TJ Ryan Foundation Internship Project on Homelessness

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Literature Review

Research on homelessness in the developed world is largely grounded in the housing and social policy research traditions (Fitzpatrick 2005: 1) and there is much literature on the causes of homelessness—though some argue that the debate has lacked conceptual and theoretical clarity (Neale 1997: 48). Fitzpatrick (2005: 1) finds that disparate causal factors thought to be related to homelessness—inter alia, unemployment, housing shortages, mental illness, and relationship breakdown—are often listed but rarely interrogated to ascertain any relationships to each nor to wider explanatory frameworks. There are two theoretical approaches that have polarised the debate about the causes of homelessness: structural factors and individual or agency explanations (Neale 1997: 49). Structural explanations find homelessness is caused by social and economic structures, whereas individual explanations focus on the personal characteristics and behaviours of homelessness people (Fitzpatrick 2005: 4). It appears that the structure versus agency debate oversimplifies current thinking but they remain historically relevant conceptual frameworks (Neale 1997: 49) and are therefore useful in understanding homelessness. This literature review seeks to expound on the various theoretical perspectives that attempt to explain homelessness. This will include the traditional broad categories of structural and individual explanations of homelessness, and examine the attempt to combine both positions (in what is known as the "new orthodoxy"). Then, in brief, it will cover various critical approaches: critical realism; feminism and gendered approaches; poststructuralism; postmodernism; Gidden's structuration; and, Habermas' critical theory.

Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992) describe three levels of homelessness: primary homelessness is "sleeping rough"—sleeping outdoors, in cars, or abandoned buildings; secondary homelessness is moving from one temporary accommodation to another; and tertiary homelessness is residing long-term in boarding houses. Darab and Hartman (2012: 350) finds that this definition of homelessness reflects "shared community values"; it has been used by both the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Federal Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). This reflects Watson and Austerberry's (1986) concept of a home-to-homelessness continuum. Understanding homelessness on three levels allows it more complexity than a simple administrative category (Neale 1997: 48).

Explanations of homelessness have been divided into two categories—structural and individual—and are "not unrelated to" the idea that people are either deserving or undeserving (ibid. 49.). Individual explanations divide further into two strands. The first strand—prevalent until the 1960s— finds that individuals are blameworthy because they are responsible for their housing (or lack of); responses in this vein were provision of minimalist basic accommodation. The second strand finds that individuals are not entirely blameworthy because their homelessness is a result of personal failure or inadequacy; this produced responses such as casework or psychiatric treatment (ibid.). Structural explanations, on the other hand, find that the causes of homelessness cannot be simplified to the individual level but are found in wider social and economic structures (ibid.). Thus, the response here is broad societal intervention. Historically, individual explanations of homelessness have predominated and thus, responses have often been minimal or punitive forms of

support (ibid. 49-50). In Australia, however, the literature shows that over the past few decades, homelessness has undergone a sequence of conceptual changes (Bullen 2015: 219). There was a shift away from individual explanations after the 1960s, where poverty was "rediscover[ed]", and so homelessness explanations started to be located in social and economic structures (ibid.). The end of the 20th century saw another shift back to individual explanations and critiques of the welfare state, and this was reflected in Australian policy: "like many other Western liberal governments, […] embrace[d] […] advanced liberal political rationalities of government, which aimed to enable a competitive market economy to function and to work through the regulation freedom for both groups and individuals" (ibid. 233). Changes were made to governing homelessness services, emphasising "the capacity for self-realisation which can be obtained only through individual activity" (Rose 1999: 145); though, Graycar (1983) asserts that this "does not constitute a retreat of the welfare state, but rather an extension of the influence of the state". Bullen (2015: 233) that these reforms can result in homeless people blaming or excluding themselves.

A "new orthodoxy" (Pleace 2000) was said to have emerged in academia in the 1980s, attempting to marry individual and structural explanations:

> Homelessness is explained with reference to the manner in which changing structural conditions impact most severely upon particular groups, either because of a simple position of structural disadvantage or (more usually) because of some further vulnerability that renders a person especially ill equipped to cope with those changes. (May 2000 quoted in Somerville 2013: 388)

This approach asserts that structural factors allow homelessness to occur in certain conditions, and people with personal issues are more vulnerable to such social or economic conditions. Thus, these people with personal issues experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable or susceptible to structural factors; individual explanations alone are inadequate (Fitzpatrick 2005: 4). Fitzpatrick (ibid.) finds that the new orthodoxy is a more practical explanation of homelessness but theoretically inadequate; it does not have a clear conceptualisation of causation and does not accommodate factors that might lead to homelessness. Somerville (2013: 388-9) adds that this approach is not "new" because homelessness has long been thought to be a relationship failure between the "individual" and "society". Thus, other theoretical perspectives have been suggested. The theories—critical realism, feminism and gender approaches, poststructuralism, postmodernism, structuration, and critical theory—will now be briefly discussed in turn.

A central ontological assumption of critical realists is that the world is structured, differentiated, and stratified (Fitzpatrick 2005: 13). It can be hypothesised that causes of homelessness may exist on four levels: economic structures; housing structures; patriarchal and interpersonal structures; and individual attributes (ibid.). Fitzpatrick (2005: 10) notes that it is difficult to produce empirical research to support critical realism due to requirement of a process referred to as "retroduction" (Bhasker 1989 in Fitzpatrick 2005: 11). Retroduction requires a description of social relations and events, as well as explanations of them by uncovering "hidden" dimensions of social reality (Fitzpatrick 2005: 10).

Homelessness is multidimensional and it is not just a matter of lack of shelter; it involves many different deprivations—physiological, emotional, territorial, ontological, and spiritual (Somerville 2013: 384). It would be remiss not to recognise this multidimensional aspect, as homelessness cannot be remedied through provision of basic accommodation alone. If the other dimensions are not addressed, such as domestic violence in the home, then "housing is the problem—homelessness may well be a solution" (Tomas and Dittmar 1995 quoted in Somerville 2013: 384). In recent decades, there have been attempts to understand the gendered nature of homelessness in Australia , mostly due to acknowledgement of the relationship between domestic/family violence and homelessness (Murray 2011: 346). Mayock et al. (2015: 880) further finds often, homeless women engage in strategies to conceal their situations, and thus remain hidden from public view; this can be explained in part by the stigma attached to the "unaccommodated woman". The notion of a woman without a home is a challenge to the feminine body and is outside a women's gendered role as mothers, nurturers, and homemakers (ibid.).

Poststructuralism and postmodernism share similarities but are not exactly synonymous. Poststructuralism is part of the larger matrix of postmodern theory (Best & Kellner 1991). Poststructuralists challenge the causes of homelessness, as there can be no single oppressive force, nor no single solution to any one social problem. Consequently, such analysis should be more localised and specific. Neale (1997: 54) finds that postmodernism complements poststructuralism's analysis, as it focuses on language and deconstruction. However, Neale (ibid.) argues that the process of deconstructing meanings is a critical weakness; a preoccupation with language reveals much about the meaning of homelessness, but little about its causes.

Giddens (1984) proposes "structuration" in an attempt to overcome the structural versus individual debate, as homelessness cannot be reduced to either explanation. Giddens finds that "structure" and "action" cannot exist independently of each other; structuration describes how structures relate to social action. Giddens (ibid.) further explains that there is a "duality of structure"; social actions spring from structures but also create those same structures. Neale (1997: 57) finds that this theoretical analysis of power structures highlights forces that make it likely that particular people will become homeless, and also allow for individual action (and change).

Habermas (1991) finds that universal interests and ideals exists, and is mostly concerned on how best to pursue them. He proposes that we should not predefine what a welfare state should grant, but rather encourage consensus to form around such needs. According to Habermas (1991), individual and collective needs should be integrated, and this can be reached by "collective will formation" and is identified by an "ideal speech situation" where universal interests will emerge. Thus, a forum for debate is necessary so that the needs or experiences of homeless people are to be interpreted and responded to accurately.

This literature review highlights the existing theories on homelessness. The literature is dominated by structural or individual explanations, or the marriage of both in the "new orthodoxy". Whilst theoretical understanding of homelessness does not necessarily result immediately in improvements

to the situation, it is still necessary, as policy and provision cannot continue to occur in an untheorised way.

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Women and Homelessness: Taking a Gendered Approach

As suggested by recent statistics, the population of women experiencing homelessness in Queensland is increasing (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016). There has, in recent decades, been more study on homelessness; however, there is still minimal literature on women experiencing homelessness (Menih 2015: 9) as most studies have been quantitative in focus, and/or gender-blind (Menih 2015: ii). Homelessness is multidimensional (Somerville 2013: 384); for women, the nature of homelessness is complex as they experience both the difficulty of living on the streets, and the experience of being at odds with their traditional gender role as "mothers, nurturers, and homemakers" (Mayock et al. 2015: 880). There is stigma attached to this, and Brown and Ziefert (1990) find that homeless women experience difficulty connected with their own self. This essay aims to outline why a gendered approach and understanding homelessness' multidimensionality is important by looking at how women and homelessness have been discussed in the literature.

Homelessness affects people from all age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) 2008). According to the ABS (2016), the numbers of homeless people are increasing; between 2011 and 2016, there was a 4.6 per cent increase. In 2011, the Census reports 105,237 people classified as being homeless, and as of 2016, 116,427 people classified as being homeless (ibid.). Male homelessness has increased from 56 per cent in 2011 to 58 per cent in 2016, and female homelessness decreased from 44 per cent in 2011 to 42 per cent in 2016 (ibid.). In Queensland, in 2011, there were 19,039 homeless people, and as of 2016, there are 21,671 homeless people (ibid.). Female homelessness in Queensland rose from 8,184 in 2011 to 9,017 in 2016, with 596 women considered to be experiencing primary level homeless (ibid.).

In the literature, there have been two predominantly acknowledged explanations for homelessness: structural and individual (or agency)—and these two categories are "not unrelated to" the idea that people are either deserving or undeserving (Neale 1997: 49). Historically, individual explanations have been more prevalent and influential on government and non-government responses and policy (ibid. 49-50). However, in the literature, structural explanations have predominated (Main 1998). Johnson et al. (2008) find that the reason for homelessness—how a person becomes homeless—is a process or a "pathway," and this pathway is affected by various factors. Whilst the pathways to homelessness for many might appear similar, Snow and Anderson (1993) note that each individual will experience this pathway differently, and reactions to this change determine whether one becomes rooted in homelessness or not.

The definition of homelessness that has been utilised by both the ABS and FaHCSIA is a cultural one—it argues "homelessness and inadequate housing are socially constructed cultural concepts that only make sense in a particular community at a given historical period" (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2001: 38) and identifies three level of homelessness: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 1992). Primary homelessness refers to where one is without conventional accommodation. Secondary homelessness is where one moves frequently between

temporary (insecure) accommodations. Tertiary homelessness is where one resides in long-term boarding houses. This definition of homelessness reflects the concept of a home-to-homelessness continuum, as proposed by Watson and Austerberry (1986); homelessness is not a single administrative category but rather, encompasses a variety of experiences. Saunders and Evans (1992) maintain that conventionally, maleness and whiteness describe the social world in Australia. A cultural definition of homelessness encourages different experiences—across ages, cultures, and genders—within homeless populations to be distinguished, but more often that not, these different experiences are not considered (Menih 2015: 18). One specific population for instance is indigenous women; indigenous people are overrepresented in homelessness statistics (Every 2017: 44).

Researchers began to study homeless women as a specific population, from the 1990s. This was largely driven by acknowledgement of the relationship between domestic violence and homelessness for women (Murray 2011: 346). Wright, Rubin, and Devine (1998: 155) note, "physical and sexual violence and exploitation are exceedingly common elements in the lives of homeless women and are, indeed, a major precipitating factor for homelessness among women." Previously, most study on domestic violence and homelessness sought to quantify that there is indeed violence in the lives of homeless women, presenting only a superficial view of these experiences (Jasinki et al. 2010). Such incomplete study cannot lead to policy designs that might combat these experiences (ibid.). In Australia, 45 per cent of women have named domestic violence as the main factor explaining their homelessness (Healy 2002), and 55 per cent of women with children and 36.9 per cent of women without children have named domestic violence as the main factor (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008). Murray (2009: 39) notes that homelessness for women escaping domestic violence can be understood in a few ways: it may be argued that they are not homeless—they have a home but it is unsafe to be there; however, those who seek temporary accommodation are understood as homeless. Crucially, it is important to note that most research focuses on physical violence (only one specific behaviour within domestic violence) so it cannot be (or has not been) determined how specific domestic violence behaviour relates to homelessness (Menih 2015: 27). Tually et al. 2008 also highlight that much abuse is not reported in Australia, so true figures are unlikely to be ascertained.

Women and men conceptualise home and homelessness in different ways (Tucker 1994). Gender roles and expectations affects how women construct their experiences (Panelli et al. 2005). Discourses of femininity construct and perpetuate gender inequality both inside and outside the home (Menih 2015: 56). As a result, there is stigma attached to women behaving at odds with their traditional gender role as they are perceived as more masculine; the public realm has traditionally been perceived as a man's domain (ibid.). Watson and Austerberry (1986) found that 42 per cent of women they interviewed did not describe themselves as homeless; as such, it becomes less likely that they will act to change their situation. The hidden nature of women's homelessness is reinforced by gender roles (Menih 2015) and the sexual division of labour (Watson & Austerberry 1986). Further, this causes women to become socially alienated (Brown & Ziefert 1990). Brown and Ziefert (1990) argue that feminist social work can help women ease out of such alienation and become connected to others. Casey (2002: 88) has studied how women can transition away from homelessness, identifying:

> "...inner strength to begin to seek out support; access to affordable accommodation/housing in the short and long term; adequate income in relation to housing costs; personal counselling, particularly regarding past trauma, including sexual assault counselling and services such as domestic violence outreach; support in pursuing leisure activities, such as athletics and art, etc."

In conclusion, homeless women have traditionally been considered to be outside their prescribed gender role as mothers and homemakers (Menih 2015), and experience the stigma attached to the "unaccommodated woman" (Mayock et al. 2015: 880). It is therefore important to understand that homelessness for women is complex and multidimensional, and does not only encompass difficulties related to "rooflessness"—thus, a gendered approach is necessary. It should also be noted that women are not a homogenous group; within a gendered approach, cultural and social differences should also be delineated and explored.

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Reports on Events and Meetings

TJ Ryan Foundation's 5th Anniversary Event 27/02/19
I attended the Foundation's 5th anniversary event and it was my first time meeting Dr. Mary Crawford (Executive Director and Chair), other members of the Foundation, and many people from the community. The event addressed the theme 'The Impact of Inequality in Queensland' and included presentations by Professor Tom Cochrane and Micah Projects CEO Karyn Walsh. Professor Cochrane spoke on the importance of evidence-based policymaking and reminded the community of the impact and legacy of Thomas Joseph Ryan who served as the Premier of Queensland (1915-1919) and sat in the House of Representatives for the federal Labor Party (1919-1921). Karyn Walsh's presentation 'Inequality in Brisbane' highlighted huge existing gaps in equality in Brisbane and Australia more generally. Micah Projects works from a human-rights perspective and advocates for the right to a home, an income, healthcare, education, safety, dignity, and connection with your chosen community. Following her presentation, I introduced myself to her and arranged to meet with her for a longer conversation; I wanted to learn more about women's specific and complex experiences of poverty and inequality, and the driving factors.

TJ Ryan Foundation's Board Meeting 04/03/19
I observed at TJ Ryan Foundation's board meeting on the 4th of March, 2019. Approximately half of those in attendance video-conferenced into the meeting. I was very interested in hearing the various updates and news that the members shared. I have attached the meeting's minutes (see Appendix x).

Book Launch of Sally McManus' 'On Fairness' 26/03/19
The book launch of Sally McManus' 'On Fairness' was hosted by the Queensland Council of Unions, Australian Council of Trade Unions and the TJ Ryan Foundation. I arrived early to set promotional materials (bookmarks) for TJ Ryan on the tables and organised for Avid Reader Bookshop to include a bookmark with all purchases of 'On Fairness'. Dr Robert Anderson (Uncle Bob) delivered the acknowledgement of Country, followed by speeches by ACTU Secretary Sally McManus and Van Badham. Both spoke on the importance of fairness in the forthcoming election debates and the ACTU's 'Change the Rules' campaign that seeks to address inadequate wage and job security. I was able to speak briefly to Sally McManus and left with a signed copy of her book.

Meetings with Dr. Mary Crawford (approx. once a week)
I met with Dr. Crawford approximately once a week, usually on Monday mornings to both brief upcoming events/tasks or debrief. These meetings have been very important in grounding and framing the work I did at TJ Ryan, which was mostly done remotely. Dr. Crawford has been very generous with her time and advice regarding both my work project and professional experiences at events or interviews with key people.

Interview with Karyn Walsh 15/03/19
I met with Karyn Walsh, the CEO of Micah Projects which is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing services and opportunities in the community to create justice and respond to injustice. I had briefly spoken with her when she presented at the TJ Ryan Foundation's fifth anniversary event; her presentation 'Inequality in Brisbane' was deeply engaging and I wanted to learn more about her and the great organisation she leads. I went into the meeting wanting to specifically talk about poverty traps impacting women, and how it can lead to homelessness. When working with women, Micah Projects seeks to manage imminent risk and the combined psychological stress. Karyn pointed out that the main drivers of homelessness for women include the increasing lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, and/or mental illness and complex trauma. Safety for women is critical; women at risk of or experiencing homelessness need to be

around other women, and when housed, need to have control such as a head lease, and therefore will not be bound by domestic violence. Debt alongside domestic violence is common; abusive partners can be controlling and dishonest re finances so financial debt literacy is highly important for women. It is also understood that women's risk of experiencing violence increases when they leave a relationship and the man loses control; unfortunately, it is a sad fact that men punish women by killing their children. The dynamic of child murders in these situations are complex and such outcomes cannot be predicted and affects many different socioeconomic classes. Often, there is no previous physical domestic violence and the family or individuals have not been identified by police. However, there will have been high levels of control in these relationships, and either the woman thinking of leaving or having left the relationship. It is important to note that different classes experience domestic violence differently. Circumstances cannot be generalised; some middle class women have experienced unnecessary poverty as a consequence of domestic violence and it has great psychological impact on children. Poor women who experience domestic violence do not experience the same property law issues as middle class women. My conversation with Karyn was very interesting and important to my research project, and she was very generous with the information she provided.

Interview with Hon. Grace Grace 12/04/19

I had previously viewed Hon. Grace Grace's speech 'The Economics of Inequality' at the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) where she recognises that education is the path to a strong and successful economy, and is the basis for an economic environment that creates jobs and drives a nation's economic growth. However, there remain persistent inequities. Over half of Queensland schools are in rural and remote areas, and such communities have particular challenges. I asked Grace about her actions and strategies for rural/remote education. Grace highlighted the importance of identifying the needs of a particular community, and of increasing school attendance rates and connectivity. Appropriate place-based and wrap-around support and services are required, depending on context (the culture and location of the community). She referred to trials and programs (Doveton, Logan Together, etc.) being conducted in Australia where successful pathways to equity is individualised to the specific community.

Interview with Hon. Leanne Linard 13/05/19

I read the inquiry into wage theft, '*A fair day's pay for a fair day's work*: Exposing the true cost of wage theft in Queensland', prepared by the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee, chaired by Hon. Leanne Linard. I met with her at her parliamentary office, and we spoke about the specific issues facing women within particularly vulnerable cohorts, and what consequences she has seen for women experiencing low wage and wage theft.