
(3642987 ext 7103)

Outline:
My aim is to understand your experiences of working with the homeless. I am particularly interested in how you understand their situation and the relationships you have with them.

With your consent, I wish to understand your individual stories through an informal tape-recorded interview at a place of your choice. This will be guided by my questions but ultimately led by you, as there may be some issues that you do not wish to discuss. It is hard to put a timeframe on the interviews as some may take longer than others; however I am aiming for them to be around an hour long. _____ and _____ from _____ are contactable before, during and after the interview should you need to talk to them.

It is important for you to know that your identity will be protected and all information from these interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet where I am the only person with access to the information.

This project is being undertaken to fulfil a Master of Arts (MA) degree in the school of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Canterbury and has been reviewed and approved by the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at any time for further details.

b) Information Sheet for Women

Thesis Title:
No Fixed Abode: Representations of Homelessness in Christchurch (working title)

Contact Details:
Kate Marsh
021 0658616
kma70@student.canterbury.ac.nz
Supervisors: Martin Fuchs (3642987 ext 4975) and Patrick McAllister (3642987 ext 7103)

Outline:
My aim is to understand your experiences of being homeless. I am particularly interested in how you understand your situation and the relationships you have with others, particularly other people that are, or have been homeless, as well as those that work with you (people from the Salvation Army for example).

With your consent, I wish to understand your individual stories through an informal tape-recorded interview at _____ or a place of your choice. The interview will be guided by my questions but ultimately led by you, as there may be some issues that you do not wish to discuss. You are welcome to bring a support person with you to the interview and _____ from _____ will be available should you need to contact her before, during or after the interview. It is hard to put a timeframe on the interviews as some may take longer than others; however I am aiming for them to be around an hour long.

It is important for you to know that your identity will be protected using false names and all information from these interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet where I am the only person with access to the information.

This project is being undertaken to fulfil a Master of Arts (MA) degree in the school of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Canterbury and has been reviewed and approved by the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at any time for further details.

Appendix Two: Summary of Documentary Films

The Street is My Home (1992)

Oomen, M. and Te Kata, W. (Directors) and Burke, V. (Producer).

Top Shelf Productions: New Zealand.

"Wellington City Street Life" is the name of a group of young people who have been living on the streets of Wellington for a number of years, many since they were children. This documentary focuses on their group, particularly a man named Blueboy and a number of other people who are not named. They talk in detail about their paths into homelessness, their experiences on the street, how they look out for one another and share what they have, emphasising that they are a street family. The documentary includes the views of business owners who feel threatened by them and make them shift away from their premises because they believe that they are violent and unpredictable. The group feels upset that they are moved from one place to another and they do not feel as though people take them seriously. However, after one of their group passed away in his sleep, they said that the authorities began to take an interest in their situation. The council came up with a solution to clear an empty residential section and put a shipping container on it so they could live there. However, when a neighbour found out what was happening, he barricaded the street so that the truck with the container on it could not get through. He did not want to live next to homeless people. Before Christmas, Blueboy and some friends got a house and moved into it. However, six months later, they moved out and all went their separate ways. This documentary film highlights the dysfunctional and sad backgrounds of homeless people and indicates that their upbringings are connected to their paths into homelessness. It shows the blameful attitudes of many authorities and members of the public, who appear to have a predominantly negative perception of homelessness. The documentary film indicates that this group does not feel like full members of society as they recount the overwhelmingly negative attitudes of others towards them, which results in their exclusion. It also highlights the complexity of homelessness.

A Caravan Called Home (1997)

Millar, J. (Director) and Kingsford-Smith, I. (Producer)

OK TV: New Zealand

Narrated by a male journalist, this documentary film is situated in a caravan park in Auckland, this documentary film follows the story of Marion and her daughters Maureen (18) and Amanda (14), as they try to move away from the caravan they have lived in for the last eight years. They initially moved to the park, where there were only about four or five caravans, because renting their state house became too expensive. However, the park has grown significantly since they moved there and so have incidences of domestic violence, drugs, alcohol, and theft. The documentary includes interviews with Marion's sister Pauline and her husband Jack who have three children together, as well as Marion's closest friends at the park, Len and Tina. Unlike Pauline and Jack who are looking for somewhere else to live because they do not want to bring their children up there, Len and Tina enjoy living at the park and choose to live there because Len is "an outdoors man" and it is cheaper for them. They do admit though, that the park is no place to raise children. Everyone interviewed believes that the park has a negative influence on children and this is what has happened with Amanda, who smokes marijuana, steals, and is often truant. Marion is not happy with what Amanda gets up to and this is one of the reasons that Marion has decided that it is time for her and the girls to leave the park. However, the bank rejects her application for a mortgage so Marion and Maureen decide to save more money before moving. Amanda's relationship with her mother has deteriorated and worsens with their close living quarters. Amanda decides to leave the park and stay with her aunt, which Marion is not very happy about. Marion and Maureen finally end up leaving the park when they hear a rumour that the council may be closing it down so they have to find immediate accommodation. Essentially, this documentary film highlights how hard it is for people to get out of their situation when they are not financially secure as well as the difficulties of finding accommodation with children.

Te Whanau O Aotearoa: Caretakers of the Land (2003)

Wright, E. (Director) and King-Jones, A. (Producer)

Te Whanau O Aotearoa Cutcutcut: New Zealand.

This documentary film focuses on a man called Ben, known as the "Blanket Man", who has lived on the streets of Wellington for a number of years. He is angry about the rules in society, particularly those relating to the use of land, which he understands as belonging to everyone. He has been trespassed from Cuba Mall and the Cenotaph because of his disorderly behaviour and from the soup kitchen because he refuses to wear a shirt. During the filming of this documentary, he is arrested by the police for breaching his bail conditions, which state that he is not allowed back in Cuba Mall. Ben believes that New Zealanders should promote the church of Jah Rastifari and should share a "peace pipe" or a smoke of marijuana with the Gods. He and his friends believe that the Government is not providing for its people and that they have to survive on nothing. However, he is not interested in working to pay bills and believes that if we care of the land, then the land will provide (food) for us. Ben talks about being sick of rules and regulations, and he ends up appearing on national news because he refuses to remove himself from the Cenotaph in the central city. New Zealand First MP Winston Peters wants him removed because he thinks that he is being disrespectful by occupying the place, while Green Party MP Nandor Tanchez says that there is a massive problem with homelessness in New Zealand and that arresting people and banning them from public places is not going to solve it. Essentially, this documentary is a debate over public places and the ways that people believe they should be used, raising issues about how homeless people should be, and are, treated. It is more of a political discussion than a personal one, as it does not go into detail about how Ben and his friends became homeless.

Life on the Street (2005)

Kentish-Barnes, C. (Director and Producer)

Production Line: New Zealand

A man called Johny, who has experienced homelessness for many years, narrates this documentary film, which centres on the lives of five homeless people in Christchurch and one in Wellington. The opening scene focuses on Johny walking down the railway towards his makeshift home next to the railway tracks where he is met by two police officers who are concerned about his health. Throughout the documentary Johny emphasises the difficulties that homeless people face and that it is not as easy to get out of homelessness as other people may think. He states that he does not want to be homeless but that he has no choice because he cannot get a job and he cannot afford to pay for rent. Johny emphasises the detrimental impact that his upbringing has had on his life and talks a lot about how he has felt rejected and has not really enjoyed life. He takes the audience on a trip around Christchurch city demonstrating what life is like for homeless people. Johny shows what services are available for homeless people by introducing some service providers at the City Mission and the Salvation Army, and he also introduces four people who are experiencing homelessness at the time this film is made. Like Johny does, Denise, Kele, Thomas and Shannon are very open about their paths into homelessness, their daily experiences and struggles of being homeless, and how they are treated by other members of society. Johny emphasises that street life is dangerous, which becomes evident when Shannon is brutally murdered while living on the street. The film seems to focus on conveying the reality of homelessness and introducing some individuals to show that they all have different paths into homelessness and that they are human beings just like everyone else, except that they live differently. Johny highlights that people often become homeless because they have no other choice.