Empowerment and engagement: Case studies in Victoria, Australia of people who are homeless and volunteers who are working in services for the home-less.

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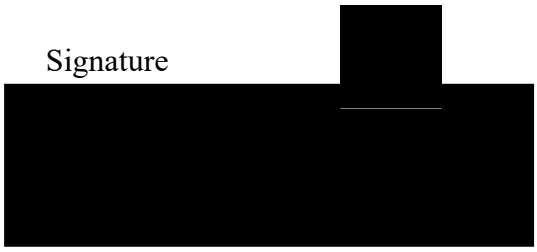
Declaration

I, Zachary Greig, declare that the PhD thesis entitled 'Empowerment and engagement: Case studies in Victoria, Australia of people who are homeless and volunteers who are working in services for the home-less' is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature 

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Abstract

By drawing on community development values and principles as well as a social constructivist theoretical perspective, this study aims to understand how people who are homeless and the volunteers who serve them perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment. Twenty-nine individuals have participated in this study: 18 had personal experiences of homelessness and 11 volunteered in the homelessness sector.

This study collects data through informal in-depth interviews, and it thematically examines a research diary. Research outcomes suggest that volunteers feel elements of perceived and actual power in their volunteerism. The study argues that such power stems from a belief that volunteering benefits the volunteer, people experiencing homelessness and broader society. These findings are consistent with existing literature and popular discourse; however, my research discovers that volunteers also express guilt and a reluctance to self-identify as a volunteer. This reticence, which accompanies volunteers' scrutiny of the role's characterisation as superior, runs contrary to how scholarship and popular discourse often understand volunteers.

Participants with first-hand experiences of homelessness characterise the role of the Australian 'homeless person' through notions of disempowerment and empowerment. They perceive disempowerment in the various ways they experience social disconnection: family rejection, a lack of companionship through friends and low-quality or precarious relationships within the home-less community. They also connect socially expected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs and norms to the disempowerment of welfare users. Nevertheless, through topics of public space, safety and protection, these participants express a sense of belonging and perceived empowerment.

Crucially, this study finds that 13 of the 18 'homeless' participants had volunteered in the homelessness sector. This unanticipated observation expands the study's analytical focus beyond an oppression-privilege binary in order to explore the nuances of participants' complex social positions. As a result, the study tracks the ways by which volunteering challenges what it means to be 'homeless' in Australia and how it helps some 'homeless people' overcome aspects of the power inequalities encountered in mainstream society and welfare contexts. Overall, the study submits that volunteering signals the personal resources,

abilities, skills, knowledge and potential that home-less people possess to improve their own lives and determine their own future.

Finally, the process of research challenges the student researcher's expectations of what it means to perform as an effective scholar. The willingness and ability to listen - to offer kindness, sympathy and compassion – reconfigures how the student understands himself, others and good social work.

Abbreviations & Descriptors

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics

DHHS: Department of Health and Human Services Victoria

FAHCSIA: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

NGO: Non-Government Organisation

SAAP: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

As described on page 1, the descriptor ‘home-less’ is used in this thesis to replace the word ‘homeless’ and ‘homelessness advocate/s’ or simply ‘advocate/s’ describes a research participant, or a group of research participants, who narrated personal experiences of homelessness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The ways by which people perceive roles can disclose how one challenges and/or reinforces positions of power. I became interested in my own role when volunteering at a homelessness drop-in centre in Melbourne, Australia. During that period, friends, family and strangers ascribed my role with a number of characteristics I felt were inconsistent or undeserving of my perceptions of who I was and what I was doing. For example, when they learnt I volunteered they behaved differently toward me and referred to me as an amazing guy, a good guy or nice person. I also consciously and deliberately verbalized 'I volunteered' as a way to enhance my sense of self. Roles exist through interactions with others, and my volunteering was inextricably linked to the role of the 'homeless person'. In this sense, the ways that others perceived my role was meaningless without a mutual and connected understanding of the individuals I was claiming to help. My interest in roles developed over many years apace with my increasingly uncomfortable positioning and place. I sensed an inherent conflict between how people perceived my role as a volunteer and how they perceived the roles of people who are homeless. This necessary connection between roles and place is explored in this study.

This chapter begins by defining the research terms and presenting the research aim, objectives and research question. It describes how the study is situated in community development values and a framework of empowerment embedded within a philosophy of conducting research 'with communities' rather than 'on communities' (Seager 1995). As such, this introduction provides a description of the study's significance before it considers important dimensions of the research context that inform accounts of the research participants.

Definition of Terms

Employing suitable terms to describe research participants that acknowledge their shifting identities and subjective experiences is important. After consultation with a number of research participants, this study uses the following terms. 'Participants' describes all 29

research participants. ‘Homelessness advocate/s’ (or simply ‘advocate/s’) designates a research participant or a group of research participants who narrated personal experiences of homelessness. The term ‘advocate’ connotes knowledge and expertise, and its appearance positions these individuals appropriately as powerful contributors to the research process whilst recognising their shifting identities. ‘Volunteer/s’ describes a research participant or a group of research participants who did not narrate experiences of homelessness and regularly volunteered for people who were home-less.

Because the phrase *‘people who are homeless’* may render passages of a doctoral manuscript cumbersome, this text uses the word ‘home-less’ interchangeably. The descriptor ‘home-less’ consciously displaces phrases like ‘homeless people’ or ‘homeless person/s’, which often reproduce how social, public and political discourses (e.g., Anthony 2018; Craig, 2018; Paul 2017; Tom 2017) cast people experiencing homelessness in negative ways. The phrase ‘homeless person’ also tends to affix a sort of permanent description of a person (as if a *lifestyle*), whereas ‘home-less’ and ‘person who is homeless’ reminds us that shelter and the absence of shelter are often temporary conditions people experience. One will find the term ‘home-less’ absent from popular discourse and homelessness literature; thus, its utilisation throughout this study works to detach and renegotiate some of the stigmas, stereotypes and misconceptions that the word ‘homeless’ would otherwise preserve.

Research Aims and Objective

To better apprehend the connections between social positions and roles, the primary aim of this study is to explore and understand how people who are homeless and the volunteers who work with the home-less perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment. The secondary aim is to investigate and comprehend how participants’ roles are challenged, reinforced and/or negotiated in welfare settings, communities and broader society. Central to these aims is to document how participants describe their lives and interactions and to convey insight about their subjective experiences. From this, the objective of the study is to determine what Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and Government (Municipal, Federal and State) policy and practice responses can be implemented and/or changed to improve the lives of people who experience disempowerment through homelessness.

Community Development

Community development is the foundation on which this study is built. It will complement the methodological approach and provide an overarching set of values and principles that guide the study's processes and discussion.

Scholars currently understand community development variously (Ife 2016), and its meanings have changed over time (Goel 2014). This study conceptualises community development as a toolkit of values and principles (referred to as 'tools' henceforth) that guide scholars' and practitioners' world-views and practices. I learnt about these tools and how to use them from Australian and international scholars, such as like Jim Ife, Sue Kenny and Margaret Ledwith, as well as from mentors, teachers, supervisors and first-hand experience working with vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in East Africa and Australia. Sometimes it is necessary to reference one or several tools to guide my practice; other times I must draw upon all of them at once. Regardless of the particular tool used, the toolkit stays with me: its weight forms a constant reminder to approach mainstream processes and wider structures, institutions and social arrangements with an aim to increase the power of the disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Interrogating Power

Interrogating how dominant ideologies deceive, fragment and distort the interests of the many in favour of the power and privilege of dominant individuals and groups (Ledwith 2011) is an essential community development tool. Scholars undertaking community development work are therefore obligated to interrogate the power they hold *and* the power circulating throughout society.

In terms of interrogating researchers' own power, traditional forms of scientific enquiry may perpetuate unequal relations by positioning researchers as experts and professionals (Gaventa & Cornwall 2008). Community development scholars try to avoid this scenario by thinking and behaving towards research participants as if they are the authority figures (Ife, 2016). Scholars can then listen and rely as much as possible on participants' views and subjective

understandings. They also continually reflect on how their social position and role as academics may negatively influence the research process and outcome. Community development research acknowledges the diversity of individual and community needs and desires, and, rather than empowering others, the research orients itself as a resource to help communities and individuals empower themselves.

In addition to researchers' own power, the social arrangements between people who are homeless and volunteers represent fertile ground for interrogating the power that circulates throughout society. For example, social, public and political discourse often describe people who are homeless as deviant, substance-addicted, poor and lazy, and this discourse frames their use of welfare as a form of weakness (Hodgetts, Cullen & Radley 2005; Zufferey 2013; Zufferey & Kerr 2004). Meanwhile, many societies view homelessness as a state chosen by people who are homeless (Perusco 2010).

This image of the 'homeless person' directly affects how the mainstream public think and respond to people who are homeless (Lee, Lewis & Jones 1992; Toro et al. 2007). It also influences the popular view that home-less people are personally responsible for homelessness and accountable for their own disadvantage (Johnson & Jacobs 2014). In contrast, volunteers are portrayed as 'angels', 'heroes', 'saints' and 'experts' (Zufferey & Chung 2006, p. 34). Volunteering is also broadly assumed to benefit society economically (McGregor-Lowndes et al. 2014), to build communities (Sacred Heart Mission 2019) and to make positive community differences (Melbourne City Mission 2019). Questioning the unequal power relationships between people who are homeless and volunteers therefore accords with a community development approach.

Community

Valuing community belonging is another tool of community development. Essentially, this tool is concerned with understanding and improving the ways that humans connect with each other. One often speaks of 'community' nostalgically because its ideal evokes a bygone era without the Internet or the frenetic lifestyle of modern societies (Ife 2016). Trust, intimacy and a sense of shared belonging also characterise the term community (Tonnies & Loomis 2017). Some scholars suggest that the decline of institutions like the tribe, the clan, the

Church or the village makes a sense of community increasingly difficult to come by in modern society (Ife 2016). Others submit that what it means to belong to or to be excluded from community is as relevant and important today as ever, since communities are the means by which humans construct identities and self-worth (Pretty et al. 2007; Rappaport 1995). In short, the notion of community is important in community development work (and this study) because it locates individuals within physical and symbolic spaces where they bind together to control and improve their lives.

People who are homeless are rarely discussed in terms of community belonging (Horsell 2006); when they are, invocations of 'community belonging' tend to frame them through unflattering notions (i.e., substance abuse or deviancy). This rhetoric symbolically positions people who are homeless neither within nor outside of a community setting: it implies they are somehow displaced in the sea of rhetoric whereby they interact but are not seen to contribute positively to those around them. The Australian print media (see Zufferey 2013) perpetuate the negative traits of homelessness rather than the potential and/or positive qualities that people who are homeless possess. Viewing people who are homeless as a 'drain' on community resources (Baldry et al. 2012) that cost the community a 'staggering amount' (Pro-Bono 2014, p. 1) are just two examples of this negative rhetoric.

Scholars also highlight and discuss exclusion: they show that home-less people are disorientated and alienated (Robinson 2011) from community membership and that their voices are absent in the processes and outcomes of society (Coleman, 2000, p. 40). Although these insights into the home-less experience may be true under some circumstances, discourses of community exclusion and isolation directly influence how the mainstream public understand and respond to people who are homeless. Unsurprisingly, people who are homeless are typically seen, as community members like Spencer (2016, p. 1) describes them, as 'outcasts who belong nowhere', because it is often this feature of homelessness upon which scholars and popular discourses focus.

Volunteers' contributions to and involvement in communities are understood differently from the social constructions of home-less people's participation in community. For example, volunteers are nearly twice as likely as non-volunteers to have participated in a community event in the last six months (ABS 2010, p. 6), and mainstream discourses characterise them

as belonging, included and contributing community members (e.g., The Today Show 2019; Emerson 2014; Gillett 2015; Kinbacher 2016; Masanauskas 2016c; Lambert 2015). Scholars perpetuate this view, underscoring that volunteering promotes a strong sense of community and desire to socially connect (Onyx, Kenny & Brown 2012; Putnam 1995, 2000a; Ross et al. 2010). The social arrangements between people who are homeless and volunteers may therefore indicate the ways broader Australian society accepts and acts upon the roles of disadvantaged groups; it may also indicate how the disadvantaged may perceive the roles of the privileged in terms of controlling behaviours and ascribing rights, beliefs and norms.

Empowerment

The community development tool noted here is empowerment. Empowerment increases the power of the disadvantaged and vulnerable (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). Similar to community development itself, the word 'empowerment' is overused and ambiguous, and it can mean different things to different people.

The meanings people associate with empowerment are subject to culture and history. Prior to the 18th century, for example, powerful individuals who came from institutions like the church or government (or, in some societies, were slave owners) typically granted freedom to a person or group (Traynor 2003). During this period freedom was a privilege offered sparingly (Traynor 2003), and power was 'held over' the powerless in the form of land ownership and obligations (e.g., taxes). It made little sense for individuals to claim autonomy at the time because society knew of no other way to preserve social cohesion other than through the role of master. As wealth began to move over broader geographical areas and through more population groups, people began to see and consider themselves as individuals disconnected from these powerful influences.

The shift in cultural norms and practices - i.e., an increased focus on individual safety, welfare and self-fulfilment - during the 18th century is known as the 'rise of individualism' or as the Enlightenment period, and during that time the concept of empowerment first emerged (Burnett, Sloan & British 2003; Edelstein 2010; Ferrone 2015; Hind 2007; Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). It is from this historic dimension that freedom and autonomy remain central notions of contemporary empowerment theory. While, more recently, a broad range of

disciplines that do not necessarily relate to increasing the power of the underprivileged use the notion, the community development perspective engages empowerment as the relationship between the disadvantaged and those with more power (Kenny 2011). This focus concerns providing people with resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to determine their own future (Ife 2016).

Some of the most influential empowerment theories emanate from community psychology. Along with Rappaport (e.g., 1981), others (e.g., Cattaneo & Chapman 2010; Christens, 2012b; Zimmerman 2000) have contributed to a community development worldview that considers the processes of empowerment as cognitive and iterative. This study incorporates empowerment theory from community development *and* community psychology, and it explores how participants consider themselves and others as within the range of powerful to powerless.

Empowerment, along with interrogating power and community, are three tools of many in the toolkit. They are important because they speak to how I designed my research question and how this analysis will respond to it.

Research Question

Based on the above aims, principles and the community development approach adopted in this study, the research question is:

> How do people who are homeless and the volunteers who work with the home-less perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment?

Roles differentiate groups from others. This insight draws upon a theatrical analogy: actors perform roles written for them, and one conceptualises actors with a number of expected and connected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs, and norms in a social situation (Biddle 1986). The analogy teaches that free or continually changing behaviours differentially provide an individual social status or social position. This study's research question therefore aligns with the commitment to understand the subjective experiences and views of its research participants. The question is not simply about understanding empowerment from the point of view of participants, but also seeks to comprehend the role of relationships as a

means to extend and to add complexity to how home-less people and volunteers are constructed and understood.

Significance

The findings of this study will redound to social awareness and policy decisions, considering that homelessness and volunteerism in Australia are rising even as the welfare system is declining. Below, I specify four areas of significance this study delivers.

Better understanding homelessness as a form of escalating social disadvantage is this study's primary significance. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (henceforth referred to as ABS), the rate of homelessness in Australia increased by 14% during 2011–2016 to 111,237, and the number of people requesting assistance from homelessness services rose by 22%. People living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping outside (the most visible and extreme form of homelessness) also grew by 20% in the same period (ABS 2016a). These numbers significantly outpace general population increases for the same years (ABS 2016b). Furthermore, homelessness service providers sense that recent government policy initiatives have exacerbated rather than ameliorated homelessness (Pawson et al. 2018). For example, 71% report that Australian government changes to the welfare benefits system and/or Centrelink practices aggravated homelessness, and 53% believe policy changes over the last five years have intensified homelessness. Over the same five-year period, the national social housing stock has enlarged by only half the rate needed to keep pace with overall population growth (Pawson et al. 2018). This state of homelessness is occurring despite Australia experiencing record levels of wealth and prosperity: according to some criteria, the country is considered one of the world's wealthiest (Main 2013).

Second, this study will update and improve current conceptions of volunteerism. In the most recent available data, just fewer than six million people in Australia participated in some type of formal volunteering (ABS 2014). Nevertheless, volunteerism is broadly under-researched (Lyons, McGregor-Lowndes & O'Donoghue 2006); some scholars even refer to it as the 'loose and baggy monster' (Kendall & Knapp 1995) to articulate the complex and hard-to-define nature of volunteerism. Although no data exists on the number of people who volunteer specifically in the homelessness sector, according to some the amount is not only rising but those volunteers are also increasingly asked to perform roles traditionally

performed by the state (i.e., Kenny 2011). The volunteerism sector is growing and gaining influence, and it accounts for billions of dollars per annum in 'savings' to the Australian economy (Dolnicar & Randle 2007, p. 3)

Social constructions of volunteers habitually frame them as empowering people experiencing homelessness. Such a view often rests on the conviction that people who are homeless are agents of change. Furthermore, there is a clear and obvious concern about the impact to their sense of power when they are in a vulnerable and stigmatised state, which the very act of receiving aid and services inevitably reinforces when delivered by people broadly interpreted as more powerful and socially privileged. The unequal power relationships between volunteers and people who are homeless is sustained by research showing that the process of giving empowers volunteers (Cheung, Lo & Liu 2012), that volunteering develops personal skills (Cnaan et al. 2010), reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation (Toepoel 2013) and improves self-esteem and confidence, life satisfaction and health (Leviten-Reid & Campbell 2006; Stukas et al. 2016). In contrast, this study will listen and value the voices of volunteers *and* the home-less people who use volunteer services to better understand how their roles interconnect.

Third, this study will progress knowledge about the ways actors within Australia's welfare system perceive their roles in welfare contexts. In 1960, Hayek argued that public welfare was a form of environmental and personal control of one person by another. His view finds support by more recent suggestions that Australia's charity/welfare framework (constructed around a market framework and discourses of individual self-interest and self-help, private initiative, enterprise and competition) may perpetuate power imbalances between volunteers and recipients (Kenny, McNevin & Hogan 2008). Volunteers may therefore feel 'powerful' in their capacity to help the 'powerless' and become scriptwriters for the vulnerable in welfare contexts. Under this scenario, social arrangements are liable to perpetuate tyranny and disadvantage because volunteers hold the potential to control the behaviours, rights and obligations of people who are homeless and construct the beliefs and norms surrounding their form of social disadvantage. As a result, the relationship yields greater benefits to the volunteer than to people who are homeless, who enjoy far less control in these contexts.

Despite the above problems, no study analyses how Australian home-less people *and* the

volunteers who serve them may perceive their roles from the perspective of power. Existing investigations (i.e., Cheung, Lo & Liu 2012; Parsell 2011a) isolate these two groups instead of exploring the nuances between them. These nuances are important because empowerment is relational and context-driven (Christens 2012a), and individual perspectives of power are more meaningful in the context of relationships with others. This study investigates the simultaneous role perspectives of the two groups. Understanding this dynamic between people who are homeless and volunteers ultimately contributes to the promotion of empowerment in both groups.

The study's final significance is relatively modest. People who are homeless are often ignored, overlooked and displaced (Robinson 2011). They lack legitimacy and their voices are absent from the processes and outcomes of society (Coleman, 2000, p. 40). The simple act of listening and valuing home-less participants is central to the study's success, which means the research journey will be just as (if not more) important than the research outcome (Ife 2016; Zimmerman 1988). By incorporating the socially valued voices of people who are homeless, this study will contribute nuance to perspectives currently available in literature and popular discourse.

Context

This study was conducted in Melbourne, Australia between 2013 and 2019. Many of the participants were from (and many of its interviews were conducted in) the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda and its surrounding neighbourhoods. Other locations included Melbourne's CBD and Collingwood. One needs to consider the context of the study as a time of political instability and social unrest. Until 2013, the Federal Labour Government ideologically held that an integral role of the state included funding for community services. Bold policy reform in 2008 brought increased funding and a national focus on homelessness as a very clear and present concern. This focus shifted with the election of the Liberal Federal government in 2013: the administration embraced a neoliberalism predisposed to minimal government intervention and the transfer of economic control from the public sector towards the private sector. The Global Financial Crisis in 2008 and the end of the mining boom in 2012 partially justified this neoliberal-driven change (Duncan & Cassells 2018; Sincovich et al. 2018).

Social unease also accompanied homelessness during the period of research. In early 2016, people experiencing homelessness in Melbourne took to streets and public parks to protest the ways mainstream media were portraying them. The protests merged into a public debate about homelessness service provision, which seemed to amplify public attitudes that 'homeless people' are lazy, deviant (Petty 2017) and/or misbehaving drug-using 'hobos' (the term hobos originated in the United States of America during the early 1900s and referred to migrant workers or homeless vagrants) who chose a life of homelessness (e.g., Doherty 2016; Jefferson 2016c; Masanauskas 2016c; Panahi 2016; Sunday Herald Sun Editorial 2015a; Tom 2017; White 2016). As a result of the social and political instability around homelessness, advocacy groups in 2019 express a deep sense of concern about the current state of homelessness in Australia and campaign for increased attention and funding (e.g., Council of Homeless Persons 2019). Within this context, volunteerism has emerged as an increasingly important mechanism to address funding gaps and social disadvantage.

About the Participants

This study interviewed 29 individuals: 13 women and 16 men aged between 19 and 66. The participant cohort included 18 individuals who narrated first-hand experiences of homelessness and 11 volunteers who worked in the homelessness sector (and who did not narrate personal homelessness experiences). The study collected over 29 hours of narrated interviews and transcribed them over a five-month period between December 2014 and April 2015.

It is important to note that people may feel numerous identities concurrently (Lawler 2008 in Parsell 2010, p. 82); therefore, just because this study names a participant 'advocate' or 'volunteer' does not mean she or he consistently identifies with those terms. Indeed, identities constantly change day-to-day and across one's lifetime (Hall & Du Gay 2006; Lawler 2008 in Parsell 2010; Lemke 2008). The definitions outlined below therefore provide context, yet they remain sensitive to the plurality of identities and subjective interpretations of participants. The participant list by self-selected pseudonym is presented in Table 1 (p. 76).

Volunteerism

Within modern discourses a person who volunteers is an individual who willingly performs labour with no financial remuneration in the form of time, service or skills through an organisation or group (ABS 2010). This study engages individuals who volunteer within organisations catering predominantly to people who are homeless and who have some sort of inter-personal interaction with people (who they view as) experiencing homelessness. This study precludes those who may volunteer their time and resources without coming into 'contact' with an individual who is without a home.

Homelessness

Definitions of homelessness are culturally and historically contingent (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2014). The most common way of understanding homelessness in Australia is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'-lessness, not 'roof'-lessness (ABS 2012). This cultural definition, as originally formulated by Chamberlain and MacKenzie in 1992, provides that homelessness is a relative concept that acquires meaning in relation to the housing conventions of a particular culture (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2014, p. 76). In terms of the advocates of this study, individuals who consider themselves as experiencing homelessness, or have recently experienced homelessness, will include men and women without a permanent place of residence (including those residing in temporary accommodation). Like volunteers, these individuals are diverse and represent a range of experiences and life situations. Most importantly, homelessness does not define them.

Overview of thesis structure

This thesis progresses by outlining the literature and popular discourse on homelessness, volunteerism, empowerment and community. It then covers the research design, results and the discussion of those results.

Chapter 2 explores the historical progression of how popular discourse and research literature represent people experiencing homelessness. Chapter 3 draws on Australian and international academic, political and social discourse to explore the volunteer's role. Chapter 4 investigates the constructs of power and empowerment introduced in Chapters 2 and 3, and Chapter 5

extends this to examine the notion of community. Chapter 6 details the methodology used in this study: it substantiates the qualitative and constructivist approach that responds to the research question, and it justifies the community development approach as a necessary means to engage with research participants.

Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 report the study's findings and explore how participants perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment. Chapter 7 surveys the role of the 'homeless person' from the perspective of advocates' experiences and views of belonging and non-belonging. It demonstrates that people experiencing homelessness are entirely capable and willing community members. Chapter 8 explores the role of 'the volunteer' through concepts of positivity and empowerment. It suggests that the way volunteers perceive roles may not correlate with how they self-identify. Chapter 9 draws on the in-depth interviews *and* the research diary to focus on the role of the 'welfare user'. Chapter 10 discusses the study's findings comprehensively, and it details a perceived role unanticipated at the start of the PhD journey.

Chapter 11 concludes the thesis. It connects all of the findings chapters and critically reflects upon the adequacy with which the thesis responds to its research question. This chapter concludes by considering the implications of the study for policy and practice responses to issues of homelessness and volunteerism.

Summary

This chapter described how my personal interest in roles influences the study. I presented the research aim, objectives and research question. The chapter's sections detailed how this study proceeds within community development values and a framework of empowerment embedded within a philosophy of conducting research 'with communities' rather than 'on communities'. Finally, it provided the study's significance and its research context to clarify how these inform descriptions of the research participants.

Chapter 2: Constructs of Homelessness

Introduction

There are synergies in the way that researchers and scholars in the literature of Australian homelessness influence the political, ideological and public notions of homelessness. This is reflected in a contemporary understanding of 'the disempowered homeless person' (Farrugia 2011). This understanding is interpreted by and influences the conduct of homelessness services and occasionally encourages recipients to self-identify as powerless in order to become eligible to receive help (Parsell, 2010). Nevertheless, these ideas remain contested. Service providers and governments often claim the empowering benefits of the help they provide. Social, political and public discourse and notions of homelessness influence the types and impacts of help provided to people who are homeless. This debate can be traced, albeit imperfectly, through a number of ideological shifts that occurred in Australia and abroad since colonisation. An important and often forgotten dimension of homelessness discourse in Australia is the inclusion of the personal voice of the home-less and their perceptions of their role in contexts which offer help. As a result, there is a call for further exploration and investigation of the perceptions and associated role of advocates in engaging with empowerment and disempowerment related to the home-less. This chapter reviews the research in the historical progression of homelessness and its associated roles, and while the discourse of the 'disempowered homeless person' is similar in other countries and regions, this chapter focuses on the context and history of Australia to engage in much deeper discourse analysis.

Colonisation

The arrival of the First Fleet signalled the beginning of homelessness in Australia (Coleman & Fopp 2014; Mormon-Robinson 2003). Prior to the arrival of the first fleet and European settlement, the resident indigenous population neither knew nor experienced homelessness. Indigenous Australians were always 'at home' in their country (Coleman & Fopp 2014, p. 12). They were neither recognised as 'having homes' nor as 'persons' (they were considered fauna and flora until 1960s) (Law 2019), they were expelled by British colonial powers, forced into labour camps and submitted to slavery (Harman 2012). This and the subsequent

treatment of Indigenous Australians highlights the most acute act of forced disempowerment in Australian history (Wyatt 2005). The Australian Human Rights Commission (1997) as well as various scholars and political commentators contend that Indigenous Australians were the objects of genocidal policies (Barta 1987; Meierhenrich 2014; Moses 2004). The treatment and policies towards Indigenous Australian by British colonial powers reflects how contemporary mainstream society act toward and perceive the roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals who are homeless in Australia (Mormon-Robinson, 2003).

There are a number of legacies of colonisation in the political, ideological and public notions of contemporary Australian homelessness. For example, the unofficial policy of British powers during colonisation was the practice of dispersal or 'moving on' of indigenous groups by restricting their access to sources of traditional food and water Australia (Coleman & Fopp 2014). This transplantation of British norms and values meant that nomadic lifestyles were considered a manifestation of poverty and a result of individual vice and shiftlessness Australia (Coleman & Fopp 2014). More the point is that these colonial belief structures continue to influence contemporary outreach responses to people who are homeless (Memmott 2003; Parsell 2011b). Australian police and council rangers, often at the instigation of public complaints, draw upon legislation to forcibly remove people from public places (Memmott 2003). These public spaces are important for people experiencing homelessness in enabling the creation of a sense of identity, construct meanings associated with home; and, feelings of community belonging (Coleman 2000; Perry 2013; Steffen 2012). Furthermore removing rough sleepers exposes a serious and often overlooked violation of civil and Human Rights normalised and prejudiced by Australia's colonial history.

Another legacy of colonisation on notions of contemporary homelessness is the significantly higher rate of Indigenous Australians in contrast to non-indigenous Australians considered homeless (ABS 2016). This may be explained, in part, by the way the two most common definitions of present-day homelessness in Australia draw upon either Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home (Mallett 2004) or the 'dominant' cultural meanings which define people without 'conventional' accommodation as homeless (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2014). While the ABS (2016, p. 1) acknowledge their definition

of homelessness has been developed for application to the general population, the consequence is that Indigenous Australians who may choose to live a traditional lifestyle and irrespective of their own sense of home or feeling of belonging are publicly, socially and politically constructed as 'homeless'. Some (i.e., Coleman, A 2000; Memmott & Chambers 2010) identify the limitations of these culturally biased definitions of Australian homelessness and yet acknowledge that such definitions continue to influence services and policy responses to contemporary issues of homelessness.

Colonisation also influences the perception of non-indigenous Australians who experience homelessness in contemporary Australia. For example, what distinguishes the use of public space by people who are homeless is that their presence, even when it corresponds to the standards of more mainstream groups using public space, is not legitimized or sanctioned (Coleman 2000). In contrast, the use of the same public space by more mainstream community members is generally sanctioned, even when their behaviour is indistinguishable from that of people who have experienced long-term homelessness. Coleman and Fopp (2014) later describe how British values and norms constructed the social-positions of people living nomadic lifestyles as reflecting deviancy or rootlessness. The use of public space by people who are homeless is rarely a choice (Averitt 2003; Coleman 2000; Parsell & Parsell 2012; Snow & Anderson 1987; Wharne 2015). To suggest homelessness is a choice may be considered an attempt to control and manipulate how people feel at home. Inevitably, the delegitimizing and control of public space constructs the role of people who are homeless as rootless, socially isolated or disconnected even when people who are homeless may not personally ascribe to these views. Constructs of Australian homelessness and people who are homeless, continue to influence contemporary policy responses, public opinion and service delivery. These often sway between neglect of homelessness as a social issue and regulation of people who are homeless by surveillance, and through law and order discipline (Coleman & Fopp 2014).

Welfare Rights

Following colonisation, one of the most influential ideological shifts in Australian culture that shaped contemporary social, political and public discourses of people who are homeless, was the welfare rights movement. Homelessness during this period was often characterised

by its structural or individual causes, which in turn framed sufferers of homelessness in notions of deserving or undeserving welfare recipient.

For example, as a result of rebuilding and restructuring following the second World War, Australia entered a period of unparalleled prosperity referred to by some as the 'golden age of welfare' (e.g., Deeming 2017; Jordan 2018; Ringen 2017). This period was characterised by full employment and home ownership. Home ownership in particular in the time since colonisation has dominated cultural norms of belonging. The welfare rights movement has contributed to shaping the common contemporary assumption that home ownership is an expression of success and security (Dupuis & Thorns 1998). This, in turn, may promote a role perception of people who are homeless as unsuccessful and insecure by socially identifying them as distinct from norms of 'homed' living. While there were limited government policies to address the issues that surround homelessness in Australia during this time, social commentary focused almost entirely on the welfare rights of indigenous Australians and refugees (Berger 1941; Neville 1948). The welfare rights period was influenced by global initiatives like the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1942 and the Civil Rights movement in the United States (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). These movements increased global awareness of social justice and inequality and inspired people to question homelessness as a daily indignity (Nadasen 2012). In contrast to colonisation, the central role of governments in this period was to create fair societies by meeting the needs of all citizens (Ife 2016).

The welfare rights movement influenced the burgeoning awareness of inequality in global communities. In Australia, the Federal government responded directly to the perceived needs of people experiencing homelessness through the *Homeless Persons' Assistance Act of 1974* and the *Homeless Persons' Assistance Program* in 1983. Despite being relatively well intentioned, these policies tended to construct the roles of people who were homeless by drawing upon the kind of negative and disempowering notions that continue today. Australian policy responses, consistent with other post-industrial countries of the same time, over-simplified homelessness and attributed it to the structural causes of insufficient housing, rather than identifying homelessness as a form of disadvantage and inequality (Parsell & Parsell 2012). Consequently, homelessness, and by extension people who were homeless,

were generally misunderstood by broader society and the consequent policy and research responses misrepresented their complex needs and associated diversity.

A great deal of the homelessness literature from the welfare rights period assumed people who were homeless were men and in essence considered homelessness a cause rather than a product of disadvantage (Friend 1978). While Friend (1978, p. 173) suggested this was 'purposeful ignorance' on the part of Australian governments because it failed to comprehend the complex nature of the problem of homelessness, this period in history was challenging to policy makers and service providers because there was a lack of agreement about what actually constituted a person experiencing homelessness (Wyatt 2005). The difficulties were exacerbated by gaps within the literature on homelessness (i.e. causes, pathways and experiences of homelessness) and changes in counting rules that obscured the real numbers and types of people without a home (Coleman & Fopp 2014). For example, the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare on 'Homeless Youth' (1982, p. 26) review of the homelessness research from previous decades concluded: "Any attempt to give a wider account relied almost exclusively on anecdotal evidence…this would seem to highlight a most unsatisfactory basis on which policy decisions have been made".

In different ways, the structurally biased and often negative and disempowering role of perceptions of people experiencing homelessness that characterised social, political and public discourses of the welfare rights period continued to construct role perceptions of people who were homeless into the 1980s. Plus, this model reinstates the structural power imbalance between the state ('helper') and the home-less ('victim') that continues today. This period is often referenced as the crisis of the welfare state or the shift towards the New Right, neo-liberalism or Thatcherism (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). It is of particular interest to Australian and British community development scholars because it represents a time when individual responsibilities informed societies' views of disadvantage (Ife 2016, p. 19 - 22). The crisis of the welfare state was characterised by increased attention by political administrations on the importance of individual freedoms and the superiority of the private market as the best way to allocate wealth and resources (Ife 2016, p. 19 - 22). The community development literature tends to take a conceptual approach when discussing this period. In this context, individual perspectives of homelessness inform a range of related

welfare discourses and public perceptions construct the contemporary Australian home-less person as incapable of social function (Johnson & Jacobs, 2014).

Another characteristic of the welfare rights period was the debate in Australian research and policy around the causes of homelessness, and in particular the investigations of structural (i.e., employment, housing, welfare) or individual factors (i.e., personal choices, drug and alcohol dependency, mental illness) (Arthurson & Jacobs 2009; Johnson & Chamberlain 2011; Johnson & Jacobs 2014; Neil & Fopp 1994; Timmer 1994). While individual perspectives of the cause of homelessness existed well before the welfare rights crisis, particularly in government policies, the crisis of the welfare rights movement increased public awareness of individual responsibility (Ife 2016; Kenny 2002; Ledwith 2011). Individual perspectives of homelessness emphasises the active role of the home-less in making decisions and taking responsibility for their own circumstances (Johnson & Jacobs 2014). The discussion and debate surrounding this perspective is that while an individual perspective may assert the agency of people who are homeless, it may also frame people who are homeless as responsible for homelessness and attribute their living conditions to a personal unwillingness to work and or other character flaws (Johnson & Jacobs 2014).

An individual perspective on homelessness also frames the choices people who are homeless make in terms of freedom and control. Poor personal choices by people who are homeless are more often than not the result of rather than the cause of their homelessness (Parsell & Parsell 2012; Snow & Anderson 1987). Public attitudes remain inconsistently opposed to these beliefs. Public opinion on homelessness in Australia is driven by the notion that people become home-less due to poor decisions and a lack of personal effort (Batterham, Hollows & Kolar 2011). These public attitudes are important in shaping the public treatment of the home-less and effect support for particular policy responses (Lee, Lewis & Jones 1992; Toro et al. 2007).

Discourses that concern poor people are also often framed by a distinction between those thought to deserve and those thought to not deserve help (Rosenthal 2000). This binary distinction of ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’ (Kenny 2002, p. 287) is linked to the debate over the extent to which homelessness is attributed to structural or individual causes (Rosenthal 2000). Rosenthal’s (2000) insights have been incorporated into a number of similar

international (Cloke, May & Johnsen 2011) and Australian (i.e., Horsell 2006; Schindeler 2010; Zufferey 2013) studies and remain consistent with the theories of Foucault (1982). Foucault (1982) in *'The Subject and Power'* identified dividing practices which separate powerless groups and individuals *within* themselves or *from* more powerful others. This process is illustrated in the concluding statements of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare (Australia. Parliament. Senate. Standing Committee on Social Welfare 1982, p. 23) with their binary and dividing role distinctions in claiming 'homeless youth' were either unemployed, of low socio-economic background, possess little education or skills, or have emotional or social 'problems'.

More recently to the welfare rights period, Zufferey (2013) suggested similar individual explanations for contemporary homelessness in binary media representations of people who are homeless. Drawing on the work of Rosenthal (2000), Zufferey (2013, p. 1) concluded that the home-less in Australia are often described as mentally ill, lacking social skills and thus deserving support; undeserving slackers or drug addicts who do not want to help themselves, or alternatively, as unwilling victims such as women and children escaping violence. These types of distinctions are a form of knowledge creation that construct the roles of the home-less in binary and over-simplified terms. This may influence the ways in which people who are homeless inevitably receive help (Parker & Fopp 2004). Overall, individual explanations of the factors contributing to people being home-less may ignore social inequalities on the one hand and on the other hand construct people as unable to control their own lives.

Problems and Emergencies

The previous section outlined how individual and structural explanations of homelessness during the welfare rights and 'crisis' periods in Australia and abroad, may have influenced a perception that the home-less are either inactive agents in their own lives or personally responsible for their own disadvantage. While these types of social constructs of homelessness continue to influence contemporary perceptions of homelessness, discourses of homelessness changed from the mid-1980s from focusing on welfare rights and the crisis of welfare rights to consider homelessness as a 'problem' or an 'emergency' to be fixed (Parsell, Jones & Head 2013; Zufferey 2013). Thus, this section focuses on how political, ideological and public notions of homelessness framed the home-less as a financial drain on society

(Baldry et al. 2012) and as a cultural embarrassment (Batterham, Hollows & Kolar 2011; Johnson & Chamberlain 2011). These attitudes shape the way communities respond to the home-less (Lee, Lewis & Jones 1992; Toro et al.) and contribute to the view they are personally responsible for homelessness and accountable for their own disadvantage. Such attitudes also imply the home-less are not capable of solving their own predicament.

Describing homelessness as a 'problem' or 'emergency' has only recently been linked in the Australian homelessness literature to Foucault's (1970, 1972, 1979, 1982, 1990) concept of 'governmentality' which Foucault described in terms of the wide range of ways people can be controlled. However, this focus remains a relatively narrow field of enquiry. Nevertheless, it provides an appropriate lens in viewing the roles of the home-less as personal, political and social constructions in explaining how institutions construct the roles of the powerless to reflect the interests of the powerful. The release of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) in 1985 may have been influenced and in turn influenced a perception that homelessness was an 'emergency' and a 'problem' that needed fixing (Parsell, Jones & Head 2013). While the aims and objectives of SAAP changed between 1985 and 2008, it remained consistently predisposed toward the view that the home-less were responsible for their own circumstances.

Australian Schindeler (2010) provides the most detailed description of these concepts in arguing that the problematization of homelessness lies in seeking or testing causal links between homelessness and individual deficiency. There is an implicit, if not explicit, insinuation that the experience of homelessness is a form of individual moral, social or criminal deviance (Schindeler, 2010, p. 17). Due to this perceived deviance, the roles of the 'homeless' prevent them from becoming 'contributing members of society' and thus homelessness arises due to personal deficit or fault. The home-less therefore begin to consider their roles in ways consistent with the way that others see them (e.g. having a problematic life and behaviours and/or living in a state of an emergency). Schindeler's (2010) findings while not considered in Zufferey's (2013) media representations of homelessness in Australia, both come to similar conclusions. Zufferey (2013) suggests that the written media tend to represent homelessness in Australia as a crisis and a problem. The conclusion is that these perspectives reinforce deep-seated community values that lead to the maintenance of unequal power relations between service providers and the home-less.

There is also a great deal of debate on evaluating SAAP's effectiveness and how well it addressed issues associated with the complex nature of homelessness (e.g., Danby, Farrell & Leiminer 2006; Eardley et al. 2008; Gibson 2004; Griffin & Giovanetti 2007; Kocaj 2005; Kunnen & Martin 2004; Limbrick 2006; Wyatt 2005). The government claims SAAP as an example of "…innovative and good practice" (Taskforce 2008). In contrast, Danby et al., (2006) claims that young home-less negotiate between structural conditions of services and their own agency, while Kocaj's (2005) contends that clients of SAAP were not having their basic housing needs adequately met due to a lack of appropriate housing and support options. There is also general approval of the wrap-around nature of support (Parsell 2011b, p. 333). In spite of some problems with definitions of homelessness and the implications about responsibility, the initiatives from SAAP are worthwhile.

Nevertheless, several scholars of homelessness who have reviewed the policy describe the problematic nature of homelessness including inadequate family links and that they could not, if given the opportunity, live independently (Coleman & Fopp 2014; Limbrick 2006; Parsell 2011a). In addition, the services associated with the SAAP were often ineffective in empowering recipients to feel at home (Burdekin & Carter 1989; Human Rights Commission 1989). Despite common assumptions that the home-less were responsible for their own circumstances, there is a pervasive view that the election of the Australian Labor Party to government in 2007 signalled an important change in the ways that homelessness was socially constructed. These changes were in-part influenced by an increased international awareness that modern capitalist societies were unable to 'leave behind' the poor (Ife 2016). By framing homelessness from both structural and individual perspectives, political discourses in particular began to acknowledge that homelessness was pervasive and its reduction was everyone's responsibility. There was a greater focus at this time on class-based power relationships as determinants of disadvantage and recognition of the importance of social cohesion and the demands for a more egalitarian society (Stilwell & Jordan 2007).

Experts and Professionals

The Labor government in this era promoted more long-term and multi-disciplinary approaches that focused on homelessness rights and social justice. This emphasis, in

conjunction with developments in research and theory, housing and service delivery (Hombs 2011) and a clearer universally recognised definition of homelessness (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2014), brought and focused the issues of homelessness on to the public domain and constructed a more positive perspective of the roles of the home-less. In spite of this change in focus, there remained a significant absence and exclusion of people who were homeless and their voices were "silent as a breath" (Foucault, 1972, p. 25), while academics, service providers and governments continue to be described and describe themselves as experts and professionals. The absence of legitimacy and control by the home-less is exemplified in their lack of presence and voice in the processes and outcomes that shaped their lives (Coleman 2000).

Illustrating the changing roles and the excluded voice of the home-less during this period is a central debate (see for example Hopper 1991) around the ways homelessness in Australia was defined. Shortly after the Federal election of 2007, the ABS began to redefine homelessness to reflect its shifting dynamics and complexities. The ABS influenced by American and European interpretations of 'home' (Mallett 2004), added to previous cultural definitions of 'home' and developed operational categories including the physical, social and legal domain. These included a consideration of whether a tenant was legally allowed in the dwelling and the impact of overcrowding on their control of and access to social relations (ABS 2016a). Essentially, these changes to operational definitions of homelessness increased the numbers of people who were considered home-less (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2014). These new definitions framed the roles of the home-less in more complex and diverse ways by considering how they were affected by the physical, social and legal circumstances in which they find themselves.

A number of policies and associated rhetoric surrounding their implementation demonstrated that the Federal Labor government of 2007 delineated their stance from prior ideologies and yet continued to exclude the voices of the home-less. An illustration of this change in focus was Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's pledge to turn the homelessness 'crisis' around for the long term, rather than apply short-term band-aid solutions (in The Sunday Telegraph 2008). Prime Minister Rudd pointed out that each night in Australia, 100,000 people did not have a place to sleep and that together, "…we have a unique opportunity to make a difference to homelessness in Australia …[and]… we owe it to those 100,000 homeless Australians to get

this right" (in The Sunday Telegraph 2008, p. 1). This was followed by the Australian Labor government release of *'The White Paper: The Road Home'* which aimed to reduce homelessness by injecting $1.2 billion of additional funding into the 'sector' (Bailey & Johnson 2009). The purpose of the paper was to outline a new policy direction to halve overall homelessness by 2020 and offer a greater level of supported accommodation to rough sleepers (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FAHCSIA] 2008, p. 17). As a result, homelessness became more visible and was located within broader public discourses.

The White Paper is generally applauded for its broad approach and acknowledgement that homelessness is incredibly complex (e.g., Falzon 2009; Goudie & Cornell-March 2009; Nash 2009; Nicholson 2008). The policies acknowledge that homelessness was not just the result of too few houses and highlighted a range of contributory factors including domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse (FAHCSIA 2008). In addition, setting quantifiable and measurable targets to reduce homelessness distinguished the federal Labor government from previous administrations as responsibilities for homelessness shifted in part from the home-less to governments and the broader public.

This change in political rhetoric that framed homelessness as a broader public responsibility while mentioned briefly by some (i.e., Batterham et al., 2011, p. 74) remains relatively absent from the Australian homelessness literature. The discursive change instead was illustrated by reviewing how the mainstream media of this period constructed notions of homelessness and the roles of the home-less. Since Kevin Rudd publicly acknowledged in 2007 the numbers of people who were home-less in Australia, there was an increase in Melbourne newspaper articles referencing these statistics. In addition, a review of Australian newspaper databases (i.e., ANZ Newsstand, Nexis and Westlaw) indicated an increase in 2007 and onwards in the frequency and number of newspaper articles written about homelessness. This change in the type and frequency of public discourse increased public awareness of the issues of homelessness and presented the roles of the home-less with greater complexity and compassion.

Despite an increased public awareness of the numbers of home-less, the voices of the home-less remained consistently absent from public, political and academic discourse. Instead, debate across the comprehensive body of literature and within specific articles identifies the effectiveness of homelessness policy, its application and its influence on public perceptions. For example, several (Bullen 2013; Falzon 2009) argue that the period saw a dramatic change in the homelessness discourse to the consideration of both individual and structural perspectives. Structural perspectives in turn constructed the roles of the home-less more positively by acknowledging the complexities of homelessness and identifying structural inequalities. Others (i.e., Reynolds 2009, p. 1) highlighted the White Paper's thoughtful approach toward responding and tackling the full range of home-less experiences and or suggested that while *The White Paper* over-emphasized the rough sleeping population and introduced a narrow definition of homelessness, in contrast to previous attempts it more clearly described the extent of causes and impacts of homelessness (Wright-Howie 2009).

Those more critical of homelessness policy during this time continued to suggest that the home-less were personally responsible for their own circumstances. For example, Johns (2012, p. 43) argued that homelessness cannot be reduced and felt it unlikely that causes of homelessness could be overcome. Johns' (2012) approach accepted inequality as a necessary and even desirable state of modern societies and opposed the values which guided community development by classifying causes of homelessness to include amongst other factors, domestic violence (FHCSIA, 2010), poor mental health (Johnson & Grigg 2007) and poverty (Novak 2015) as acceptable forms of vulnerability.

The tensions explicit in the Australian homelessness literature surrounding the White Paper notwithstanding, the overall numbers of home-less in 2014 increased to over 100,000 people (Karvelas 2013). The reality of policy implication and practice fell well short of the aspirational rhetoric (Coffey & Stone 2016). There is an overwhelming consensus, predominantly argued by service providers, that policy failed because of a lack of funding (Beer & Prance 2013; Moore & Burrows 2013; Parsell, Jones & Head 2013) or because of the absence of a national plan or guidelines which in turn left the States and Territories to devise their own homelessness plans (Coffey & Stone 2016). Nevertheless, there are a limited although influential number of studies that have looked at these areas from the perspective of

exclusion and discourse. These may more accurately describe the inability of implementation of the White Paper's recommendations to reduce the number of home-less in Australia.

Policy responses to homelessness during these times moved closer toward community development values by acknowledging homelessness as a form of inequality yet they continued to exert control and influence through hierarchical expert and professional knowledge (Kenny 2010; 2011). These top-down approaches deny the home-less the right to self-determine their own social roles and perpetuated structures of oppression and disadvantage (Ife, 2016). Several researchers examined homelessness related discourses from similar power perspectives (Arthurson & Jacobs 2009a; Carey 2008; Jones & Smyth 1999; Robinson 2003). Most conceptualize power and discourse rather than reflect by personally engaging with the home-less. For example, Horsell (2006) draws upon Foucauldian concepts of discourse, power/knowledge and surveillance and applies these to Australian policy responses towards homelessness. His argument centers on the relationship between power and knowledge and how these are embedded in contemporary thinking about homelessness. Essentially Horsell's (2006) point is that the excluded and isolated roles of the home-less in policy may inform service providers' own perspectives towards the roles of service users. This, in turn, promotes a normative view that individuals should and can be independent and that reliance on services labels recipients as deficient and responsible for their own circumstances (p. 215). Horsell (2006) offers some excellent insights, nevertheless his exclusion of 'home-less voices' is consistent with the larger corpus of homelessness literature in Australia.

The exclusion of the 'home-less voice' acknowledges the marginalization of people who are homeless in policy design and service delivery. For example, there is the complete absence of a 'home-less voice' in the planning and implementation of the Common Ground service designed to meet the perceived housing needs of people experiencing homelessness (Parsell, Fitzpatrick & Busch-Geertsema 2014). Advocating on behalf of people who were homeless, a group of academics, journalists, lobby groups and government 'expert' representatives came together to implement the program based on intuition and seeing Common Ground first hand which Parsell, Fitzpatrick & Busch-Geertsema (2014) suggested failed to acknowledge or legitimize other knowledge sources i.e., rigorous evaluative supporting research.

The home-less are not only excluded from mainstream society, policy design and service delivery, their voices are also largely excluded in academic research (Horsell 2006; Parsell, Cameron & Jones 2014). Others (i.e., Gilbert 2010; Jeanneret 2005; Jones & Smyth 1999; Paliwal 2005; Pate & Cull 2010; Spoehr et al. 2007) also may perpetuate the myth that researchers/practitioners in contrast to their participants/clients possess superior levels of knowledge (Kleinsasser 2000) and influence and construct the 'expert' and 'professional' roles of academics and scholars. Foucault's (1994, p. 326-348) understanding of discursive formation and power describe this process as a hierarchical privileging of expert knowledge which separate researchers' expert, professional and knowledgeable roles from the roles of those affected by disadvantage, marginalization and powerlessness. While researchers may base their work on breadth of experience and good intentions, they inevitably illustrate similar exclusionary practices which are potentially disempowering to the role perceptions of the home-less.

In contrast, a limited amount of research from Australia includes the voices of the home-less and makes similar conclusions about the disempowered and excluded roles of people who are homeless. Coleman (2000) in a series of interviews with the home-less in Brisbane suggested that the construction of homelessness based on myths and beliefs rather than interaction and understanding is a significant factor in the social exclusion of people experiencing long-term homelessness. Excluding and denying the underprivileged a more dominant voice in response to policy and service provision reinforces power imbalances. Watson (2003, p. 3) explains that "…to take power is to win speech" and public language helps to shape our understandings of homelessness. *The White Paper* and the policy and practice it encouraged, recognized homelessness as a form of inequality. Nonetheless, its failure to reduce the overall number of people without a home can be partly attributed to an absence of the voice of the home-less and its inability to recognize new methods of collaboration, social innovation, interdisciplinary research and models of governance (Dale & Hill 2001; Kenny 2011).

Choice, Lazy, Deviant, Misbehaving, Drug User

A number of constructions around homelessness contribute to the perceived empowerment or disempowerment of people experiencing homelessness. These include, among others notions of choice, laziness, deviancy, misbehaviour and drug use.

In terms of choice, the liberal political machine has recently championed policies which significantly diminish the role of the public sector (Whelan 2012) and cast homelessness from perspectives of personal choice (Nader 2010). Meanwhile, political protests in Melbourne's CBD in 2016 by the home-less may have shaped, influenced and/or amplified public attitudes of participants as lazy, deviant/criminal and/or misbehaving, and drug users (Petty 2017). Despite and in contrast to public perceptions, the home-less tend to be more measured when constructing their roles. The seemingly defiant opposition to these understandings in public, social and political discourses remains critical. Truth telling by others is an essential component to how the home-less take care of themselves and how they form the right kind of relationships that give virtue and happiness (Foucault 1990).

While this chapter previously discussed how the literature engages with homelessness choices in contexts of public space and factors related to homelessness, notions of choice seem to appear more frequently in Australian public and political descriptions of the home-less (Nader 2010; Panahi 2016). Historically, international conservative political leaders have publicly defined homelessness as a choice. In the United States, President Reagan famously stated "…we may say, homeless by choice" (in Parsell & Parsell 2012, p. 422) and British Prime Minister John Major supported this view (Parsell & Parsell 2012). In comparison, Australian political leaders have rarely claimed this position until more recently (e.g., Abbot in Perusco 2010), although there is a strong argument that the notion frames both past and contemporary public attitudes (Batterham, Hollows & Kolar 2011; Knecht & Martinez 2009; Parsell & Parsell 2012).

Contemporary public and political attitudes in Australia that support the view that homelessness is a choice are consistent with early twentieth century representations of homelessness in the United States. The ''neo-romantic" ideologies that constructed the roles of marginalized people as 'cool' (Wacquant 2002) during this period also described the experiences of homelessness as liberating from the responsibilities of 'normal life'[1] (Kusmer

[1] Similar arguments have been made by some scholars who research the field of prostitution. While the majority of scholarship claims prostitution a form of sexual exploitation and gender inequality; some argue it is women's right and liberation (Coy, 2016).

2003). For example, essays and novels by Jack Kerouac (2007, 2012; 1996) the famous beat generation author portrays homelessness in the early part of the twentieth century as a choice derived from a desire to live outside the rules of morality that governed the average person (Kusmer 2003). With a cigarette in hand, Kerouac (*On the Road* 2007, originally published in 1957) describes his travels and life as an "idealistic lope to freedom" (in Heinonen 2008 p. 4). Other early twentieth century studies romanticised homelessness (Anderson 1923) and identified people experiencing homelessness as 'hobos' (Anderson 1923), constructions which Cresswell (2002) suggests also framed the direction of future research.

Some argue that there remains within the human condition a yearning for freedom from daily life (Viruru 2005) which is sometimes attributed to the experiences of homelessness (Waldron 1991). However, as Foucault (in Kallendorf 2010) demonstrated, there is no vantage point outside the systems of power in which people find themselves implicated. Research in homelessness and the attitudes of the home-less often deny homelessness as a choice or that it is experienced as a form of freedom (King 2003; Mitchell 1997; Snow & Anderson 1987; Waldron 1991; Wright). Indeed, in contemporary United States, homelessness may be a choice for some but these choices are often made in the face of limited alternatives (Snow & Anderson 1987). The choice to become home-less is a choice of the lesser evils and takes on a different meaning than if it were made in the face of more attractive options (Snow & Anderson, 1987 p. 1364).

In Australia, there is relatively little research on whether or not people choose to become home-less. Most tend to focus on the choices made while experiencing homelessness (i.e., Brooks, Hernandez & Stuart 2005; Clear & Lennon 2007; Cripps 2009). The research on the choice to become home-less is often presented by advocacy and service providers speaking on behalf of people who are homeless. For example, in the context of domestic violence Cooke (2015) explains that homelessness may constitute a better alternative to living with ongoing abuse. Similarly, Nash (2015) contends that young people often have no other choice but to become home-less due to exorbitant rent charges and substandard living conditions.

These advocacy and service provider perspectives remain consistent throughout the limited empirical research conducted in Australia into choices to become 'homeless'. Parsell and Parsell (2012) drawing upon Snow and Leon (1987) in the USA, present ethnographic

research in Australia exploring the lives of people sleeping rough to argue the prevailing view that 'homelessness is choice' is embedded within debates about deviant behaviours and problematic pathologies (p. 421); a view that is supported by Petty's (2017) PhD research. Such a view suggests that the home-less either make calculated and immoral choices to be homeless or they are perceived to be powerless agents who lack the capacity to exercise choices (Parsell & Parsell 2012). Parsell and Parsell's (2012) contribution to the Australian homelessness literature is empirical evidence supporting and supported by advocacy and service providers' perspectives that homelessness is not a choice and more likely due to circumstance i.e., it is safer for them to be homeless than in their prior permanent place of residence.

In addition to choices, several other public role perceptions in Australia influence people who are homeless. These role perceptions are composed through indirect contact between the public and the home-less (Jordan 1994). While the public may have sought romanticized descriptions of homelessness in the early twentieth century from films and novels (see, for example, Charlie Chaplin's 1915 silent film 'The Tramp', Preston Sturges's 1941 film 'Sullivan's Travels' and Jack Kerouac's 1957 novel 'On the Road') which framed homelessness as an experience of freedom unencumbered by life's usual difficulties, contemporary news coverage of homelessness is one of the most powerful forms of indirect contact between people who are homeless and mainstream society (Lee, Farrell & Link 2004). The news media often shapes public attitudes and influence policy and service delivery (Buck, Toro & Ramos 2004; Lee, Farrell & Link; Link et al. 1995; Zufferey 2013; Zufferey & Chung 2006). Nonetheless, with some recent exception (Petty 2017) there is little information to indicate or report on how the political protests in Melbourne by the home-less in 2016 have shaped, influenced and/or amplified public attitudes, or how they often framed people who are homeless as lazy, deviant and/or misbehaving.

Media articles written on homelessness in Melbourne between 2010 and 2016 often describe people who are homeless as violent, lazy and/or drug users (Alison 2016; Doherty 2016; Dow, Jones & Gordon 2016; Jefferson 2016b, 2016c; Jefferson & Paynter 2016; Masanauskas 2016a, 2016c; Middendorp 2016; O'Rourke 2016; Panahi 2016; Editorial - Sunday Herald Sun, 2016a; 2016b; White 2016). It is not completely unreasonable or

unexpected that the public construct their understandings of homelessness from more critical perspectives when claims arguing otherwise are less frequently offered in public discourses. In such a context, public attitudes toward the home-less are often framed in disparaging notions, which in turn reinforce stereotypes about the home-less and stigmatise an already disenfranchised population (Bartholomew 1999).

Nonetheless, drug dependency tends to be higher among the home-less than in the general population (Mallett 2004; Robinson 2011; Teesson, Hodder & Buhrich 2003; Topp et al. 2013; Whittaker & Burns 2015). Up to fifty-nine percent of people who are homeless in Western Europe and North America are alcohol dependent and fifty-four percent are dependent on at least one illicit drug (Fazel et al. 2008). These rates are also significant in Australia with the home-less, in contrast to the general population, being six times more likely to have a drug-use disorder and thirty-three times more likely to have an opiate use disorder (Teesson, Hodder & Buhrich 2003). However, the research into homelessness tends to address the 'what' of drug use (e.g. frequency and type) rather than 'why' the home-less take drugs. In some cases, this approach may perpetuate the myth that substance abuse is the main cause of homelessness (Johnson & Chamberlain 2008a). This myth in turn justifies inappropriate policy and program design and by focusing on substance abuse as a causal factor, individuals are commonly blamed which diverts attention away from the structural factors that contribute to homelessness (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008b, p. 347).

Even though newly accommodated adults in Australia are less likely to be drug dependent (Johnson & Chamberlain 2008b), drug and alcohol use continues to be a mechanism to deal with homelessness (Johnson & Chamberlain 2008b; Kidd & Davidson 2007; Neale 2001; Northcote & Howard 2006; 2011; Whitbeck et al. 2001). Within this framework drug use is often positioned from individual perspectives and the solutions to its use are based on reducing each of supply, harm and demand (Lancaster & Ritter 2014). While tackling substance abuse from the perspectives of treatment and recovery are necessary, they can also promote discourses that stigmatise an already disenfranchised group. Individual perspectives of substance use frame 'homeless people' as poor decision makers who are accountable for their own circumstances. Substance abuse therefore justifies the social position of people who are homeless which denies them of opportunities for empathy and understanding (Rossiter

2001). Homeless individuals who enjoy the occasional alcoholic beverage are also stigmatised. Homelessness differentiates them from ‘normal people’ and drinking becomes morally suspect, irresponsible and dangerous (Beresford 1979; Hodgetts, Cullen & Radley 2005; Rossiter 2001)

Laziness often defines the public perception of the home-less (Cecins 2015; Knecht & Martinez 2009; Wagner and Cohen 1992). Four in ten Australians believe that people who are homeless are lazy, freeloaders, stupid, or not working hard enough (Doherty 2016). The popular media reinforces this view *and* perpetuate the myth that if the home-less can be regimented enough to sit in the same place every day before others get to their place of employment, they can probably hold down jobs of their own (Janine - Community Member - in the Herald Sun, 2016). The perception of the home-less as lazy is historical (Schindeler 2010) and is a myth born from western cultures idealized work ethic (Wagner 1993). This public perception of the home-less as lazy is embarrassing to the home-less despite many home-less engaging in productive activities (Wagner 1993).

In addition to the public perceptions that the home-less are lazy free-loaders, the prevailing constructions of 'homeless people' as deviant in recent Melbourne print media is particularly evident (Petty 2017). The public discourses surrounding homelessness may have amplified, agitated and/or constructed the roles of the home-less when they responded directly and in force to the publication of a Melbourne newspaper article which argued Elizabeth St was becoming Melbourne’s skid row and aggressive beggars were jeopardizing the city’s reputation (Jefferson & Paynter 2016). In response, the home-less built and resided in makeshift city camps, which in turn served as a form of empowerment (Dow 2016). Nevertheless, newspaper editorials during this period frequently claimed the ‘occupation’ was dirty and illegal, while popular journalists (i.e., Panahi 2016) explicitly reported upon and claimed participants were refusing help and breaking the law.

Apart from the isolated report (see, for example Petty 2017; Robertson 2016), there have been very few attempts to interpret the political protest in Melbourne. Media representations nonetheless influence perception of the home-less as deviant. For example, Lee et al (2004) suggests that acquiring information about homelessness through newspaper articles is one of the most influential ways public attitudes are shaped. Even when these public attitudes are

framed from positive perspectives, they can quickly mutate into less favourable views when the home-less are portrayed as threatening. Such portrayals of the home-less often emerge when the media focus on any sign of resistance to the location of their shelter, or when merchants' attempt to get rid of the home-less by scaring away customers (Lee, Farrell & Link 2004). Media reports during the Melbourne political protest frequently reported upon the cost of homelessness on local trade and Melbourne's reputation (Jefferson 2016a; Jefferson and Paynter 2016). Various government representatives further framed the home-less from perspectives of deviancy, while maintaining that innocent members of the public going about their business should not have to find themselves at risk of being threatened, or feel afraid (Lord Mayor Robert Doyle in Jefferson & Paynter 2016)

The Melbourne political protests are a form of social order resistance imposed upon the home-less by services and shelter providers (Hoch 1994). These forms of illegal behaviours enhance the deviant status of people who are homeless while coinciding with the development of a sense of solidarity amongst the home-less (Hoch 1994). The 'homeless' subculture in Australia is explained by some as contributing to higher crime rates amongst the home-less than in the general population (Chamberlain & Johnson 2013). Meanwhile others argue that crime behaviours are a symptom of the experience of being homeless (Martijn & Sharpe 2006). However, there is general agreement that in various forms the home-less are more likely to be a victim of past and future violence than people who are homed (Larney et al. 2009) despite contrary and less supportive public attitudes.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the synergies in the way that researchers and scholars in the literature of Australian homelessness influence the political, ideological and public notions of homelessness. The chapter found that through a number of ideological shifts that occurred in Australia and abroad since colonisation an important and often forgotten dimension of homelessness is the inclusion of the personal voice of the home-less and their perceptions of their role in contexts which offer help. As a result, further exploration and investigation is required into the perceptions and associated role of advocates in engaging with empowerment and disempowerment related to the home-less. The next chapter takes a similar approach from perspectives of volunteerism.

Chapter 3: Constructs of Volunteerism

Introduction

This chapter is a counterpoint to the previous section on homelessness by engaging with the ways in which Australian and international academic, political and social discourse frames the roles of volunteers in concepts of positivity. While volunteering is an important part of our political and cultural heritage, it remains broadly under-researched (Lyons, McGregor-Lowndes & O'Donoghue 2006). As an example, Oppenheimer (2008, p. 1) views volunteerism as sitting in the shadowlands, somewhere between the cut and thrust of paid work and markets and the private domestic economy. Others refer to volunteerism as the lost continent in the cartography of the social fabric of modern societies (Cloke, Johnsen & May 2007) or as a loose and baggy monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995). These definitions and descriptions are problematic due to the theoretical difficulties in providing definitional boundaries surrounding what constitutes the voluntary sector and the behaviour of volunteering (Kendall & Knapp 1995; Oppenheimer and Warburton, 2014). But, despite the difficulty in clearly defining volunteerism, the general view in international and Australian literature is that volunteering is beneficial to the volunteer, to the recipients of volunteer services and to society more broadly. In short, there is the unequivocal claim that "volunteering benefits all of our lives" (Pidgeon 1998, p. xi). This broad assumption is not wholly supported in terms of the empirical research but perhaps also overplays the view that the social and personal roles of volunteers are entirely positive. Underpinned by this construct of the broad benefits of volunteerism, the literature focuses on a number of key areas. These include the economic role of volunteerism, the personal benefits of volunteering, and the positive role characteristics and motivations of volunteers. Analysis of the bulk of the research based on positive interpretations of the role of volunteerism will be contrasted with some more critical examples from the literature in this chapter.

Economic Benefits

The time and energy volunteers contribute to organizations or groups equates to a significant dollar value which under normal circumstances may require remuneration. One of the

benefits of reducing costs through the use of volunteers is that organizations or groups are more freely able to employ additional paid staff and improve services to the public (Ironmonger 2012). This particular mindset is common in western societies and is grounded in moral judgments about charity imported from Britain by working class migrants and the philanthropy-minded bourgeoisie (Beilharz, Watts & Considine 1992). However, framing volunteering in purely economic terms constructs the role of volunteers as *'contributing members of society'* even when volunteers themselves, or recipients of their services and time, may not necessarily perceive volunteer roles from an economic perspective. Volunteers from the economic perspective perpetuates the idea that they are more fortunate than charity recipients and may contribute to a rejection of structural or collective solutions to issues of social justice and inequality in favour of relationships that are based on the patronage of individuals (Kenny 2011, p. 232). The implication is that non-volunteers in broader society may at times frame the roles of charity recipients as 'undeserving' of additional help because from their perspective they are already receiving all the help they need to improve their lives. Meanwhile, while volunteers occasionally consider their roles from economic perspectives, it rarely represents their defining role characteristic.

Oppenheimer (2008; 2012; 2014a, 2014b; Oppenheimer & Warburton 2014), a leading and influential Australian scholar in volunteerism, describes how the voluntary sector is connected to and influenced by the economic ideologies of government. Oppenheimer also examines the influence of colonisation and suggests the role of volunteers in Australia has been framed by British notions of philanthropy. She also illustrates that charity in nineteenth century Britain was often provided by upper or middle class citizens who were socially and publicly understood to be volunteering to increase their own power, religious influence and importance within society. These perceptions continue to frame the roles of volunteers in modern-day Australia. The stereotype of the well-off and self-serving volunteer may be an accurate and truthful representation in some contemporary volunteerism contexts. For example, the ABS (2010; 2014) has reported that 67% of volunteers are employed in full time or part time work; people with higher education levels are more likely to volunteer than those who have low level of education and, 74% consider themselves to be in excellent/very good, or good health. There is the suggestion that charity work is often performed to improve the volunteer's own life circumstances. In Victoria, Australia, Brown et al (2012) reported that self-esteem, self-efficacy and social connectedness were significant mediators in a

volunteering-well-being relationship. In addition, Clary and Snyder (1999) in the USA reported volunteering enabled volunteers to strengthen social relationships, improve mental health and learn more about the world they live in. It may not, therefore, be completely unreasonable to suggest that while broader society frame volunteers from perspectives of economic contributions a stronger influence may be the personal benefits volunteers experience through volunteering.

The framing of volunteerism in economic terms also divides voluntary behaviours into formal and non-formal volunteering definitions. Informal volunteering is a traditional form of helping others performed outside of non-profit organizations (Volunteering Australia 2015). These behaviours may include helping friends, family or neighbours, and is frequently observed in the literature through the lens of theories of social capital advanced by socialist scholars like Bourdieu (2011), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1994, 1995, 2000a, 2000b). Meanwhile, Low et al. (2007) defines formal volunteering in the UK as giving help through groups, clubs or organizations to benefit other people or the environment. The current Australian government definition of formal volunteering is consistent with the British definition as "…the provision of unpaid help willingly undertaken in the form of time, service or skills, to an organization or group, excluding work done overseas" (ABS 2018c).

The definition of formal volunteering is recognised by the voluntary sector and the ABS as imperfect because it does not capture concepts like online and spontaneous volunteering, corporate volunteering and activism and excludes volunteering that is conducted because of an obligation or condition (e.g., work experience, community service orders, student placements and work for the dole etc.) (ABS 2018c). In late 2018 the ABS sought submissions from the voluntary sector to try and better understand current and emerging needs for volunteering and giving data. These discussions are ongoing but the submission to the ABS by Volunteering Australia (the peak volunteering body in Australia) argued that formal volunteering should continue to exclude volunteering that is conducted because of obligations or conditions. Formal volunteering therefore remains an activity that is understood to stem from a personal choice.

The Australian government uses the formal definition of volunteering to collect data for government funded national surveys and assist in developing policies. These surveys and

policies, Lee and Brudney (2012) suggest, may be an attempt to control and influence volunteers and measure volunteerism's economic impacts. As a result, volunteerism increasingly focused on notions of economic management, reporting, accountability and procedures (Kenny, 2013; 2011). A volunteer by implication is anyone who is an agent of such notions. The focus of this thesis and throughout this chapter is on formal volunteering and formal volunteers. However, for ease of reference they will simply be referred to as 'volunteers'. It is also important to acknowledge that marginalized groups such as people who are homeless and indigenous Australians are frequently excluded in definitions of formal volunteering because the types of 'help' they provide to others may be outside the reach of formal organisations. While concepts of volunteering are no less important for these groups than for other Australians (Oppenheimer & Warburton 2014) they frequently sit outside the boundaries of academic and government focus.

The formal voluntary sector further expanded in the early part of the twentieth century as engagement in the first and second world wars encouraged Australian citizens, particularly women, to mobilize for the war effort on the home front (Lyons, McGregor-Lowndes & O'Donoghue 2006; Oppenheimer & Warburton 2014). Most of the historical literature tends to focus on the impact and influence a neo-liberal ideology had on the voluntary sector in the 1970s (Cloke, Johnsen & May 2007; O'Brien & Penna 1998). Volunteerism was particularly attractive to supporters of neo-liberalism in the 1970s because of its potential to enhance the role of the private sector and reduce the need for state spending. Some scholars from this period argued that democratic social systems must depend on the volunteered time and energy of its members for the state's maintenance, stability, growth and development (Schindler-Rainman & Lippitt 1971).

Today, there are a few contemporary volunteerism scholars who continue to support neo-liberalism ideals (Baillie Smith & Laurie 2011) while others remain sceptical of the deregulation, privatization and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision (Harvey 2005). Sceptics of neo-liberalism tend to be wary of the ways volunteering is shaped and exploited by both the state and the market to offload their responsibilities onto local citizens (Robinson 2016, p. 37). While others argue the control governments exert over the voluntary sector is a means of quelling potential political opposition (Van Gramberg & Bassett 2005). British political leaders Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair are considered

important and influential supporters of the neo-liberal notions and contemporary volunteer roles implemented in Australia (Whelan 2012). According to O'Brien and Penna (1998), Thatcher and Blair were influenced by philosophers and scholars like Hayek (1960) and Friedman (1953). Hayek (1960) believed that increasing public welfare was an example of environmental and personal control of one person by another while Friedman argued for reduced government involvement in capitalist markets (Friedman 1953).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, western governments maintained a focus on the role of volunteers as economically beneficial to broader society (Whelan 2012). Although some research was conducted by Wolozin (1975), Hawrylyshyn (1978) and Karn (1982), most empirical studies on the economic contribution of volunteering emerged in the 1990s (e.g. Ironmonger's work 2000). Lyons et al. (2006) explore a number of Australian government funded studies from the late part of the twentieth century. Lyons et al (2006) observe that the literature frequently refers to a study titled *'Unpaid work and the Australian economy'* from 1997, which argued that the benefit of both formal and informal volunteering to the Australian economy was $261 billion per annum (ABS 1997). Alternative studies from this period reported that the contribution of formal volunteering to the Australian economy was $42 billion per annum (Dolnicar & Randle 2007). The importance of the voluntary sector is acknowledged in the Australian government's decision to include questions about volunteerism in the 2006 national census.

Ironmonger (1993; 1998; 2000, 2006, 2011, 2012; 2009) argued for the importance of voluntary work on the economic health of the country by calculating the cost of replacing voluntary time with real wage costs. O'Dwyer (2013) took a similar approach. Based on Ironmonger's method, she reported that the economic value of formal volunteering in contemporary Australia is $106 billion per year. This value, according to O'Dwyer (2013), either matches or surpasses other key sectors of the Australian economy including mining, agriculture and government expenditure on health. This figure was updated by O'Dwyer (in Rance 2015) in 2015 to nearly $300 billion. Others take a different approach by assessing the economic contribution of volunteering to social capital expressed in reduced incidence of crime and improved health (Mayer 2003; Son & Wilson 2012). These economic perspectives are echoed in public discourse highlighting the amount of money voluntary organisations collect for people who are homeless and or the amount of money volunteers save the

economy (Dagge 2015; Dennehy 2015; Genevieve 2016; Korssen 2015). As frequently reported, newspaper and media articles shape the public understanding that volunteering is worth many billions of dollars to the Australian economy (Rance 2015).

Discussions of volunteerism and economics are often framed in the literature consistent with the perspectives of the voluntary sector and the government. Volunteers and recipients of volunteer services are rarely directly engaged when drawing conclusions about the value of their contribution and most of the literature draws upon broadly collected quantitative data. This approach to charity in Australia is characterized by governments who move responsibility for, and ownership of, volunteer work from high levels of power to lower levels of power, shifting service delivery and day-to-day responsibility for this work to community organizations (Kenny 2002; 2007; 2011). Nonetheless, the roles of volunteers are often framed in broad economic terms which have little relevance to volunteers working 'on the ground'. This research seeks to redress this shift by engaging directly with volunteers and the recipients of their services to determine how they perceive their roles enacted within a welfare context.

The frameworks of volunteerism in the Australian literature is thus often top-down, quantitative and perceived from a macro-level. For example, the federal government's census data on volunteerism from 2011 and 2016 is broad in scope and defined within the relatively simplistic question on whether one performed any voluntary work in the previous twelve months through an organization or group. Participant responses and the literature that relies on census data include formal volunteering behaviours for a wide range of services. Other government funded surveys like the General Social Survey in 2010 and 2014 (the most recent) and the Voluntary Work Survey in 2006 and 2010 (the most recent) offer additional insights but remain wide-ranging and unhelpful in some contexts. For example, 82% of volunteers reported they were delighted, pleased, or mostly satisfied with their lives in the 2010 Voluntary Work Survey compared to 75% of non-volunteers; and, 62% of volunteers strongly agreed, or somewhat agreed that most people could be trusted compared to 49% of non-volunteers (ABS 2010). However, no one knows how many people actually volunteer in the homelessness sector in Australia. Due to this neglect in not analysing data sector-by-sector, some suggested that it is impossible to know whether the volunteerism literature is representative of a larger population or can be applied to specific sectors and that because

research is often conducted by commercial agencies, research may be biased towards the aims of these organizations (McGregor-Lowndes et al. 2014) to retain, recruit and control volunteers (Pidgeon 1998). As a result, volunteer roles are frequently ascribed and framed by volunteerism broad economic discourses which may have little meaning, or connection, to how they personally perceive their roles.

Despite the homelessness volunteerism being significantly entrusted within the work of NGOs (i.e., Salvation Army), the sector is significantly tied into the governments' economic approaches and agendas and is increasingly expected to perform in accordance with government ideologies (Cloke, Johnsen & May 2007). For example, the Australian government maintained during the release of the White Paper on homelessness in 2007 that it would not be possible to meet homelessness policy and its economic goals without harnessing the efforts of the broader corporate and private sector (FAHCSIA 2008).

Volunteer organizations make similar arguments about their impact and suggest volunteering delivers profound economic benefits to the community (Dertimanis 2015). One of the major problems with the homelessness voluntary sector's close relationship with the state is that the roles of volunteers may under some circumstances be supervised and controlled by government ideology. As a result, the intentions or preferences of individual group members are subjugated to the plurality of group membership (Beck 1992; Cloke, Johnsen & May 2007; Eckstein 2001; Hustinx & Lammertyn 2003; Meijs & Hoogstad 2001). Nevertheless, the relationship between volunteering and funding may be influenced by reduced welfare funding in Australia, which increases demand for individuals to perform tasks which have traditionally been the role of paid employees (Ife 2010). For example, there are many volunteer positions advertised on Melbourne job sites (e.g. Seek, Indeed) and increased demand encourages the employment of specific renumerated managers to recruit, select and motivate volunteers (Haski-Leventhal 2009). Others recommend to organizations strategies to maximize volunteer's motivation, satisfaction and performance (Millette & Gagné 2008). Meanwhile smaller organizations that undertake volunteerism and homelessness from a more organic and bottom-up approach are less likely to receive funding than larger organizations that align toward western business values (Warburton, Oppenheimer & Moore 2014). The Australian Department of Social Services contend that funding is only provided to voluntary organisations on the provision that the government determine the program is effective,

efficient and in line with government priorities. This approach in part limits the choices available to volunteers and squeezes them into corporatist agendas and hierarchies (Cloke, Johnsen & May 2007). This ideological top-down perspective is inconsistent with community development values (e.g., Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011). The voluntary sector as a result of the focus on economic notions of management, reporting, accountability and procedures becomes increasingly regulated, professionalized and bureaucratized (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). In contrast, grassroots organizations with fewer ties to economic or government agendas tend to focus on strategies of local empowerment and are more likely to be connected to their local community needs (Kenny 2011).

However, and perhaps understandably, research in Australia that engages directly with volunteers rarely frames their roles in purely economic terms. For example, Holmes (2009) in her qualitative study reported that volunteers perceived their roles as financially beneficial to the organization they are assisting, to the recipients of their services and to the wider community. Nonetheless, even though volunteers were providing a direct service to the organization's clients, the primary beneficiary of their activities were the volunteers themselves (Holmes 2009). A related but concerning side issue in volunteerism is that in some instances and cultures the more the public perceive an individual to be personally benefiting (monetarily or socially) from volunteering, the less likely they are to perceive that individual as a volunteer (Handy et al. 2011; Holmes 2009). Academic, political and public discourse about volunteers as economic contributors often frames the social roles of volunteers and is inconsistent with public perceptions and the volunteer's personal roles. However, regardless of how volunteers perceive their own roles, the public perception becomes troublesome in the context of homelessness. In this context recipients of volunteer services are perceived as economically draining by broader society (Baldry et al. 2012) and the volunteer/recipient relationship is more likely to be viewed by the public from a binary help perspective as 'deserving' or 'undeserving' (Kenny 2002). Indeed, when the roles of volunteers and recipients are framed within economic discourse, unequal power relationships emerge which represent a "binary opposition between the rulers and the ruled" (Gramsci in Daldal 2014 p. 165).

In conclusion, neo-liberal ideologies may have influenced the way the public, government and researchers define, understand and construct the roles of the modern-day volunteer. In

particular, the idea that volunteerism is economically beneficial to society links the voluntary sector and volunteer's roles to government ideologies and economic perspectives. However, and in contrast, volunteers and the public, rarely define the roles of volunteers in terms of the economic importance. Indeed, one of the most influential ways volunteers construct their own roles is through the personal benefits they receive from volunteering.

Personal Benefits

Academic, public and political discourse also engages with the roles of volunteers in Australia in terms of the personal benefits volunteers receive from volunteering. The real and supposed benefits however have been met with several criticisms and concerns, albeit with minimal research to support or challenge claims.

The Australian government frequently ascribes personal benefits to the roles of volunteers. This includes the idea that volunteers benefit in terms of social development and that volunteering helps to build strong social networks and community cohesion (ABS 2010). The government's position is repeatedly supported and amplified in broadsheet newspaper articles published in Melbourne between 2013 and 2016. Volunteering is described as an opportunity to find work because 'helping others' increases both skills and job prospects (Ahwan 2015). Other newspaper articles make the claim that people love to volunteer and that volunteering is good for your soul, your longevity and community connectedness (Gow in White 2015). The subsidised childcare volunteers receive from the government is highlighted in Wilson's (2016) article while Kinniburgh (2015) point to the recognition volunteers receive for their outstanding contributions to the community.

In addition to the Australian government position and the media's perspective on the personal benefits of volunteering, the voluntary sector in Australia also advocates for the personal benefits of volunteerism on the volunteer. The peak volunteering body in Victoria – Volunteering Victoria - claims that volunteering can improve volunteers' mental health and helps build social connections (2019) which is a view governments and academics support (e.g., Victorian State Government 2011; Musick & Wilson 2003). This argument filters down to voluntary sector organisations in Melbourne who supply potential volunteers with claims that volunteers live longer than non-volunteers, are less likely to suffer depression and have a

reduced risk of heart disease (Grimm, Spring & Dietz 2007). There are also the rewarding feelings volunteers experience from connecting with like-minded people, the development of personal skills and an improvement in quality of life for all involved (Sacred Heart Mission, 2019). Others have more generally reported that volunteering is fun and rewarding (The Smith Family 2019; Interchange Incorporated 2019; Sacred Heart Mission 2019). It is not surprising that educational institutions encourage and or require students to participate in voluntary activities as a part of their curriculum studies (Clary & Snyder 1999). For example, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme is a popular award in Australia and abroad which encourages high school students to volunteer for people who are less privileged as a way to receive accreditation and build upon personal resumes.

The personal benefits of volunteering are also supported in the research literature. Volunteering is related to the development of personal skills (Smith 2010); reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation (Rochester et al. 2009); and, is associated with higher levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction and improved health (Onyx & Warburton 2003; Thoits & Hewitt 2001). Despite the tendency to focus on the benefits for the volunteer, framing volunteer's roles in notions of positivity may drown out the voices and roles of the people volunteers are supposed to be helping. For example, volunteers may be more distracted from the 'big-picture' of helping others when their roles are defined by the personal benefits they may receive (Ife, 2010). As a result, practice can become fragmented, encouraging voluntary work for its own sake rather than locating it in the broader contexts of inequality (Ife, 2010). This theoretical orientation is consistent with Kenny (2002; 2010; 2011) whose view is positioned from the perspective that Australia's framework of charity is modelled on 'more fortunate' members of society giving back to the 'less fortunate'. Discourses of personal benefit perpetuate the power imbalances between volunteers and recipients and these relationships sit within conceptual understandings of charity, constructed around a market framework and discourses of individual self-interest and self-help, private initiative, enterprise and competition (Kenny, 2002).

The community development literature suggests that the personal benefit discourse that surrounds volunteerism in Australia may be an attempt by both government and the voluntary sector to encourage volunteer involvement. Indeed, there are many examples focusing on the voluntary sector's approaches toward marketing and recruitment with many recommending

improved recruitment methods for the purposes of appealing towards non-volunteers and retaining current volunteers (Lee & Brudney 2012; MacGillivray & Lynd-Stevenson 2013). As an example, from the United States Lee and Budney (2012) recommend that the voluntary sector consider the pool of informal volunteers as a fertile ground for recruitment and suggests that organisations use their volunteers existing networks and social-ties to attract more volunteers. In Australia, MacGillivray and Lynd-Stevenson (2013) draw from the theory of planned behaviour to suggest that the views people within a person's social environment hold toward volunteering can potentially influence a person's intention to volunteer. They suggest that if organizations provide people with information about the positive benefits of volunteering, organizations are more likely to appeal toward potential volunteers. These approaches are ultimately a process of persuasion which aims to attract volunteers by appealing to the potential power they will hold on volunteering (Flipo 1986). In contrast, marketing methods may contradict the community development values of 'grass-roots', locally driven and bottom-up methods of providing help, as volunteers may be inclined to travel further (sometimes abroad), or volunteer only due to the promises organisations make regarding the personal benefits they may receive (Panda 2007; McAuliffe 2011). By focusing on the benefits of volunteer roles, volunteers may become isolated from the recipients of their services and the contexts in which they interact (Gorham 1992, p. 117). Volunteers become disconnected from their local communities and relationships are more likely to be defined by unequal divisions and distinctions between those who serve and their beneficiaries (Gorham 1992). Volunteers are more likely to perceive the recipients of their services and time as deficient when charity work is framed within 'help-provider' and 'help-seeker' relationships (Gorham 1992). Others support this view by suggesting the benefited-volunteer-model of charity in Australia rejects any structural or collectivist solution to issues of social justice and inequality in favour of relationships that are based on the patronage of individuals (Kenny 1997, p. 46). Instead of the ideal which is charity based on issues of redistribution, equality of services and outcomes, the charity model in Australia is eroded by volunteers who take on volunteer work in the hope of helping themselves.

Angels, Heroes, Saints and Do-Gooders.

The self-reflective view of volunteers and the ways they are perceived by the broader public are often framed around the idea volunteers are performing 'good work'. One possible way to

review the dominant construction of volunteer's 'good-work' roles is to focus on how volunteers are described in mainstream media articles and link these back to how the literature engages with volunteer motivations. Public conversations about social problems and solutions are largely mediated by the media (Blasi 1990; Putnis 2001). Media discourses are embedded in power relations promoting particular constructions of disadvantaged groups and volunteers which come to be accepted by the public as 'the truth' (Dalton et al. 1996; Wiseman, 1996; Putnis 2001). The roles of modern-day volunteers in Melbourne are frequently framed in newspaper articles from perspectives that people who help the homeless are 'amazing people' (Emerson 2014), 'kind' (Kinbacher 2016), 'do-gooders' (Masanauskas 2016c), 'skilled, empathetic' (Lambert 2015), and reminiscent of Cole's insights into what she calls the *'White Saviour Complex'* (2012) volunteers are described as 'saviours' (Gillett 2015). More frequently, volunteers have been described as helpful contributors to the issues of homelessness (Dagge 2015; Kinniburgh 2015; Naughtin 2014).

Zufferey and Chung (2006) reported very similar depictions when examining the way that the Australian national media construct and represent homelessness service provision. While not explicitly referring to volunteers Zufferey and Chung (2006, p. 34) use the term 'service provider' as a broad descriptor related to volunteers who are working in the homelessness voluntary sector. The study illustrates how volunteers are often publicly constructed in the Australian media as 'angels', 'heroes', 'saints' and 'experts'. In the homelessness sector this may lead to the representation of an unequal 'us and them' division and exaggerate the power differential between people who are homeless and volunteers (Kenny 2002).

Descriptions of volunteers as 'angels' and 'saviours' also connect the roles of volunteers to religious motivations. Religion is a key predictor of volunteering and religious people are more likely to volunteer (Berger 2006; Lam 2002; Wilson & Musick 1997; Youniss, McLellan & Yates 1999). Religious belief teaches values of altruism and caring for others which may easily find expression in acts of volunteering (von Essen et al. 2015). For example, religion scriptures encourage volunteering, "…but to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Carroll and Prickett 2008, p. 280), and, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Carroll and Prickett 2008, p. 739). The relationship between religion and volunteering enjoys considerable support in existing volunteerism research (e.g., Hustinx

et al. 2014; Lim & MacGregor 2012; Monsma 2007). For example, Canadian scholar Berger (2006) reported that over a wide range of religious beliefs, volunteers were frequently motivated to volunteer because of a perceived religious obligation. But, others point out tensions that arise between the motivation to volunteer because of religious obligation and the way volunteering is defined as consisting of actions carried out in freedom of choice (von Essen et al. 2015). Indeed, Volunteering Victoria (2016, p. 1) argue that volunteering is always a matter of choice, and suggest that when volunteers feel obligated to volunteer, volunteerism becomes a contradiction in terms since something that is 'voluntary' cannot also be ‘obligated’. While there is tension, relationships between volunteerism, religious obligation and motivations to volunteer are complex, interconnected and contextual (Cnaan, Kasternakis & Wineburg 1993; Serow 1991).

The media also frame the roles of volunteers through a lens of altruism. However, while altruism is a feature in many types of volunteering, people are ultimately motivated by a second broad group of egotistic factors, that is, by the benefits they receive from being involved (Hibbert, Piacentini & Dajani 2003; Smith 1981). Others take a more complex view, pointing out how volunteers can be motivated by a broad range of different factors which may include altruistic factors. For example, Dolnicar and Randle (2007) reported that in Australia volunteers were motivated to help others to do something worthwhile, gain personal satisfaction, gain work experience, to befriend and listen to people, because they felt obliged to volunteer, or slid passively into volunteering. Volunteers are frequently motivated by personal values, opportunities to learn about the world they live in, and to exercise skills and/or to grow psychologically (Clary & Snyder 1999). Overall, volunteers are rarely motivated to help others because of one or two factors alone. Instead volunteers simultaneously hold many motivations which ebb and flow in importance and relevance depending on the time and context in which volunteers operate.

Among discussions of public perceptions of volunteers and volunteer’s motivations, is an absence of engagement with the recipients of volunteer services. The voices of people who are homeless become silenced in favour of discourses which perpetuate the positive role characteristics of the people who serve them. The marginalization of people who are homeless in the volunteerism literature may be because volunteerism discourses are infused with ideological power used to justify the status quo and maintain systems of inequality

(Vorlklein and Howarth, 2005 in Höijer 2011, p. 14). Others have suggested that there seems to be a salient barrier to speaking ill of such a perceived noble behaviour (Cox 2000). By this, the shadowlands (Oppenheimer 2008) in which the loose and baggy volunteerism monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995) 'helps-others' is often controlled and manipulated by government ideology, the media, and the voluntary sector. Meanwhile, volunteerism is generally beneficial both to the economy and to the volunteer and yet, neglects to meaningfully engage with recipients of volunteer services.

Summary

This chapter acted as a counterpoint to the review of homelessness literature by showing that Australian and international academic, political and social discourse frames the roles of volunteers in concepts of positivity. The investigation found that while volunteering is an important part of our political and cultural heritage, it remains broadly under-researched. Scholars describe how the 'loose and baggy volunteerism monster' (Kendall & Knapp 1995) operates within the shadowlands somewhere between the cut and thrust of paid work and markets and the private domestic economy (Oppenheimer 2008). Consequently, further consideration and investigation is required into the perceptions and the associated role of volunteers in engaging with empowerment and disempowerment related to homelessness. The next chapter moves away from homelessness and volunteerism and review theories of power and empowerment.

Chapter 4: Constructs of Power and Empowerment

Introduction

People who are homeless are frequently described as experiencing powerlessness (e.g., Cloke, May & Johnsen 2011; Lafuente & Lane 1995; Lorentzen 2017; Watts, Fitzpatrick & Johnsen 2018; White & Newman 2015). Their roles in social, public and political discourses are framed around societal financial costs and public embarrassment (e.g., Baldry et al. 2012). Meanwhile, volunteers who work in the service of home-less people are almost always portrayed as privileged and thus empowered community contributors (e.g., Kinniburgh 2015). To better understand the dynamic between people who are homeless and volunteers, it is necessary to understand power and the notions of empowerment. However, while theories of power inform and influence research in empowerment, these theories often represent two distinct areas of scholarly interest. Serrano-Garcia (1994) points out that some of the most influential empowerment scholars rarely refer to power in and of itself. Meanwhile, scholars directly investigating power (i.e., Clegg 1989) only briefly refer to empowerment. This may be because power is an abstract notion in its relationship with structure and agency; in its role in social systems; and, in its function in discursive practices. Whereas the term empower is a 'fuzzy' concept (Eyben & Napier-Moore 2009) used loosely within the voluntary sector and at times without regard to the variety of meanings and flavours of power that make it up. It is rendered as standardised and meaningless jargon instead of a subtle and nuanced word with deep implications for how people who are homeless and volunteers interact (Chaudhuri 2016). For this reason, the purpose of this chapter is to describe how scholars define and engage with the notion of power, especially from social, discursive and structural perspectives, to ground the exploration of empowerment in later sections.

Theories of Power

In its most general sense, 'power' is described as the production of causal effects (Gruin 2011). By way of illustration, the power of a storm is manifested in its causal effects; it might flood the land, fill rivers and lakes, or uproot trees. Like environmental effects on the landscape, however, power is also integral to how people impact each other. In this sense,

individuals can manifest power by affecting others through physical force, such as pushing a person over or by moving them from one location to another. Some have described this type of physical power as a simple quantitative phenomenon in the sense that power is nothing more than a generalized capacity to act (Hindess 1996). The second more complex understanding is that through human power we can influence others by shaping their opinions and behaviours. A parent for instance may directly impact their child's decision to apply sunscreen when outdoors by educating them about the dangers of skin cancer. Power can also be used indirectly to subversively impose one's will, or the will of a group, against the will or interests of others (Kenny 2011). For example, the way government agencies direct welfare clients through policy, rules and regulations to stand in line to ask questions or present grievances is a form of subversive control used to force welfare clients to behave in particular ways.

Social Power

The influential use of power whether it is beneficial or not is commonly described as social power (Scott 2007). The focus of this thesis and throughout the chapter is on social rather than physical power and for ease of reference will simply be referred to as 'power'. In terms of the kinds of power relevant to this study, some have interpreted how people who are homeless feel powerless when dominant groups maintain their own power by consenting to the status quo, or distorting, concealing and deflecting the real understandings of power relations and how homelessness is experienced (Snow, Anderson & Koegel 1994). Others point to volunteers as a powerful group who speak on behalf of the powerless but may be tempted to distort the images of people who are homeless (Villadsen 2008). Villadesen (2008) suggests volunteers could tend to provide more assistance or resources to recipients who display signs of powerlessness, disadvantage and poverty than clients who appear privileged. Kenny's (2011) and Villadsen's (2008) illustration of power, are often explored from the perspective of well-known theories about power and discourse, the most prominent developed by influential French academic, Michel Foucault.

Discursive Power

The precise character of contemporary power emerges in ways that people make sense of their world and how social roles are constructed and represented in public and political discourses. Clegg (1989) suggests that power can never be free from the matter of words. This theoretical orientation is positioned around the notion of discourse. The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press 2019a) define discourse as 'written or spoken about communication or debate' which Foucault argued could be used as a way to control and manipulate how people feel, think and act. The use of words in this case is a discursive practice used to limit and control the boundaries of knowledge (Foucault 1970, 1972, 1979, 1990, 1991, 1994; Foucault & Kritzman 2013). A particular discursive practice or form of words 'represents a system of options that reveals the way in which a group, in order to protect itself, practices exclusion, establishes the forms of assistance, and reacts to poverty' (Foucault, 1976, p. 16). For instance, when people believe something, it makes that belief true (O'Flaherty 2016). Truth can be subjective. When people who are homeless are described in discourses as powerless, poverty stricken, disadvantaged and deviant, regardless of whether or not they are, for the believer the unchallenged words becomes the truth.

Chief amongst Foucault's many interests are the relationship between power and knowledge and particularly how knowledge can be used as a form of social control (Lemert & Gillan 1982). In an interview conducted in 1977, Foucault (in Gordan, 1980) described the shifting dimensions of power over time. Foucault points to how power in feudal societies essentially functioned through signs offered by the less powerful to the dominant and levies imposed by those in power on the less powerful. Mechanisms of power during this period included signs of loyalty to the lords through rituals and ceremonies; levies through taxes; and, an involvement in hunting and regional wars. Over time, the feudal mechanism of power became less effective as populations grew and demographics changed and instead the eighteenth century witnessed a shift in the ways power was exerted to embrace the production of knowledge and social service (Foucault 1980). Power is often concerned with obtaining productive service from individuals by gaining access to the bodies of individuals; to their acts, attitudes and everyday behaviours (Foucault 1980). This theoretical orientation is consistent with contemporary welfare ideologies where people who are disadvantaged are expected to speak, behave and appear in particular ways that are consistent with expectations

(Parsell 2010). For instance, an individual may be more likely to receive welfare payments if they arrive to their meeting appearing and behaving 'poorly' – wearing a Rolex watch and expensive clothing may decrease opportunities to receive the help to which they are entitled. Some have championed the uniqueness of Foucault's conceptualization of power in that it contrasted with existing models that conceptualized power as domination, that is, as a centralized and repressive force exerted by one group over another (Pylypa 1998). Meanwhile, others remain critical and suggest that Foucault's theory of power is pessimistic because it emphasizes the myriad ways in which individuals are subjected to power and domination without providing a critique or action (Schulzke 2016). Indeed, for Foucault, power is omnipresent; exercised from innumerable points; and, inherent in all relationships (Pylypa 1998).

The theories of power and knowledge put forward by Foucault in the latter part of the twentieth century are frequently drawn upon by international and Australian contemporary homelessness scholars to describe how knowledge influences the relative powerlessness of people who are homeless (see, for example, Horsell 2006; Parker & Fopp 2004). In contrast, in the United States prominent homelessness scholars Snow, Leon and Koegal (1994) have argued that the tendency of researchers to define people who are homeless as a 'highly crippled, dysfunctional population' may have shaped an academic body of knowledge which paints a picture of rampant pathology. Thus, scholars who contribute to knowledge of homelessness may at times exert the same mechanism of control, manipulation and judging that Foucault argued would objectify and exclude the powerless. Snow, Leon and Koegal (1994) highlight Foucault's theories, arguing it may not surprise that society concludes people who are homeless are always, as Wright (in Snow et al, 1994, p. 462) describes them, 'drunk, stoned, crazy and sick' because it is often these very characteristics of homelessness which researchers choose to investigate. Indeed, by reviewing research on Australian homelessness, many focus on the 'homeless person's' drug and alcohol dependence (Teesson, Hodder & Buhrich 2003), service use (Herault & Johnson 2016; Neale & Stevenson 2013; Parry, Grant & Burke 2016; Segan, Maddox & Borland 2015), poverty (Hughes 2017), deviancy and violence (Growns et al. 2018; Watson 2016) and mental illness (Spicer et al. 2015). Meanwhile, there is much less research on the positive role characteristics of people who are homeless such as resilience, resourcefulness, openness and honesty. Portraying people who are homeless only in pejorative ways is distorted and flawed

because it magnifies only the blemishes or imperfections of homelessness (Snow, Anderson & Koegel 1994). These portrayals are flawed in the sense that such a picture or image of homelessness is, in part, an artefact of the questions researchers ask and the methodology used to answer those questions (Snow et al, 1994, p. 462).

Australian researchers have also drawn on Foucault's theories to explore the relative powerlessness of people who are homeless. For example, Horsell (2006) engages with theories of discourse to argue that the exclusion of people who are homeless from Australian society is often embedded in contemporary thinking about homelessness and in the practice of service delivery to people who are homeless. Similarly, Bullen (2010) points to the way the discursive construction of homelessness translates into modes of political reasoning that inform not only policy and practice, but also reshape the bureaucratic arrangements through which people who are homeless are governed. Meanwhile, others draw from Foucault's theories to explore how homelessness discourses often frame people who are homeless as 'social problems', or '*the* problem' or at least personally responsible for their own problems. They argue that people who are homeless perceive their homelessness as a result of personal fault and public blame (Parker & Fopp 2004; Parsell 2011a).

In contrast to the homelessness research that cites Foucault's theories, the volunteerism literature seems to engage much less frequently with notions of power. An exception is Danish scholar Villadsen (2008) who suggested that volunteers may create damaging identities for people who are homeless in order to fit them into welfare discourses. Meanwhile, Zufferey and Chung (2006, p. 34) illustrated how discourses around volunteerism are frequently framed from perspectives of positivity and power where volunteers are identified as saints, heroes and experts. Variable discourses around homelessness and volunteerism are important because power is "inherent in social relationships" (Pylypa 1998 p. 21). The way volunteers and people who are homeless perceive their own and other's roles and behave and act towards each other, may be largely based on these discursive differences.

Discourse of Needs

Another important way power is explored in the literature, particularly in the field of community development, is through the discourse of needs. American feminist scholar Nancy Fraser is generally considered influential in this area. By drawing on Foucault's (1977) theories and his contention that a need is a political instrument, meticulously prepared, calculated, and used by individuals or groups who hold power in society, Fraser (1989) explores need from the perspective of women and welfare to suggest that need discourses are often based on broad assumptions or interpretations of what people need; who should fulfil that need; and, the most effective way needs are met.

The ways in which needs are interpreted are often presented as unproblematic, when needs tend to be interpreted by people who hold more power and authority and are frequently skewed in favour of self-interpretations and the interests of dominant social groups (Fraser, 1989, p. 164). There are many volunteerism organizations in Australia who unequivocally claim to be meeting the needs of people who are homeless. For example, Sydney Homeless Connect (2019) claim that they are 'connecting the vulnerable with the protection, help and care they need'; Manna (2019) in Perth claim their volunteers give their time on a regular basis to prepare and deliver consistent food services to those in need; and, in Melbourne volunteers are described in the popular media as the link between people in need and professional agencies (Dole 2015). The term 'need' as used by organisations and the media to describe volunteerism clients could be framed as a politically sensitive way to depict a 'homeless person'. But, the term 'need' also ascribes powerlessness upon people who are homeless by underlining an absence of ability, skill or resources that volunteers are described as possessing.

These constructions of homelessness and volunteerism are enacted in an arena through which political power is constructed and applied (Fraser, 1989 as cited in Kenny 2011). Some describe Fraser's (1989 as cited in Kenny 2011) perspective as a question of who defines the needs of people who are disadvantaged, those who experience disadvantage or those who seek to support them (Kenny 2011). Others point to how the needs of the disadvantaged are often framed objectively, that is, needs exist and can be measured (Ife 2016). The problem with objectifying needs, is that the process of measuring and determining needs emphasizes

'expert opinions' rather than consulting the very people who are experiencing the need themselves (Ife 2016). This theoretical orientation of needs is consistent with the Australian homelessness literature. Coleman (2000) argued that policy responses to homelessness are based on the construction of expert discourses which identify and respond to needs. Such discourses are rarely constructed by the people who are identified as needy, yet they have a significant impact on their lives. Instead, these constructs generally favour the interests of those who are already privileged (Coleman, 2000, p. 29). For example, when voluntary organisations seek funding it remains in their best interests for discourses of needs to frame the voluntary sector as instrumental need deliverers (Coleman 2000).

Systems and Structural Power

In addition to incorporating perspectives on how discourses are infused with power and the ways that these discourses influence how people act and think about themselves and others, the literature also engages with investigating how human beings can liberate themselves from oppressive and unequal power relationships. By exploring the relationships between power and education, Paulo Freire (1972) contributed much to the contemporary literature on notions of power within systems and structures. Growing up in Brazil, Freire became familiar with poverty and hunger during the depression of the 1930s (Gadotti 1994). It was this experience that influenced his perception that very poor people are often trapped in states of disadvantage. He once said of his own personal circumstances, 'I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge' (Freire in Gadotti, 1994, p. 5). Freire suggested that education can be used as a form of oppression when 'all-knowing' experts 'deposit' knowledge into passive students. Freire's theories tend to be more optimistic than Foucault in recommending actions by which people with less power could challenge people with more power through education as a form of liberation from constraining discourses. Freire (1972) argued that when 'experts' and 'students' engage in meaningful dialogue, they may collectively challenge the root causes of oppression. Interestingly, while Freire is recognized as an important theorist and practitioner in addressing power imbalance (Aronowitz 2002; Giroux 1992; Ife 2016), his ideas are scarcely referred to in the homelessness or volunteerism literature.

The following section will build upon the theories of power explored so far to describe how the literature engages with the notion of empowerment.

Notions of Empowerment

Unlike some theories of power cited above, which tend to be somewhat critical and theoretical, the concept of empowerment illustrates how shifts in power or greater consciousness around the dynamics and discourses of power in particular situations can be used to improve people's lives. Historically, the notion of empowerment advanced in Europe during the Enlightenment Period of the eighteenth century (Burnett, Sloan & British 2003; Edelstein 2010; Ferrone 2015; Hind 2007; Kenny 2011). The catalyst to the Enlightenment period was in the Church's relinquishing of educational control to the state and the promotion of freethinking, independent, and empowered societies (Beal in Blanning 2000). People during this period began to assert their autonomy (Traynor 2003) and rights (i.e., Ife 2010) which allowed for self-determination and freedom to choose their own life course (Spicker 2013). These notions frame the contemporary understanding of empowerment. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary (2019b) define empowerment as 'the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights'. But, while this definition captures the context and meaning of empowerment, the term lacks clear definitions across many disciplines (Christens 2012a; Page & Czuba 1999) and has become a buzzword capitalized for funding purposes in the community development sector (Gaventa & Cornwall 2008; Page & Czuba 1999; Pigg 2002). Homelessness services in Melbourne frequently claim that their services empower users (see, for example, Salvation Army 2018a; Cattermole 2016; Sacred Heart Mission, 2019). The following explores how the fields of community development and community psychology contribute to the literature and identity empowerment as underpinning theoretical positions.

Community Development Perspectives on Empowerment

While there are similarities among researchers in interpretations, community development scholars described empowerment differently. For example, Craig (2002) defines empowerment as 'the creation of sustainable structures, processes, and mechanism, over which local communities have an increased degree of control, and from which they have a

measurable impact on public and social policies affecting these communities' (p. 2). Kenny (2011, p. 179-187) thoroughly explores the notion of empowerment and frames it as a process by which individuals (or groups) can free themselves from oppression, alienation, disadvantage and exploitation. Meanwhile, Ife (2016, p. 264) suggests that empowerment is a process of providing people with the resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to determine their own future, and to participate in and affect the life of their community.

Central to these contributions is the idea that empowerment seeks to radically shift imbalances in power for people who are disadvantaged (Craig, Mayo & Taylor 1990; Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). By this, community development is uniquely positioned to explore empowerment as a process that is value driven, subjectively experienced and overlaid with diverse and often complicated ideological philosophies. As way of illustration, activities designed to empower the disadvantaged are often performed in charity, welfare, activism, and market frameworks (Kenny 2002). The result is a voluntary sector that seeks to empower 'homeless' clients based on bureaucratically administered agendas of individual responsibility, mutual obligation and asymmetrical power relations (Kenny 2002). Notions of community development such as human rights, local knowledge and process, provide a set of tools volunteers can draw upon to interrogate their roles in such frameworks. But, despite these contributions the field of community development rarely focuses on empowerment at the psychological level and there appears to be little exploration of how empowerment is experienced across different levels of social privilege. Indeed, by reviewing the work of some of the most influential community development scholars (i.e., Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011) one may conclude that empowerment is a process that only the disadvantaged can experience.

Community Psychology Perspectives on Empowerment

Notwithstanding the contribution of the field of community development to the empowerment literature, scholars in community psychology add further depth to the research with added and useful insights. For this reason the following describes some of these nuanced theories (Nelson & Prilleltensky 2005) which explore how humans, including the socially privileged, cognitively experience empowerment; how thought processes are influenced by

environmental settings, and, how these experiences and processes subsequently affect decisions to act (Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 1995).

One of the most influential empowerment scholars is Julian Rappaport (Kelly in Aber et al, 2011). Rappaport's vast contributions (see, for example 1981, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000; 2000; 1991) are influential over a broad range of fields beyond community psychology (Peterson & Zimmerman 2004) and hold particular meaning to this study because his ideas closely align to how volunteers and people who are homeless experience their worlds and interact with each other (e.g., Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011). For example, Rappaport (1981) contends that practitioners who focus on the end result may overlook the means by which ends are achieved. This approach is counter-intuitive and does not seek to adequately understand the process by which individuals achieve desired outcomes. As a result, Rappaport emphasised the importance of relationships, appreciating local knowledge, communities and participation (Surrey 1987). Empowerment encapsulates an understanding that competencies are already present, or at least possible, within individuals and what may be seen as poor functioning within individuals and communities is the result of social structures rather than any inherent incompetence (Rappaport 1981). Rappaport (1987, p. 11) first defined empowerment broadly as "the mechanism by which people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their lives".

Some (i.e., Zimmerman 1990a) seemed to suggest that Rappaport's definition of empowerment was too broad and compromised a focused clarity on the concept. Others (i.e., Goodman et al. 2004; Perkins 2010; Prilleltensky 1997; Riger 1993) believed he placed too much responsibility on the individual and did not sufficiently attend to the relevance of the construct of community wellbeing. The implication was that scholars focused on either individual 'feelings' of control and power or how social contexts influenced individuals feelings of empowerment. For example, Feminist Psychologist Stephanie Riger (1993) conducted an influential seminal critique on how empowerment is interpreted within psychology in the West. She argued that empowerment research frequently rests on the assumption that the healthy individual is self-contained, independent and self-reliant, capable of asserting 'himself' and influencing 'his' environment (Riger 1993, p. 280). These assumptions conflate actual control with a sense of personal control, which is problematic

because it emphasizes the cognitive processes of an individual's sense of empowerment rather than actual increases in power (Riger 1993).

In addition, Riger (1993) suggests that by focusing on agency, mastery and control, notions of empowerment were characterized by attributes typically associated with masculinity and men rather than concerns associated with femininity and women i.e., community and connections with others (Riger, 1993, p. 280). Riger (1993) argued that research and practice influenced, in part, by Rappaport's empowerment framework from the late 1980s may disconnect human behaviour and psychological processes from the socio-political context.

Some (i.e., Farrugia 2011) support Riger (1993) in suggesting that the Western focus on the rights and freedoms of individuals frames homelessness as a personal fault or failure. In contrast, Riger (1993) argues that a person who is homeless is not necessarily personally responsible for their state-of-being, nor is a volunteer more socially privileged because of their competencies. Some people find themselves in circumstances in which, despite their own abilities, skills and resources, they hold little control. Overall, Riger's (1993) contribution to the empowerment literature was important because it highlighted how the underlying assumptions of empowerment were often framed in notions of conflict rather than cooperation and there was the need to focus research on socio-political contexts and changes in actual power rather than just on a feeling of power. The following section describes how some responded to the individualistic perspective in the empowerment literature.

Psychological Empowerment

In more recent times community psychologists contributed to the view that feelings of empowerment and changes in power are important (Christens 2013; Speer & Hughey 1996). For example, Zimmerman (1995; 1990a, 1990b; 1995) framed his ideas around psychological empowerment and a distinction between processes and outcomes of empowerment. Processes refer to how people, organizations and communities become empowered, while outcomes signify the consequences of these processes (Zimmerman 1995). The notion that effective processes of empowerment cannot exist without the achievement of desired outcomes and vice versa, is central to psychological empowerment (Zimmerman 1995). A participant engaging in this study may hold a personal sense of empowerment such as a belief that they

possess the personal abilities and skills to find and reside in permanent housing yet, without the effective interactions and behaviours that result in that participant finding permanent housing, the exercise of this power remains elusive. Essentially, contemporary academics and practitioners have found the conceptualization of psychological empowerment helpful in distinguishing between and highlighting the importance of both the processes and outcomes of empowerment.

Psychological empowerment is a connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for and a willingness to act in the public domain (Zimmerman 1988). When empowerment focus is on the individual and treated as a personality variable, the influence and importance of contextual considerations is neglected (Zimmerman 1990a). For example, at the individual level, empowerment includes participatory behaviour, motivations to exert control and feelings of efficacy and control (Zimmerman 1990a). The phrase *'I can do whatever I like'* demonstrates an individual perspective and illustrates the importance of 'feelings' of empowerment. However, the phrase does not demonstrate actual abilities to enact change or capture processes of empowered thinking and behaving.

Other important conceptualizations of psychological empowerment are intrapersonal, interactional and behavioural (Zimmerman 1995), at times referred to as feeling, thinking, and doing (Zimmerman 2015). The intrapersonal 'feeling' component of empowerment refers to how people think about their capacity to influence social and political systems which are important to them. This self-perception includes domain-specific perceived control, self-efficacy, motivation to exert control and perceived confidence. The interactional 'thinking' component refers to the understanding people have about their community and related socio-political issues. This aspect suggests that people are aware of behavioural options or choices to act as appropriate to achieve goals they set for themselves. It includes an individual's knowledge about the resources needed to achieve goals, an understanding of causal agents, a critical awareness of one's environment, and the development of decision-making and problem-solving skills to effectively engage with others. The final behavioural 'doing' component refers to any actions taken to directly influence outcomes (Zimmerman 1995; 2015).

Psychological empowerment also features collective action, skill development, cultural awareness and socio–personality factors such as motivation to control, locus of control and self-efficacy (Zimmerman 1990a). It takes different forms for different people, may vary across different life domains (e.g., work, family, recreation) and fluctuates over time (Zimmerman 1990a). A person may feel and behave in empowered ways in particular contexts, but, they may not feel and behave in empowered ways all the time or in other settings. Essentially, Zimmerman emphasizes that what goes on in the mind is just as important as what one does out in the contextual world.

My thesis focus is on psychological empowerment as a process that anyone, regardless of social standing, may experience. For ease of reference psychological empowerment will simply be referred to as 'empowerment'. Particular attention has been paid to empowerment from the field of community psychology in this section because of its contribution to the literature and relevance to my study. However, others have expanded concepts of empowerment through the addition of a relational or mutual component.

Relational Empowerment

Other important contributions to empowerment theory from the field of community psychology consider mutual and relational aspects as a response to what they view as an inherent paradox of existing empowerment theory. For instance, Gruber and Tricket (1987) reveal that when people with more power try to empower those with less power, the institutional structure that puts one group in a position to empower another also works to undermine the act of empowerment itself. This paradox is of particular relevance to my study given that Australian homelessness services claim that their volunteers empower clients (e.g., Volunteer Match; Sarah's Circle; Youth of the Streets). There is broad agreement that people who are homeless and volunteers represent two distinct groups in terms of their power (e.g., Bullen 2013; Farrugia 2011; Zufferey 2013; Zufferey & Chung 2006). It is not unreasonable to suggest that relationships between people who are homeless and volunteers, by their very nature, may inescapably disempower welfare clients due to the ways the power of each group is socially, publicly and politically constructed.

Christens (2012b) suggests that power is not fundamentally situated within individuals, but is something that emerges in the transactional spaces between individuals. Christens (2012b) augmented Zimmerman's (2015) definition of a network of empowerment involving 'feeling, thinking and doing' with a relational component to underline the point made in existing theories and research that power is developed and exercised through relationships. Christens (2012b) defined his relational component of empowerment as, '…the psychological aspects of interpersonal transactions and processes that undergird the effective exercise of transformative power in the socio-political domain.' (p. 121).

Christens' (2012b) acknowledges that many others previously considered relationships an important component of empowerment. However, his contribution is meaningful because it consolidates earlier research and theories into a concise framework to which others can refer. For example, Christens (2012b) includes a number of elements in the relational component of empowerment. He defines 'collaborative competence' as the set of abilities and propensities necessary for the formation of interpersonal relationships that can forge group membership and solidarity; 'bridging social divisions' is articulated as the propensities and set of competencies necessary for building social capital; "facilitating others" empowerment' is described as the relinquishment or delegation of control over decision making; 'mobilizing networks' speaks to a person's sense of being invited to participate; and, 'passing on legacy' is the commitment of more experienced leaders to investment in the sustainability of their achievements through growth-fostering relationships with those who will succeed them (Christens 2012b).

Christens gradually refined his concept of relational empowerment in order to apply his theories to research. He continually reiterates the importance of framing empowerment as a broad social construct and that a psychological sense of community and community settings play vital roles in empowerment processes and outcomes. For this reason, the final section of this literature review describes how scholars engage with notions of community and belonging.

Summary

In order to better understand the relationships between people experiencing homelessness and volunteers, this chapter investigated concepts of power and empowerment by reviewing Australian and international literature. It showed that while theories of power inform and influence research in empowerment the concepts represent two distinct areas of scholarly interest. The chapter also showed that 'empowerment' and 'power' are *fuzzy* concepts often used loosely within the voluntary sector and at times without consideration for how they influence the interactions between home-less people and volunteers. Overall, this chapter revealed that power (and thus empowerment) influences how people who are homeless and volunteers perceive their roles.

Chapter 5: Constructs of Community

Introduction

Scholars agree that community is a central way that people experience empowerment (see, for example, Perkins & Zimmerman 1995, p. 570). For this reason, the purpose of this chapter is to describe how scholars define and engage with the notion of community, particularly from the context of homelessness and volunteerism. The chapter begins by unpacking the notion of community in light of the exclusion and isolation of people who are homeless. These illustrations are juxtaposed in the latter part of the chapter with the engagement with volunteers as included and belonging community members.

Homelessness Community, Exclusion and Isolation

Diverse approaches are used in discourses to describe the community experiences of people who are homeless. Several scholars argue a sense of community promotes confidence and self-belief (Clover 2011; Mazza 2007) allowing those who are homeless to strategically identify locations where resources can be accessed (Robinson 2011). Others point to how people who are homeless are excluded from mainstream society or choose to isolate themselves because of the stigma and discrimination related to being 'homeless' (Parsell 2010; Perry 2013; Sheehan 2010; Snow & Anderson 1987; Zufferey & Kerr 2004). Meanwhile, the popular media describe people who are homeless as 'virtual outcasts who belong nowhere' (Spencer 2016), 'non-belonging' (Spencer 2016) and 'invisible and forgotten' (Nottle 2015). Others infer marginalization by defining people who are homeless as 'the population' (White 2016) and exploring their re-integration into the mainstream community (Panahi 2016). Australian political figures interrogate the legitimacy and rights of 'homeless community' membership. For example, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne at the time said 'unfortunately, there is also a group of professional beggars who use the appearance of homelessness as a job and, for them, a police response is also appropriate' (Doyle 2016. p. 24). Meanwhile, community scholars claim these types of community representations are mechanism of control held over less powerful community groups by more powerful community groups (e.g., Gordan 2012). Community membership, when understood from a perspective that members must follow certain rules and expectations, traps people within

community contexts whilst simultaneously denying the ability to be considered a member. But, the most common way the literature engages with community concepts and homelessness is through notions of identity and public space.

Identity

Community scholars point to the relationships between community belonging and sense of group solidarity (Ife 2016) or argue that definitions of community start with the idea that a group of people hold a common identity (Kenny 2011). Others point to how a sense of identity influences feelings of order, continuity and trust (Giddens 1991). Not surprisingly, the homelessness literature frequently engages with the idea of community exclusion and isolation from identity perspectives (i.e., Snow & Anderson 1987).

Snow and Anderson (1987) in Austin, Texas, explored the identities of persons who were homeless through hundreds of hours observing and interacting with rough sleepers. The purpose of the study was to investigate how individuals at the bottom of status systems attempted to generate identities that provided them with a measure of self-worth and dignity. The study further investigated how people who were homeless interacted with each other and explored how such connections influenced the relationships between role, identity and self-concept. Snow and Anderson (1987) reported that participants who had experienced homelessness for longer periods of time were more likely to embrace a 'homeless identity' than those who had experienced homelessness for shorter periods. Snow and Anderson (1993) illustrated how long-term participants used street names when speaking about themselves or other 'homeless people' and used the terms 'I', 'us' or 'we' to describe their experience of homelessness. In contrast, short-term participants distanced themselves from other people who were homeless and refused to identify themselves as a member of a homeless community. Distancing techniques included verbal statements of disassociation from homelessness as a general social category and from specific groups of homeless individuals. Another distancing technique included the derogation of institutions that attended to the needs of people who were who homeless (e.g. Salvation Army). Snow and Anderson's work contributions (including 1987, 1993; 1994, among others) is argued by some (e.g., Parsell 2010, p. 35) to show that people experiencing homelessness are not homogenous and the communities they engage in take many forms and comprise many different groups.

Indeed, Snow and Anderson championed the view that people who are homeless are 'neither anchored in nor embodying a distinctive set of shared values' (Snow and Anderson 1993, p. 76). Their work and supporting research (e.g., Parsell 2011a; Wolch & Dear 1993; Zufferey & Kerr 2004) encouraged the use of the term 'homeless community'.

Perhaps the most influential, prolific and awarded Australian scholar to approach homelessness from an identity perspective is Cameron Parsell (2010, among many others). Parsell (2010, p. 45-46) argued that considering home-less people as belonging to a community (which he calls 'subculture') is problematic because it positions its members within negative norms and values such as unemployment, disadvantage and drug use. Ascribing a person to a home-less 'sub culture' or 'community' 'glosses over their individuality on the one hand and positions them as deviant on the other' (Parsell 2010, p. 45-46). Moreover, acceptance into a 'homeless community' works against development of long-term projects aimed at re-entry to 'mainstream' society (Parsell, 2010). Other Australian scholars tend to agree with Parsell's position on homelessness and community. For example, Farrugia et al (2016) points to how homelessness is positioned outside a moral community of responsible moral subjects while Zufferey and Kerr (2004, p. 349) suggest that people who are homeless distance themselves from homelessness services by identifying service providers as 'not on their side'. The self-identities of people who are homeless are negatively impacted upon when they interact with service providers because they feel anonymized, stigmatized and judged (Ogden & Avades 2011). This leads to an avoidance or reluctance to seek formal help (Wakefield, Hopkins & Greenwood 2013) and encourages engagement with informal help pathways through peers who are homeless (Ogden & Avades 2011; Robinson 2011) and further excludes people who are homeless from mainstream community membership.

Public Space

Public space use is another community approach in the homelessness literature. A consideration of physical-space is integral in the construction of community meaning (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Pretty et al. 2006; Thornham & Parry 2014; Wild 1981) and personal well-being (Evans 2003; Weich et al. 2002). But people who are homeless rarely have access to privacy in these public spaces (Coleman 2000; Sheehan 2010) and often have to behave in

ways which are inconsistent with social norms (Harter et al. 2005). Indeed, the popular media often describe the use of public space by people who are homeless as an inconvenience to the public or as an illegal behaviour (Hurley 2016; Jefferson 2016b; Panahi 2016). Nonetheless, pavements, street corners, alleyways, parks, and public libraries, serve as important spaces for investigating perspectives of community and homelessness (Dordick 1997; Duneier & Molotch 1999; Gowan 2010; Parsell, Cameron ; Perry 2013; Sheehan 2010; Snow & Anderson 1987; Wasserman & Clair 2010).

Homelessness research from Australia historically described the use of public space and community belonging from negative perspectives. In 1972 De Hoog (1972) conducted an ethnographic study over a period of five years living 'homeless' in Sydney and described the use of public space as a monotonous and boring drinking experience that centred around unemployment offices and homelessness services. Others (i.e., Jordan 1965) from the same period claimed people who were homeless only felt connected to each through the shared experience of drinking too much alcohol in public areas. The use of public space, at least in contemporary public, social and political discourses, is described mostly as an excluded and isolated behaviour for people who are homeless. The popular media lobby for 'moving on' people who are homeless from public space or frame public space use, given their view of sleeping or 'hanging out', as behaviours outside of acceptable social norms (Jefferson 2016b; Minear 2013).

Meanwhile, some contemporary research takes a more positive view of public space use. Rebecca Sheehan (2010) speaks positively of the homelessness community and the use of public space. Using similar ethnographic approaches to De Hoog (1972) and Jordan (1965), Sheehan (2010) spent twelve months observing how people who were homeless used the Jackson Square area in New Orleans French Quarter and what it meant to their sense of community. She argued that the historical and tourist attraction status of Jackson Square supported long-term homeless persons' desire and ability to occupy it in significant ways. People who were homeless reinforced their togetherness, strong friendships and mutual care through constant renegotiating their presence with the public, authorities and the police (Sheehan 2010). Sheehan (2010) frames the homeless experience as not entirely terrible. Indeed, the 'renegotiation' of public space is described positively – 'With pride beaming

from their faces, they [the home-less participants] portrayed the people they knew in the Square area as family' (p. 550). Sheehan's (2010) contribution, while optimistic, illustrates public space as an important element of community construction, but, her description of experiences may over-emphasize the freedom from the lack of responsibility of people without a home. Meanwhile, others contribute a more dialectic view of space and community meaning.

Perhaps the most influential Australian homelessness scholar on public space and community value is Anne Coleman. Coleman (2000) explores the meaning long-term 'homeless people' give to the public spaces they use and share with other community members and how changes in public space impact upon them. What distinguished the use of public space by people who are homeless is that their presence, even when it corresponds to the standards of more mainstream groups using public space, is not legitimized or sanctioned (Coleman, 2010). In contrast, the use of public space by mainstream community members is generally sanctioned, even when their behaviour is indistinguishable from that of long-term 'homeless people' (Coleman 2000). Nonetheless, Coleman's (2000) perspective frames community belonging in more hopeful terms than scholars like Parsell (2010) and Snow and Anderson (1987, 1993) by arguing people who are homeless are not always rootless, socially isolated or disconnected. She suggests her participants identified themselves as members of the local community and were identified as such by some more mainstream community members. Parsell (2011) suggests that Coleman (2010) romanticizes the term 'homeless community' (p. 61), but disagreements between Parsell and Coleman are not uncommon (e.g., Coleman 2012; Parsell 2011b).

The ways in which volunteers are described in the literature in terms of community could not be further from the ideas presented in the homelessness literature. The following section, the final from this review, will explore how the literature engages with volunteerism inclusion and belonging.

Community, Inclusion and Belonging

Volunteers are viewed as belonging, contributing and included community members. There is almost no alternative argument presented in the literature, or in public, social or political

discourses. The research has explored volunteers' community connections from perspectives of participation, social capital, active citizenship, engagement, partnerships and belonging (Florin & Wandersman 1990; Fyfe & Milligan 2003; Lee & Brudney 2012; Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka 2013; Onyx, Kenny & Brown 2012; Putnam 2000a). Coincidentally the popular media describe volunteers as community spirited and connected contributors (Kinniburgh 2015; Rance 2015) and television presenters make claims that volunteering 'helps people build strong social networks and sense of community' (*The Today Show* 2018). The consistent theme throughout is that volunteering promotes a sense of community belonging (Chavis 2001).

However, much of the research tends to focus on volunteering from the perspective of those who were not homeless. There is a dearth of research into the experiences of people who are homeless who may choose to volunteer in the homelessness field. Cohen (2009) suggests that people who are homeless might be denied or overlooked for volunteering opportunities, 'only a small number of welfare clients have been activated as volunteers, serving more as the object of others' volunteer work' (p. 522). A review of the marketing and online material of voluntary and homelessness organizations in Australia suggests that only the Council of Homeless Persons in Melbourne seem to actively promote the engagement of people who are homeless in voluntary activities. This is surprising given that homelessness is an excluded, isolating and disempowering experience (Snow & Anderson 1993) while volunteerism is an inclusive, engaged and empowering activity (Florin & Wandersman 1990). In addition, people who are homeless and volunteers frequently interact.

Scholars explore the benefits of volunteering amongst those traditionally viewed as clients of volunteer services. For instance, Baines and Hardill (as reported in Binder & Freytag 2013) report that people who are unable to find work due to age, disability, or ill health, may be able to escape the stigma attached to these statuses by performing volunteer work. In addition Fuller, Kershaw and Pulkingham (2008) report that women on welfare were able to fight the stigma of being 'undeserving' of help through volunteering. Cohen (2009) suggests that welfare clients who engage in volunteer work are more likely to feel empowered than welfare clients who did not engage in such work. Voluntary opportunities for people who are homeless offers potential solutions to some of the problems that people who are homeless experience and yet this idea remains somewhat unexplored in the literature.

Summary

This chapter revealed how volunteers and ‘homeless people’ are portrayed in terms of community. It drew on international and Australian literature and popular discourse to reveal how identity and physical space frame people who are homeless as excluded and isolated while volunteers are framed as belonging, contributing and included community members. The next chapter describes how this study plans to research these roles.

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

Introduction

This study will take a qualitative approach that incorporates a constructivist paradigm. The following chapter outlines how my researcher role and personal values may have influenced the research design and conduct. I explain the methods, how they were used, and why they were appropriate. Following this, I explore the topic of sampling; who participated and the recruitment methods. The data collection process precedes a discussion of the analysis phases.

Constructivist Research Philosophy

I approached this study from a social constructivist theoretical perspective. Social constructivism is a set of ideas about how people construct meaning (Gergen & Gergen 2010; Lincoln & Guba 2013). I draw on a metaphorical example, a wooden chair when viewed from various perspectives has different meanings depending on who is viewing it. A carpenter might observe the chair as poorly made. An interior designer might overlook poor build quality and view the chair from a perspective of design era and what furniture or house it might suit. A historian might attribute particular significance to the chair because of their knowledge of the previous owner. In short, a philosophy of constructivism frames the chair as more than pieces of timber, and instead, the chair embodies particular meanings and values that grow out of some sort of community connection of the person who is viewing it (Gergen & Gergen 2010). The ontology of constructivism contends that individuals can hold different yet equally valid views of the same object, whereas the associated epistemology suggests that an object's meanings are socially constructed from disciplines of carpentry, design, and history, amongst others (Lincoln & Guba 2013).

I use social constructivism as a way to think about the various ways people who are homeless, volunteers and researchers are portrayed in Australian society. For example, researchers are described socially as experts, people who are homeless portrayed as deviant drug users and volunteers as saints, heroes and do-gooders (Horsell 2006; Petty 2017; Sonn 2004; Zufferey 2013; Zufferey and Chung 2006). Some of these ways of thinking and talking

have more to do with Australia's colonial history and western perspectives of advantage and disadvantage than they do with lived experience (see, Chapter 2). Because social constructions often present as statements of knowledge and truth (Gergen & Gergen 2010; St. Pierre 2013) they profoundly influence the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of individuals and groups (Foucault 1972; Horsell 2006). Social constructivism enabled an appreciation of how study participants applied different meanings to the same situation or object. The removal of public housing from a local area, for instance, might be perceived by some as a form of social exclusion because it further limits access to affordable housing. Meanwhile, others' might be more inclined to see their removal as an attempt to improve the neighbourhood aesthetic appeal. Social constructivism was used to interpret how each perspective was a value laden assumption constructed by the viewers' social connections.

Constructivism illuminates the idea that people can socially build different meanings they apply to the same object or situation. It follows that the methods of research inspired by social constructivism must probe the minds of participants and the researcher to try and understand how they see the world (Cresswell 1998). Also, to adequately uncover how meanings are built researchers must work with participants on an equal footing, share the nomination of issues deemed critical to both parties and pursue those topics together (Lincoln & Guba 2013). To address the requirements of research inspired by constructivism I approached 29 in-depth interviews as a conversation and collaboration. The participants were the expert teachers and I the 'interested student' who wanted to learn. I sought to understand the various ways they see themselves and how they understand and interact with their world and reported their experiences to reflect what their behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs, and norms meant to them. But, in this shared and co-created reality, my values, along with participants, must be uncovered and transparent (Lincoln & Guba 2013) in order for the reader to understand how they influenced study processes and outcomes. I am, for example, aware that my experiences as a volunteer and community worker influenced my belief that the research literature on homelessness and volunteerism may overlook how volunteers *and* people who are homeless perceive their roles. Exposing my worldview and personal values acknowledges my role in the research process and helps explain how I interpret data and reflect on practice. I recognise that the ways I report and interpret participants' roles influenced understanding. The following three sub-sections explores social positioning and the values important to the ways I construct meaning.

Positioning Myself

I am a white, middle-class, educated, employed, English speaking, able-bodied, mid-30's male born and raised in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. I never experienced poverty and always had a place that I can call 'home'. From an age when most young men are finding out who they are and what they want to do with their lives, I visited East Africa when I was 18 years old. I returned to the area frequently over the following decades and these experiences shaped my values and influenced my view of and interaction with the world. In particular, between 2008 and 2013 I worked alongside impoverished and isolated communities on the archipelago islands of Unguja in Tanzania. Over the years I interacted with foreign workers from non-government-organisations (NGOs) who occasionally described the benefits of local programs they were designing and implementing in local communities. In contrast, community members explained to me that NGO workers would at times assume they know more than locals and thus some aid programs became ineffective and a waste of resources. In one example a large number of computers were donated by an NGO to a local village with no access to electricity. In another instance, a water-well lay unused because the generator that operated the pump had broken and there were no skilled tradespeople to repair it. These experiences in strong part developed my strong interest and belief in the community development principle that change and wisdom should come from below (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011). This background explains why I developed a curiosity with how roles are challenged, reinforced and/or negotiated in settings of help, communities and broader society. It also in large part explains why, on returning to Australia in 2013 to volunteer in the homelessness field, I viewed my role towards people who were homeless with uncertainty. The research reflects these experiences and interests and asks; how do people who are homeless and the volunteers who work with them perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment?

In addition to my experiences abroad, two values, in particular, influenced how I approached the research and interpreted what participants told me. I describe these in the following sections.

Relationships

Valuing and nurturing relationships is central to the construction of meaning and how one interprets the world. Positive relationships between researchers and participants are critical to processes of empowerment and in the forming of credible data (Christens 2012a; Cresswell & Miller 2000; Lincoln & Guba 2013). Nurturing a positive relationship with participants was critical given differences in our homed status and education. Nonetheless, there was an emphasis and focus on our mutual similarities. Whether that be a desire to change the ways people who are homeless are perceived, mutual story telling around subjects of inequality, or debating favourite Star Wars characters, the connections toward participants were complex (Vallacher & Wegner 2014), subjective (Mosher 2010) and required regular reflection and negotiation. I overwhelmingly sensed closeness with participants (Walsh, Rutherford & Kuzmak 2010), characterised by feelings of solidarity, trust, empathy and openness. I drew upon others' ideas that 'hanging out' with research participants can have enormous benefits and can help construct shared understandings (Woodward 2008). I sought to facilitate feelings of being 'in it together' by sitting outside on the street or a nearby park with a person who was experiencing homelessness to talk about our day. I tried to break down salient barriers like homed status by lining up for food and adhering to Community Centre rules applied to clients. Thus, people who were homeless and other volunteers would occasionally approach me to ask how the project was progressing and enquire if there was anything they could contribute. On other occasions, they emailed news articles of interest and offered feedback in response to reading the manuscript. Overall, distances between participants were reduced as much as possible within academic and ethical constraints. Feelings of belonging and acceptance felt from and toward various communities were personally and academically rewarding. Conducting the study was more than a goal to be achieved, it was an immersive experience that promoted understanding and appreciation.

My commitment to relationship building also emerged in the various ways I interacted and treated participants of this research as experts. As one example, after the data collection period I worked alongside participants to explore different ways to name them in the study. As an outcome of these relationships, we felt, like others (Coleman 2000), that because people who are homeless often lack legitimacy and control, identifying a participant as 'homeless' may position their critical contribution as less important than volunteers. The term

'homelessness advocate', or 'advocate' symbolised power, knowledge and expertise, positioned those participants as dominant contributors and recognised shifting identities[2].

Respectful Process

I prioritize and value respectful processes to jointly compose meaning with participants. The journey is just as important as the outcome (Ife 2016). For instance, during a period of data collection it was difficult to recruit the final few participants in order to complete the study. It was then considered that offering remuneration might encourage participation. The decision would enable the completion of data collection in a relatively short amount of time and the practice is common and at times supported by valid academic argument (Runnels et al. 2009). However, remuneration can be a hierarchical structure of power with distinct channels of command and responsibility reinforcing differences in authority between participants and myself and potentially destabilising feelings of belonging and acceptance (Dupont 2008). In other words, compensation may have facilitated arrival at the PhD destination sooner, but the journey would have been less significant. Meanwhile, I was able to recruit enough participants to meet qualitative research scholars and University expectations and norms (Charmaz 2006; Green & Thorogood 2009; Ritchie et al. 2013).

I also tend to be oriented and focused on acknowledging process as an iterative and based on action and reflection. For instance, in section 6.8, it was not enough for me to describe how I analysed the data because I wanted to expose the process of meaning-building that speaks to the study' epistemological position, constructivism. I wanted to convey the mistakes in the analysis to a constructivist position (Street 2008); this essentially means I invite the reader to participate in the making of meaning rather than simply be subject to it. This study over the seven year period involved the continual and dynamic development and changing of ideas and thoughts.

Now that I have described the studies constructivist view and how my background and values may have influenced how I developed the research question, conducted the study and

[2] Participants who had previously or were at the time of study experiencing homelessness are referred to as 'homelessness advocate' or 'advocate'.

engaged with participants, the following sections describe the methods used to respond to the research question.

Research Methods

The study consisted of 29 face-to-face, one-on-one interviews with 13 women and 16 men aged between 19 and 66. The participant cohort included 18 individuals who narrated first-hand experiences of homelessness ('advocates') and 11 volunteers who worked in the homelessness sector and who did not narrate personal homelessness experiences ('volunteers'). I engaged in critical reflection on my social positionality and used thematic analysis to categorise and process the interview data. The methods accommodated the constructivist epistemology (Cresswell 1998; Gergen 2014). The following sections describe these research methods in detail.

Ethics

Coursework under Victoria University (VU) Ethics program was completed in preparation for this study. Following accreditation, an official application under the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) was approved by VU's Human Research Ethics committee. The most significant ethical concern to emerge from this process and the practice of research was that people who are homeless are often highly vulnerable and dependent on volunteer services (Amato & MacDonald 2011; Menih 2013; Miall, Pawluch & Shaffir 2005; Runnels et al. 2009). Participants may have felt that their refusal to contribute could adversely affect those services and endanger important relationships. Interests deepened by the potential for low self-esteem, marginalisation and feelings of disempowerment amongst some participants. The research methods were developed to reduce the risks associated with doing research with vulnerable *and* socially privileged participants.

Key Stakeholders

A stakeholder is an individual or organisation through which researchers gain access to participants (Emmel et al. 2007). In this study stakeholders were the managers and employees of four homelessness not-for profit organisations throughout Melbourne (Table 1) that offered food, housing, advocacy, or other services to people experiencing homelessness.

Three of the stakeholder organisations used volunteers to provide services to people experiencing homelessness.

Table 1: Stakeholder List

Homelessness Organisation	**Stakeholder Pseudonym**
East of Melbourne CBD	Sue Jean
South of Melbourne CBD	Olivia Smyth
North of Melbourne CBD	Ava McDonald
Melbourne CBD	Mia Davidson

Due to my pre-existing affiliations in the homelessness sector, permission to approach potential participants occurred relatively quickly. Networking with managers during the data collection phase facilitated the process of connecting with other stakeholders. Before data collection commenced, the stakeholder obtained an outline of the research that explained their own and participants' involvement (Appendix 1). A face-to-face meeting with these stakeholders was prearranged to provide opportunities to ask questions or raise concerns. All the stakeholders were enthusiastic about the study. Nevertheless, I offered my own contact details and those of my PhD supervisors and the Victoria University ethics board in case managers wished to raise concerns or seek further clarification on details of the project.

Pilot Testing the In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interview approach was the catalyst for exploring associated various interview techniques. Practising this approach was constructivist to the extent that it promoted critical reflection and discussion with my supervisors (Cresswell 1998). The following sub-section describes the pilot testing process.

Role playing interviewer/interviewee with academic supervisors allowed for the opportunity to position myself as the 'other' within the interview context and to reflect on how various interview techniques would influence participants. Techniques were examined common to in-depth interview methods and homelessness research. For instance, some studies ask participants specific questions around a phenomenon (Partis 2003), use photos or pictures to elicit responses (Hodgetts et al. 2007) or ask participants to explain how they became

homeless (Patterson, Markey & Somers 2012). Engaging with these methods as a participant in mock interviews, I sought visual and verbal cues from the interviewer to check that my responses were in line with their expectations. In contrast, my response varied and was more illustrative when I had a sense of control over the question and the direction of my response. For this reason, I decided that a wide-ranging statement allowing the participant autonomy in their response was the most suitable. Various possibilities were tested, such as 'Tell me about yourself', 'I was wondering if you could tell me about your life', and 'Could you tell me about some important moments in your life?'. I eventually decided upon: 'Everyone has a life story and I would be interested in hearing yours'. The informal in contrast to more informal and structured approaches enabled the participant to feel comfortable and to recognise that their response was valued. It verbally reaffirmed that the participant possessed the information I was seeking, i.e., 'a life story', and that life story was important and relevant. Pilot studies are helpful (Van-Teijlingen & Hundley 2001). As a result, moving from the relative safety of my supervisors' offices I approached stakeholders Sue and Olivia from East Homelessness Services to test the interview question.

Pilot testing data collection involved interviewing Sue and Olivia for approximately 45 minutes each. I used the same interview procedure I planned on using with participants. I asked if they would mind if the conversation was audio-taped and explained the confidential nature of what was said. I encouraged them to respond by saying, 'Everyone has a life story and I would be interested in hearing yours'. This process was valuable on two fronts. First, it helped Sue and Olivia understand how their clients and volunteers would be approached and the interview method used, and second, their experiences, knowledge and skills were instrumental in adjusting the interview technique. For instance, Sue recommended interviews be modified to incorporate more follow-up and conversational type questions for volunteers because she thought that while clients of homelessness services would appreciate such an open-ended question, volunteers may feel the question would occupy too much time. This feedback was incorporated into my approach. In-depth interviews are conversational in style (Charmaz & Belgrave 2012) and rely on the social construction of knowledge (Hall & Callery 2001). The interviews were flexible, continually changing in response to the circumstances. The process of sampling is described in the following section.

Sampling

The 29 participants were sampled from throughout Melbourne, Australia, and were regular clients or volunteers of homelessness organisations. The number of participants was consistent with other qualitative research seeking to understand how people view the world (Coleman 2000) and is the generally recommended number of required for in-depth interview studies of this type (Marshall et al. 2013). Table 2 on page 79 shows the 29 individuals interviewed for this study, their pseudonyms, homelessness organisations from which they were recruited and the date of the interview. HA is an abbreviation of Homelessness Advocate and V is an abbreviation of Volunteer. Eighteen individuals considered themselves to have experienced, or were experiencing homelessness at the time of interview. Eleven were volunteers for people who were homeless who did not report personal experiences of homelessness. The participants were between 18 and 65 years of age; 12 were female and 17 were male. When using participants' quotations in this thesis, in order to ensure anonymity, participants were de-identified through the use of a pseudonym. The list of participants is on the next page. The procedure for their recruitment follows.

Table 2: Participant List

No.	Interview Date	Pseudonym	Description	Gender	Location of Org
1	09/12/14	Bill	HA	Male	East
2	16/12/14	Jack Chadwick	HA	Male	East
3	06/12/14	Queen Elizabeth the 3rd	V	Female	East
4	07/12/14	Paul	V	Female	East
5	12/12/15	Hannah	V	Female	East
6	13/12/15	Shamus	HA	Male	East
7	13/01/15	Paul	HA	Male	East
8	20/01/15	Judd	V	Male	Central
9	20/01/15	Louise	V	Female	North
10	21/01/15	David	HA	Male	Central
11	21/01/15	Hunter	V	Male	North
12	20/01/15	Ann	V	Female	Central
13	04/02/15	Tania	V	Female	North
14	04/02/15	Pat	V	Female	East
15	12/02/15	Joanne	V	Female	North
16	02/03/15	Andy	HA	Male	East
17	10/03/15	Kelsey	HA	Female	Central
18	10/03/15	Yobbo	HA	Male	North
19	16/03/15	Maria	HA	Female	East
20	16/03/15	Andrew	HA	Male	Central
21	16/03/15	Jade	HA	Female	North
22	17/3/15	Greg	HA	Male	East
23	17/03/15	Vicky	HA	Female	Central
24	17/03/15	Peter	HA	Male	Central
25	18/03/15	Fred	V	Male	North
26	18/03/15	Leo	HA	Male	North
27	23/03/15	Sam	HA	Male	North
28	12/03/15	Kate	HA	Female	Central

29	01/03/15	Daniel	HA	Male	North

Participant Recruitment

The following sections outline the recruitment process. The methods used were consistent with the study's ethics application and recommendations made by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2007).

Engaging Stakeholder Organisations

Engaging stakeholder organisations (as described on p. 75) was the first step in participant recruitment. These organisations added an extra layer of context and independent scrutiny (Ingamells et al. 2011) to the recruitment process. For this reason, the condition applied to this study was a participant's regular and ongoing contact with a stakeholder organisation, as a volunteer *or* a service user.

Managers of stakeholder organisations were approached by myself and asked if they would like to take part in the research. They were offered a plain language description of the research project that summarised the purpose of the study, their role, and how participants would be approached and engaged. Risks and benefits were outlined and the voluntary nature of the study was explained in addition to confidentiality and privacy processes. The contact details of all relevant parties (e.g. VU Ethics Board, PhD supervisors, student researchers) precluded an outline of a complaints procedure. This form can be viewed in Appendix 1. Questions and concerns were addressed in face-to-face meetings and the research did not commence until stakeholder's support was granted verbally and in writing.

Opportunities to liaise with managers in respect to a participant's appropriateness for the study helped to determine how individuals may respond to the research question and the in-depth interview approach. Managers recommended those who enjoyed speaking about their lives and verbally exploring how they became homeless or began volunteering. During the study period, managers identified only three individuals who they felt may respond negatively to the study. Two of these individuals were experiencing homelessness and had demonstrated aggressive behaviour and appeared unwell in previous weeks. I decided to not

approach these men because they may have posed a physical threat to myself or others, been unable to provide informed consent and/or tolerate an in-depth interview process. A manager also asked that I avoid a female volunteer because her partner was terminally unwell and the manager felt she may get upset if she were asked to participate. None of these individuals approached me to express an interest in participating, so the issue of denying participation to someone who was interested did not arise.

Engaging Participants

After consultation with stakeholders, I approached individuals to determine their interest in contributing to this project. The recruitment process was the same irrespective of whether an individual was experiencing homelessness and was a service user of a stakeholder organisation, or if they volunteered at a stakeholder organisation.

Usually, a service manager provided me with the contact details of someone who had shown interest in the study. I would call them on the telephone, introduce myself and the project and ask them if they would like to take part. Everyone I called said they were interested in participating. In other instances, participants approached me directly after speaking to a staff member, myself, or a fellow client of the service or volunteer. Participants were able to approach me because I was a frequent visitor to one of the stakeholder organisations during the study period. During these visits, I helped volunteers serve meals and ate meals with people experiencing homelessness. The conversations around the table and the service area frequently moved to the study and how it was progressing, and people experiencing homelessness and volunteers asked if they could participate in the study or contribute in some way. When this occurred, I asked the manager of the service if they held any safety concerns about the individual, and if the manager felt the individual would enjoy the in-depth interview process. At no stage did a manager advise against engaging a person who had shown interest in participating.

During initial introductions, the participant was provided with a plain language information sheet (Appendix 2) that outlined the voluntary nature of the study, including the aims, methods and possible results. If they agreed to contribute, a time and place convenient to the participant was organized to conduct the interview. The participant was provided with a

consent form (Appendix 3) to ensure there existed a shared understanding and awareness of the research and its likely consequences or impacts, including any risks and benefits focused around how they may respond to speaking about their lives for an extended period of time. It was verbally reiterated that they could withdraw from the interview and research process at any time they wished, with no adverse consequences.

Data Collection

The following three sections describe how data was collected for this study. The first two sections outline the in-depth interview and research diary methods of data collection. I address the techniques used to address the limitations implicit in each method and how they connect back to constructivism and the research question. The third section outlines how confidentiality and privacy influenced the data collection process.

Conducting In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted one-to-one and were undertaken in venues selected by participants. The average duration of interviews was 1.5 hours which did not include the time spent introducing ourselves and debriefing. In total, data consisted of 35 hours of audio-recorded interviews. Interview locations were as varied as a private room at a homelessness organisation or a local coffee shop. One interview was conducted in a public bar, and another in the participant's home after he informed me he was uncomfortable speaking in a public place. In some cases, due to the length of some interviews, we moved to another location for a change of scenery.

I began by introducing myself and my interest in the study and avoided outlining my credentials or qualifications to conduct the research to reduce any perceived differences in power or expertise between myself and the participant. Instead, I explained that I enjoyed listening to people tell stories about their lives. Participants were encouraged to speak for as long as they felt comfortable. Following this, they were informed about the voluntary and participatory nature of the study and asked if they would mind if the conversation was recorded. All participants agreed.

An important consideration of the interview process was ensuring that participants were emotionally and physically comfortable and had feelings of control over our interactions. I avoided conducting interviews in a structured way for each person and adjusted my behaviour to ensure participants were at ease. Less structure in an interview offers greater control to both the interviewer and interviewee to jointly construct the narrative (Patterson, Markey & Somers 2012). Others describe this technique as responsive and suggest that a less formal approach to interviews emphasises collaboration and treats participants as partners rather than objects of research (England 1994; Jefferson & Harkins 2011; Rubin & Rubin 2011). By allowing myself opportunities to adjust my approach in each interview, I could respond more efficiently to participant's comfort and or uncertainty. I also found that changing my voice and mannerisms to those of each participant was valuable. If the participant spoke quietly, I would enact the same characteristic in my verbal responses. At times, participants would intervene in boisterous or quiet tones and I would follow their lead. This helped create rapport and resulted in meaningful interactions.

After the initial introductions the participant was asked a simple but broad question: *'Everyone has a life story, I would be interested in hearing yours'.* The simplicity of the interview question was helpful and problematic. It allowed participants to speak about what they were comfortable to share, but, the question elicited extremely lengthy responses i.e., in some cases interviews went on for almost four hours and moved beyond the research question. The length of conversations was not unanticipated. For example, there is indication that 50% of what is said in an interview often goes beyond the particular interview question even when more direct questions are asked (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). In some of the interviews, the breadth of the interview question appeared to make some participants uncomfortable because they did not know where to start their stories. A participant's uncomfortableness with such a broad interview question is demonstrated in the following quotation: 'I'm a very private person. My father was private too. So it's just kind of my nature' *Hannah* (female, volunteer, #5).

In interviews where I sensed participant's unease with an open-ended question, like Hannah's, I shifted to a more conversational interaction. In these cases, I described my personal challenges, fears and experiences surrounding my role in an interview context and queried if the participant would mind expanding on our mutual experiences in the

homelessness field. This is referred to as active interviewing and maintains that conversations need not be incidental 'chatter' but involve talk that is central to the research (Holstein & Gubrium 1995). By the end of these interviews, participants had often spoken for over an hour offering many unsolicited and engaging insights into their perceived roles. Again, Hannah illustrates how some responded to interview method: 'I could feel your lack of judgment, particularly talking about something like Christianity…and it was good. I could just feel you were just allowing me to [speak]…so thanks. I appreciate that' *Hannah* (female, volunteer, #5).

The research diary also indicates that flexibility in the interview process helped some participants feel comfortable, safe and in control:

> Despite [the participant's] initial reluctance at the beginning of the interview, she approached me tonight at the Community Centre and thanked me. I asked, 'what for?' She said the interview was a 'wonderful' experience. She joked that she was going to start a group where people sit around and tell stories about their lives. (Zachary Greig - Research Diary, 2016).

Two participants expressed similar views during interviews: 'You know why this will work? Because you listen.' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2) and another, '…good that you listen I love that, someone listening.' *Greg* (male, advocate, #22)

Participant responses like the ones noted above encouraged and supported the use of in-depth interviews as a data collection method. The approach used to collaborate and engage with participants was influenced by community development scholar Jim Ife. In a presentation at Victoria University in 2014, he suggested that the most constructive information was collected from community members when cleaning the dishes after a meeting. In contexts like these individuals are framed as equals and more honest and open feedback is likely. Less formal approaches toward data collection realistically demonstrate how people make sense of their worlds (Wadsworth 2016). The purpose of interviews, therefore, in addition to collecting data to respond to the research question, was to ensure participants believed their contribution was valued and useful and that their time was appreciated. Perhaps the most positive reaction to the interviews was illustrated by the number of participants who forgot

they were being interviewed and accidently knocked the tape recorder from the table due to their exuberant storytelling. This demonstrated the comfort and ease participants felt in our mutual interactions.

In addition, participants were verbally encouraged to expand, amend or clarify what they had said (Stoecker 2012) immediately after the interview and usually a week afterwards. This technique helped to validate the data and offered respondents another opportunity to reflect on their experiences. I took an informal method and engaged with the participant by asking questions like, '…how did you find the interview last week?', or, '…did you have any concerns or worries about the interview?'. Participants did not express unease or dissatisfaction with the interview and regularly expanded on what they had said, or clarified their meaning. These reflections were then noted in the research diary and added to the participant's file.

Despite mostly positive experiences, challenges emerged in the data collection process. On three occasions a participant failed to arrive at the scheduled interview or did so under the influence of what appeared to be drugs and/or alcohol. When this occurred, I rescheduled interviews for another time that was convenient to the participant. At times these delays challenged the data collection schedule. Good community research cannot be rushed (Ife 2016). It takes time, and data collection required an organic and somewhat relaxed and flexible approach. Indeed, the primary focus was on participants' life circumstances and what these delays meant to the PhD timeframe were unimportant and irrelevant when confronted with challenges faced by others.

In addition, while no serious ethical dilemma presented itself during the research process in one case I had to quickly deal with a potential issue when a participant told me during his in-depth interview that he had been raped. This encounter was glossed over during another unrelated story but because it is serious illegal behaviour and had the potential to negatively impact the participant's wellbeing I felt it was necessary to ask a follow-up question. After the participant finished his story I asked: 'If you're comfortable, can you tell me a little bit more about the sexual assault you mentioned?' The participant then elaborated on the incident and informed me that he had gone to the police to make a report and had been

referred to a counselling service. And while he chose not to see a counsellor and no charges were laid, I felt comfortable that he had been offered assistance and the authorities were involved and I did not feel it was necessary or appropriate to take any further action.

Recording the Research Diary

The second qualitative data collection method was the research diary (Engin 2011). The diary related my personal thoughts, feelings, and emotions as I reflected upon how my background and worldviews shaped the way I constructed meaning and practised the study. Diary entries were unstructured and relatively informal. After each interview I made a short reflective summary of the interaction that included my initial observations, thoughts and feelings. I focused particularly on recording the non-verbal elements observed between the participant and myself because this information was potentially the most likely to be forgotten or overlooked. On other occasions, I wrote down interactions pertinent or interesting to the study. Throughout the study's findings, participant quotations were augmented with extracts from the diary for the purpose of revealing my role alongside those of participants'. Diary excerpts are in italics notated with the year and my name to differentiate the data from other text.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Another important consideration of the data collection process was the issue of participants' and organisations' confidentiality and privacy. As personal and sensitive information was frequently explored by participants and stakeholders, a number of steps were implemented to ensure identities remained private.

Information shared between me as the researcher, the participants and stakeholders remained private at all times. Real names and any other identifying markers were removed from the transcriptions. The real names of participants and stakeholders, their contact details, and corresponding pseudonyms were kept in the Victoria University PhD supervisors locked filing cabinet. When a participant requested to be interviewed in a local coffee shop, I explained that it was more likely that people may overhear, and that local community members may recognize myself and/or the participant and conclude that the individual is

contributing to the study. This point was also highlighted in the participant and stakeholder information sheets (Appendix 1). However, when a participant asked to be interviewed elsewhere, I would deliberately choose a coffee shop that was quiet to reduce the risk patrons would overhear what was being spoken about. Occasionally, the participant and I moved elsewhere because someone sat close by.

No participant disclosed an intention to commit a serious crime or illegal activity during the study. If a participant had of disclosed such information my plan was to stop the participant speaking the moment I suspected they may incriminate themselves. This technique has been recommended by other qualitative researchers as an effective way to deal with participant disclosures (Wiles et al 2007). By the same token, no participant disclosed an intention to harm themselves or others, if this had of occurred my plan was to speak to my supervisors about the most appropriate response while ensuring I protected the participant's anonymity (Wiles et al 2007).

Previous sections recount how data was collected, the following sections outline how data was analysed.

Thematic Analysis

The qualitative analytic method utilised in this study was a thematic approach described by Braun and Clarke (2008, p. 79) as a procedure of 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data'. This technique was selected because it offered a simple yet effective way to organise a large amount of data collected in in-depth interviews so I could interpret and understand how stories responded to the research question and how participant experiences and world views may have been connected to each other. However, the technique of searching for patterns or themes that 'emerge' from the data is often poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged in academia (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013) and constructivist researchers need to be clear about what they are doing and why and include the often-omitted 'how' they do their analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001; Cresswell & Miller 2000). Themes reside in my head, from my thinking about the data and creating links as I understood them (Braun & Clarke 2006). I did not 'sense' themes nor did themes magically emerge (Boyatzis 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006). Themes were based on the constructivist stance and a commitment to

respond to the research question. A process influenced by my own world view of what was important to people who are homeless and volunteers. I remained critically aware of how the qualitative data analysis process could be influenced by my own worldview, and it is through continued critical reflections, dialogue with peers, supervisors and some of the research participants (to cross-check my interpretative lens), I ensured the analysis is objective. The purpose of the following four sub sections is to describe the useful choices made during each stage of the analysis process that enabled me to make useful conclusions.

Organisation and Transcription

Organising the data was the first step of the analytic approach. Each interview recording was transcribed verbatim and arranged with personal diary notations into corresponding folders. Participants' names were changed to their own chosen pseudonym and a spreadsheet of participants' real names and matching pseudonyms were stored in a password protected separate file. Each interview transcript was entered into and software program NVivo which was used to manage and organise the data throughout the study. In cases where the initial introduction and pleasantries were taped it was confirmed these were correct and included in the transcripts. I found that the lengthy process of transcription removed me emotionally from the interview participants and their meanings, contexts. The humanity of our interaction was overwhelmed by the jumble of information. Responding to these concerns, I listened again to each interview on a headset as I walked. I allowed myself the opportunity to engage with interviews again without taking notes or transcribing. The silences, gaps and omissions (de Medeiros & Rubinstein 2015) of participant stories illuminated hidden stories and emotions that were previously overlooked. I began to envision spaces outside language that subjected the participant (St. Pierre in Sellers 2015). For instance, silences after *Bill* (male, advocate, #1) narrated experiences of exclusion from family and friends gave those stories and his role within narratives added brevity and meaning. Silent pauses pointed to an avoidance of memories and demonstrated how reengaging with recollections was challenging for him. Transcribed words jumped off the page as remarkable, chiefly in the context of silences and omissions. Therefore, I paid attention to not only what was said but how it was stated.. Researching 'people' and not just gathering data was an important step in rehumanising the data and emotionally reconnecting with participants and their stories.

Coding

Shadowing the step of validating and organising the data the production of initial codes by repeated and active readings of the interviews, searching for meanings and patterns began. A deductive approach, that is, an approach drawing upon the research question and theories of empowerment and community development values was adopted. The data coded into groups corresponded with the interactional, intrapersonal, behavioural and relational constructs of empowerment (Christens 2012b; Zimmerman 1995). However, this approach overlooked the complexity of participant responses and was less descriptive of the data. The deductive approach did not correspond with a constructivist paradigm (Cresswell 1998) and regarded the truth as a universal construct. Realising these limitations, I began coding the data inductively and removed all previous coding attempts.

Bearing some similarity with grounded theory (e.g., Cresswell 1998) an inductive approach to coding is data driven and has greater potential to create new knowledge because it is not limited to already recognised theories and understandings (Braun & Clarke 2006). An inductive approach can generate many different codes which are unrelated to the research question (Boyatzis 1998). Indeed, a collection of over one hundred codes painted a complex and inter-woven matrix of participant meanings and interactions. From a personal perspective, the collection of codes accurately represented what was said in the participant interviews, acknowledged the complexity and diversity in their lives and importantly responded to the research question.

I tried to remain reflexively aware of when and how my beliefs and prejudices may contaminate the analysis. I note in the diary during the coding stage, that '…many of the codes appear to lean towards community development values, e.g., rights, needs, local knowledge, engagement, etc.' (Zachary Greig, Research Diary 2016). My prior experience, education and interests were influencing initial decisions on the importance and relevance of data. Cognizance and reflection upon my influence encouraged the identification of extracts that challenged, and at times contradicted, my expectations. For example, when I first approached the data I expected to find more examples of advocates recounting feelings of disconnection from others who were also homeless. Non-belonging had been my interpretation, my memory of interviews. Instead, I found more than I anticipated examples

of connectedness amongst those who were homeless that forced me to reflect on conversations to recall stories I had forgotten or overlooked. Extracts were subsequently included in the findings and represented an important discovery.

Finding and Connecting Themes

The next step of analysis involved finding themes in the collection of coded data (Braun & Clarke 2006). The titles of each code were written on separate pieces of paper and organised into a large table. Codes were then grouped together into themes considered to represent similar experiences and/or participant perceptions. I was reluctant to fully unshackle myself from my deductive reasoning because the first selection of themes corresponded with already existing theories and seemed to lean toward my personal values. I suspected that the themes might misrepresent participant stories because of my attempts to seek answers instead of conveying subjective experiences. The collection of themes represented others' and my own story and failed to accurately reflect the voices and experiences of participants. For example, three themes were initially labelled 'intrapersonal empowerment', 'interactional empowerment' and 'behavioural empowerment'. I was reading extensively about empowerment themes at the time in preparation for completing the literature review. However, these labels potentially meant little to anyone who did not have knowledge of Zimmerman's work and themes likely excluded the voices of participants and inadequately told their story.

By detaching myself from my ontological position and reflecting on the idea that 'in this world may many worlds more be' (Cavendish in Vanderbeke 2003), I collected codes into theme titles to reflect how participants spoke, and which I felt truthfully represented how participants experienced the world. Themes included, 'community and belonging', 'life histories', 'future directions', 'community', 'isolation, power and fear', 'roles of help', 'who am I?', and a large collection of themes surrounding issues of help, such as 'active help', 'passive help', 'help seeking', 'active help' and 'help providing', amongst others. The next step involved interpreting and theorising the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Braun & Clarke 2006) by removing and connecting the remaining themes. Themes and their subsequent codes relating to future directions, identity and childhood memories were put to one side. Not because they were unimportant but

because upon reflection of the narrative as a whole, these themes remained disjointed from other themes and the research question. The remaining four themes (which are reflected in the four findings chapters, The Home-less Person's Role, The Volunteer's Role, The Welfare-User's Role and The Role of the Home-less Person who Volunteers) were selected because they represented the broader conversation and because they responded to how participants perceived theirs' and others roles from the perspective of empowerment. The themes were collated into a mind map with each box representing a different theme and each title (which are reflected in the chapter's sub-sections) within each theme signifying a different code. The mind map visually illustrated relationships and facilitated the process of writing and organising the thesis.

Writing

The format of the sections thus far implies the process of data analysis was linear and well defined. The reality was that exploration was an iterative process of action and reflection. Writing notes, jotting down ideas and observations, summarising readings and transcribing the interviews complimented creative and academic writing that facilitated understandings (Emig 1977). The process of writing was a lonely and isolating experience that separated my role from the participants (Kamler & Thomson 2014). Extracts of unedited writing were therefore frequently shared with some participants, community workers, supervisors, fellow students and friends and family as a way of removing me physically and emotionally from the processes of academia and to re-engage and respond to others in ways that would facilitate learning. Insights and contributions from others helped to shape the final dissertation, because writing was a process of learning about the world and understanding how participants understood and experienced their world. The most effective way to validate and firm my interpretations was to engage with participants and others on an ongoing basis to verbally explore and re-explore, ideas, thoughts and questions. When this occurred, I updated the research diary and interview notes to include follow-up conversations and interactions.

Summary

This chapter has argued for the suitability of the community development and constructivist approaches adopted in the study. I have described the manner in which I engaged with

participants. Following on from the limitations identified within the homelessness and volunteerism research literature, I have presented community development and constructivism as a means to develop a comprehensive understanding of how people who are homeless and volunteers perceive their roles from an empowerment perspective. However, like Kenny says (2011, p. 2), community development practitioners do not seek refuge in simple and certain answers. Instead, community development is a collaborative and dialogical process of education (Ife 2016). Therefore, the following chapter introduces how the study imperfectly responds to the research question.

Chapter 7: The Home-less Person's Role

Introduction

This chapter offers a discussion of the nuances of advocates' (as a reminder, the descriptor 'advocates' describes research participants who narrated personal experiences of homelessness) belonging and non-belonging. It details multiple perspectives on the experiences of communities as well as how advocates see and experience those communities from different perspectives. The first three sections explore advocates' disconnection from family, friends and other home-less people. For families, advocates identified disconnection as an exclusionary practice of rejection and alienation (e.g., being pushed away by parents, siblings and children). Friendship disconnection was expressed differently: as deliberate and considered attempts to isolate oneself (e.g., pull away) from non-homeless friends, usually because of the shame and embarrassment that homelessness caused. The third section demonstrates disconnection from other home-less people that advocates expressed as forms of isolation (e.g., pulling away) from home-less relationships based on perceived absences of shared home-less values and purpose. The interpretations in the first three sections resonate with the ways popular discourses and homelessness literature frequently frame the role of the 'homeless person' as excluded, isolated and disempowered (Horsell 2006; Parsell 2014; Spencer 2016; Zufferey & Kerr 2004). Even so, the chapter's next three sections present a different role and explore advocates' social connections and sense of empowerment from perspectives of public space, safety and protection. With respect to public spaces, advocates identified empowering social connections with home-less and non-home-less people in Melbourne's streets, parks and libraries. The fifth section - 'safety' - explores how advocates described home-less communities as 'secret societies' and 'exclusive clubs' that offered members safety from violent victimisation. The sixth section studies how advocates explained the protection that home-less communities offered from mainstream society. Each 'Belonging' section demonstrates that people experiencing homelessness are, at times, entirely capable and willing to belong and to perceive themselves as empowered - a notion that is underappreciated by social, political and mainstream constructions of homelessness and people who are home-less. Collectively, the sections reveal how rhetoric that focuses solely on home-less peoples' powerlessness exerts control, manipulation and judgement that objectifies and further excludes home-less people from mainstream society.

Advocates' Disconnection

Ever since Indigenous Australians were forcefully removed from their land, forced into labour camps and submitted to slavery (Harman 2012), notions of disconnection have characterised the Australian 'homeless person'. Whether economic, social or political, disconnection has typically framed the role of the home-less person as disempowered. The next three sections are consistent with this role perspective, and illustrate advocates' perceived disempowerment in the various ways they have experienced social disconnection: including family rejection, a lack of companionship from friends and low-quality or precarious relationships within the home-less community. These forms of disconnection are shown to compound and inform advocates' cycles of long-term vulnerability, the range of traumas they experience and the cumulative, embodied effects these traumas incite.

Family

A sense of family belonging was essential to advocates' sense of power, intimacy, approval, achievement and affiliation. They felt a sense of control over their lives when they belonged in family units and felt powerless when excluded. Thirteen advocates spoke about families sixty-seven times over their fourteen hours of in-depth interviews. They articulated the emotional support families offered and the physical items that accompanied family connections. Family pets (always dogs or cats), a warm and comfortable bed, 'wonderful Mums', hearty meals and places to hang photos on walls characterised the belonging role. And yet, nine advocates said they were disconnected from their families and two advocates barely remembered their families because they had lived on the streets since they were young. The narrative shows that emotional pain, social myths and beliefs, and accommodation rules were the three major ways that advocates accounted for disconnections from their family. Bill's quotation eloquently captures the way advocates often communicated their family exclusion: '[Home-less people] are all very similar. We are not attached to anything: items, we don't care for items, we will burn items, we don't care. We don't attach ourselves to personalities or family. We are all a singularity' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1).

The striking phrase 'we are all a singularity' illustrates Bill's lacks or absence of social connections, and how he responded by emotionally 'detaching' himself from the hurt and pain that exclusion caused. Another advocate responded similarly:

> I'm estranged with my family. I still talk to them a little bit, I text them on birthdays, so there's still some contact. I did everything I could to remedy the mistake, and I have done—I know that I've done everything in my power to do that. I don't have any kids, but both my two sisters, they've both got kids. So I miss them, but you know, there's a separation of that. So I've sort of lost my family. It's really their call. *Greg* (male, advocate, #22)

Greg missed his family and desperately wanted to reconnect. His statement depicts an activity that enacts agency (texting and talking to his family) but simultaneously reveals its unsuccessful attempt to achieve family inclusion. The account suggests that Greg is disempowered behaviourally: Greg believes in his personal capability to reconnect (e.g., he can love and care for his family) and understands the context for his family exclusion ('the mistake' he made), but, because his actions to reconnect (texting his family) are ineffective, Greg ultimately experiences disempowerment. Zimmerman (2015) would describe Greg's circumstance as powerful 'feeling' and 'thinking' alongside powerless 'doing', and would claim that Greg is powerless in his family context without the realisation of all three features. Greg, like Bill, seems to respond to his powerlessness by feigning disregard and compartmentalising his emotional reactions. Another example from Bill illustrates that phenomenon:

> Because when you become homeless, you don't only lose your family, but you lose your sensitivity itself and I don't have any photos of anything, of my family. I don't have any photos at all. So, people and different women I've met go, 'do you have a family?' And I go, 'yeah, I do, I do have a family'. And if you are not dysfunctional you have a family and you have [a] photos album, and photos on your wall and stuff, and I go, 'yeah', and they don't fully understand it, and although they might try to make it work, they pretty much close the door on you at that point. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

One can interpret Bill's phrase 'you lose your sensitivity itself' is his numbing to the pain caused by his family exclusion. However, the phrase was expressed quietly and hopefully: more so as a desire to stop or obscure the emotional pain he felt from family disconnection than as genuine emotional indifference. In fact, family disconnection often appeared to compound and inform advocates' trauma and numb responses. Scholars have recognised the trauma associated with family breakdown (e.g., Coates & McKenzie-Mohr 2010; Johnson & Chamberlain 2011). Robinson (2011) has highlighted the deep emotional and corporeal pain family breakdown specifically causes home-less people. An interpretation of family-breakdown trauma is that it may be linked to the societal belief that functioning community members belong to family units (Bengtson 2001). Functioning community members have sisters, brothers and parents who love and support them; visibly disconnected from such family units, a person is seen as dysfunctional.

Bill describes his homelessness and family breakdown as forms of social dysfunction. For him, families embrace functioning community members: photo albums and photos on walls of a home evidence those connections. Bill's opinions on dysfunction are not uncommon. Snow, Anderson and Koegal (1994, p. 462) have acknowledged that researchers often define home-less people as a highly crippled and dysfunctional population, and Fischer et al.'s (1986) article is a prime example of dysfunctional-typing scholarly rhetoric. Politicians and the media have also characterised people who are homeless as dysfunctional through powerless, poverty-stricken, disadvantaged and deviant (Parsell & Parsell 2012; Petty 2017; Rosenthal 2000; Zufferey 2013).

Instead of compassion, kindness and understanding, Bill is judged by the 'people and different women' he meets as they draw back and close the door on him. Another interpretation of Bill's exclusion is that - because homelessness is often understood as a result of family breakdown due to family violence and drug and alcohol abuse (Johnson & Jacobs 2014) - homelessness sufferers are seen as the source of their own circumstances. Males tend to be framed as the perpetrators of family violence (ABS 2018b) and as the subjects of drug and alcohol addiction (ABS 2018a) so Bill's concession of family exclusion may justify his social position (e.g., homelessness) in the minds of others and deny him the right to empathy and understanding. This interpretation suggests that hinging homelessness understandings on myths and beliefs rather than interaction and compassion is an important factor in the social

exclusion of people experiencing homelessness. Meanwhile, views that consider homelessness as solely the result of family breakdown rather than the cause of family exclusion focus on the home-less individuals' faults and character flaws and thus deny home-less people empathy, humanity and acceptance.

Supported housing was another impediment to advocate's family connection. For example,

> I was grey and withdrawn, you know, because the world was doom and gloom. I didn't have connections—very little connections with my family because in transitional [housing], my daughter wasn't allowed to be on the property because no children under the age of 14. So I just went, 'Fuck you's. I'm having my daughter here whether you like it or not' because it's all about connections and I wasn't going to lose connection with my daughter, not at that age. *Andrew* (male, advocate #20)

Andrew demonstrates the importance of family inclusion to health, wellbeing and hope. He also illustrates some of the challenges home-less people encounter when attempting family inclusion, particularly when accommodated in temporary housing. Significant work (Lee & Murie 1997; Shinn 2010) has explored similar obstacles, and demonstrates how the housing system can heighten material disadvantage and social exclusion. Madanipour et al. (1998 in Arthurson & Jacobs 2003), for instance, have shown that exclusion from the housing market often precipitates exclusion in other societal spheres, and Lee and Murie (1997) have posed questions about how the housing system forms a vector through which one experiences social exclusion. Andrew's ordeal with exclusion compelled him to disobey accommodation rules to maintain family connection. That transgression was necessary during a critical period in Andrew's life because family inclusion offered valuable opportunities to improve his circumstances.

Although advocates often felt excluded from their families, it is not axiomatic that family contact alone could resolve their social marginalisation. The next section presents the ways in which some advocates isolated themselves from friends rather than describing how their friends distanced themselves from the advocates.

Friendships

The second type of disconnection advocates identified was from non-homeless friends (henceforth referred to as 'friends'). Advocates said friendships offered a sense of normalcy, emotional support and overall wellbeing. They also felt that the rituals that accompanied friendships were important: Meeting at a pub for a drink, calling each other on a regular basis to 'catch- up', attending school reunions and playing sports together made advocates feel like they belonged and were valuable community members. And yet, advocates frequently spoke about friends in past tense. They also described the disconnection as a form of isolation

attributed to feelings of shame. Some advocates who experienced shame spoke about feelings of embarrassment, powerlessness and anger, and others described it as feeling out of control, overwhelmed and paralysed. Emotions of shame in the narrative were linked to stigma and discrimination related with homelessness. Even though advocates expressed a desire to reconnect with friends, activities like ignoring phone calls, pretending to have gone overseas or feigning disregard for lost relationships may have served as protective measures that managed the damaging stigma associated with homelessness. For instance:

> People said 'why didn't you connect with friends you knew' and all that sort of thing, but you don't because you're shameful, you're a loser, you're not a winner anymore, you've let people down, all those sort of things go on. But there's also that—what do they call it?—fight and flight, you know you've got to get out of there man. *Sam* (male, advocate, #27)

Here, Sam expresses shame as a painful sense of personal fault and defeat and attributes homelessness to character flaws. He sees himself as 'a loser' because of his homelessness, and the associated shame he feels is so intense that he must escape and 'get out of there' as quickly as possible. Sam's response comports with scholarship about the harmful role that stigmas and stereotypes can play on home-less peoples' lives (e.g., Farrugia 2011; Perry 2013; Sheehan 2010; Snow & Anderson 1987; Snow, Anderson & Koegel 1994; Zufferey & Kerr 2004). Fall (2014) has shown that home-less men in the United States withdraw from society as a protective strategy to alleviate the shame and stigma associated with homelessness. Social withdraw, moreover, negatively affects one's opportunities to facilitate social inclusion and to exit from a situation of homelessness. Maintaining friendships is a

central component to reducing homelessness, and Sam's decision to avoid friends counterintuitively diminishes his prospects of overcoming the ('loser') role he imagines others project onto him. Sam's contradictory actions are not exceptional: 'I was isolating myself from friends so I didn't have to compare myself to normal people. I only had street people and drug addicts around me, really' *Jade* (female, advocate, #21). Decisions stemming from internalised shame illustrate the behavioural power that social roles hold over home-less people and the embodied effects those roles can exert.

Feelings of shame from homelessness also risk psychologically refiguring one's identity in relation to conceptions of other home-less people (Biddle 1986) For example, similar to Sam, Jade's reluctance to stay connected with friends because of her perceived 'abnormality' is a self-identification that juxtaposes her against 'normal people'. 'Street people' and 'drug addicts' suffer in comparison to mainstream community members, and differentiation alleviates some of the hazards associated with judgements of 'normal'. Jade's expression of shame may be a response to how Jade, who saw herself as home-less relative to other marginal groups 'around' her, is socially, politically and publicly constructed as morally suspect, irresponsible, dangerous and/or passive (Beresford 1979; Hodgetts, Cullen & Radley 2005; Rossiter 2001). Here, homelessness names a shameful failure to meet social expectations or a shameful violation of essential social standards. The stigmatising affect accompanying Jade's homelessness configures her withdraw from 'normal people' and shapes her affiliation with 'street people and drug addicts'. Sam, too, separates himself as 'not a winner anymore'. Homelessness enacts detachments through shame: isolation from those in a position to offer emotional support or inclusion as well as struggles to isolate oneself from social stigma occur as a result.

The connection between avoiding friends out of shame or embarrassment and Australian culture's atomised explanations for homelessness produces another interpretation of the findings. For example, one advocate said, 'I [was] deserted by my friends, to be honest. But you know, I've got to take responsibility [for being homeless], you know…' *Greg* (male, advocate, #22). Greg's image of 'responsibility' is inconsistent with his narrative. He found himself home-less after his parents passed away and his construction business failed during the global financial crisis. He also had depression and believed he suffered from undiagnosed manic depression. Greg does not seem singularly 'responsible' for becoming home-less, and

he did not maintain this image throughout other parts of his narrative unrelated to friendship isolation. Greg's self-blame and implied accountability responds more to an expectation that friends would also fault him and hold him accountable for his homelessness than it does a genuine belief of individual negligence. This illustrates the power that expectations of homelessness culpability can hold over home-less people as well as the isolating effects it can produce.

Two other advocates articulated their friendship disconnection as an unsurprising by-product of their extended exclusion. For example, 'as far as friends I don't have any. I don't. It's not that I probably can't get them, it's just that probably I think I've learnt to live on my own life so long that you realise you don't need them' *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18). Meanwhile, David stated:

> Well I didn't tell very many friends [that I lost my home]. I sort of just drifted away. Sort of a lot of the friends were probably more fair weather than I thought they'd be, and so others I haven't bothered with it or I just sort of drifted away. And um, you know I've just sort of—like, I've just moved on, so I haven't really oversold it. There's one that is there a little bit for me, I still contact him, or he still contacts me maybe once a year. I still make contact with him around Christmas. He was going overseas, and I said we'll catch up. He goes, yeah, yeah, yeah, but then I've made touch when he got back. I've got a birthday coming up next month, so I might try and touch base with him again. *David* (male, advocate, #10)

The literature and the homelessness service sector would refer to Yobbo and David as long-term home-less persons because of their age and duration of homelessness (Chamberlain & Johnson 2018). Each had been home-less for longer than three years, had never married, moved house frequently, and had reported drug and alcohol (Yobbo) or mental health problems (David). Comments like 'it's not that I probably can't get them' and 'I haven't really oversold it' may understate the nature of their disconnection. In fact, I sensed during the interview, and made note of my feelings in the research diary afterwards, that Yobbo and David had become so accustomed to pervasive and persistent social exclusion that they may have feigned indifference to sheltering themselves from the emotional hurt that disconnection

caused. The apathy mechanism that shame elicits protects the advocates from the pain of isolation by way of externalization, avoidance, and withdrawal.

The final interpretation relays the most telling examples of how homelessness disengages sufferers from friends. Bill eloquently explained the impracticality of sustaining social inclusion:

> You couldn't socialize with friends you used to have because one minute you are out and the next minute you are nowhere, you know obviously with a proper friendship they want to be able to get hold of you, they want to be able to have, you know, 'come on over for a drink'. 'Cant this fortnight I got no money'. 'Let me come over to your place', 'I can't, I don't have one'. 'Where about's do you live?' The third tree on the left'. You know, so you loose, you take yourself away from it, but you would take yourself away from the community or what you know to have that security and something to eat. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

The ramifications of Bill's social isolation imbued our exchanges. During the in-depth interview and while I served him informally as a volunteer in a soup kitchen, Bill seemed desperate to communicate his beliefs, to feel heard and valued. During the almost five-hour in-depth interview, Bill revealed how poverty and the everyday impracticalities of homelessness constrained his relationships. Access to a telephone to contact friends and limited opportunities to interact in a safe and secure home are two examples. Each constraint that Bill identified is reminiscent of how Hopper and Hamberg (Hopper & Hamberg 1986) have argued that the problem of homelessness has less to do with personal inadequacy than it does with resource scarcity. With only an insufficient income derived from social benefits, Bill's primary focus was on remaining fed, dry and safe. He thus forced himself away from friends who made up his community and isolated himself further.

The next section explores disconnection from the perspective of advocates' low-quality and precarious relationships within home-less communities.

Home-less Communities

In addition to disconnection from family and friends, advocates told stories about their relationships within home-less communities. This type of disconnection resonates with the transient nature of homelessness, advocates' desire to distance themselves from homelessness as a general social role, and a need to escape unsafe individuals and environments. An advocate expresses this in the following quotation:

> Leo: You're scared, you're lonely [when home-less], you're scared of being ripped off or obliged or whatever to anyone else, because you're fighting all your own demons anyway. So until this time and instability you're not going to build a community and in those rooming houses there is no stability. The one in Glen Iris I was at—the 30-bed, eight rooms—probably wouldn't be too many days when there wasn't someone left and someone came.
>
> Zachary Greig: Transient?
>
> Leo: Absolutely. So you don't—you might have a couple of core people you get to know if you're there a while, but even that one I was at for three years, as I said, it was a 'g'day mate how are you?' No one wanted any more from anyone else. I didn't want anything to do with them, I didn't and they seemed to be much the same. They had their lives, maybe, outside of that place. I guess in a way that the community is not going to develop without some cohesive convergence of what they're there for, through necessity or choice. *Leo* (male, advocate, #26)

Instability and transiency made it difficult for Leo to form meaningful connections with other home-less people. Some consistency of place and shared values are needed for communities to develop. The ephemeral and disconnected lifestyle Leo paints is archetypal of portrayals of homelessness in the early part of the twentieth century. For example, the image of homelessness during that time was of a seasonal labourer who travelled railways in search of employment. Known as 'hobos' (Anderson 1923) it was transience and a life outside of family that anchored home-less peoples' role as different (Rossi 1991). Versions of 'hobo' constructions endure in present-day Melbourne, Australia (Panahi 2016). For instance,

Melbourne's popular media describe home-less people as 'virtual outcasts who belong nowhere' (Spencer 2016), non-belonging (Spencer 2016) and 'invisible and forgotten' (Nottle 2015). Journalists imprint home-less peoples' marginalisation when describing them as 'the population' (White 2016) or exploring their 're-integration into the mainstream community' (Panahi 2016). Even if such discourse truthfully represents homelessness under some circumstances, the twentieth-century impressions of transience and instability that subtend it may also discourage relationship-building among home-less people in the twenty-first century. A fear of inheriting disparaging 'hobo' characteristics impedes developing the relevant 'cohesive convergence' of which Leo spoke. Bill supported this interpretation:

> If you go into a line [of home-less people] and you stink, for me, because I was not a drinker, not a smoker and you go, so you shun yourself from it, you take yourself away from the community because you don't fit in, I just don't fit in, I don't fit into the regular society because of the fuck up that I have created for myself, but I don't even belong to the bottom end of the society, so you know again that plays with your head a bit, because you know, where do I fit in? *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

Bill avoids standing queuing with other home-less people to avoid psychologically aligning himself with 'the bottom end of society'. He distances himself from being negatively identified, which includes characterisations of smelling bad, alcohol and cigarette consumption. Isolation exasperates Bill's disempowerment in multiple settings including home-less communities and mainstream society. Snow and Anderson, in the 1980s, have also recognised that people who are homeless - associate with others, and use services inconsistent with their actual or desired personal identity - may attempt to distance themselves from certain identities, connotations and institutions (p. 1348-1353). Although Snow and Anderson's work has suggested that distancing techniques are more common amongst people who are newly home-less, Bill had been home-less for many years and still felt the need to detach himself from homelessness roles.

Avoiding other home-less people may also result from a desire to escape from contexts where drugs and alcohol are present:

> Zachary Greig: So who are your mates now? Who do you hang out with?

> Peter: No one.
> Zachary Greig: Really?
> Peter: Yeah, I do me own thing now.
> Zachary Greig: It must be hard from being in a situation where you have got all these mates to…
> Peter: Well I chose sobriety, and for me, I just, at this point, I just can't be around it. Which is hard because I isolate myself from my community which is hard. It's the socialising. That's the big thing you know. It was very hard for me to maintain an element of time in my community because at some point, something is going to go wrong where I know I'm going to fuckin snap and end up back on the gear, so I'd just rather stay away. I wish I could think like this about 20 years ago, but I guess I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't for it. *Peter* (male, advocate, #24)

Peter - a large man with face tattoos and a shaved head - was intimidating; however, his frightening demeanour (e.g., gruff, low voice) and appearance eventually faded in my mind as he narrated stories of living on Melbourne streets since the age of sixteen. Indeed, Peter's kindness, loneliness and vulnerability emerged during the in-depth interview, and he explained that he would deliberately break the law at the start of almost every winter so he could return to prison during Melbourne's colder months. He hated the cold and knew his way around the prison system and how to navigate the system to get off the streets. When Peter was not in prison he would immerse himself in homelessness by sleeping on the street and 'hanging out' with other home-less people. The cohort of his home-less friends were all addicted to drugs (usually heroin), and would spend most of their days cleaning car windows for change or begging for money on the city streets. Peter's decision to avoid his community was motivated by a desire to remain sober. The conflict surrounding this decision was palpable, and Peter mentioned his disconnection many times throughout the in-depth interview. He stuttered out '…and for me…I just…at this point', and that faltering captured Peter's internal conflict with and strength in remaining disconnected.

Peter's narrative illustrates how home-less people are often characterised by notions of substance abuse. Whether it is from the media, who frame the 'homeless person' as drug dependent (Alison 2016; Panahi 2016; White 2016), or from scholars, who recognise drug dependency in the homeless population (Lancaster & Ritter 2014; Neale 2001; Neale &

Stevenson 2013; Northcote & Howard 2006; Power 2002; Speirs, Johnson & Jirojwong 2013; Teesson, Hodder & Buhrich 2003; Topp et al. 2013; Whittaker & Burns 2015), the role insinuates powerlessness. Peter's aversion to embodying the role's presumptions demonstrates his agency: his detachment was an act of resistance that required (and still demands) control and strength.

Each of the three preceding sections investigated an important manner by which advocates experienced disconnection: rejection from family, a lack of companionship from friends, and low-quality and precarious relationships within the homeless community. Each type of disconnection contributed to understanding a homelessness role that advocates perceived as disempowered.

Advocates' Belonging

Further from the narratives of disconnection, the following three sections present the ways in which they talk about 'belonging'. Advocates expressed that humans are born to belong. That we are social animals that need each other and can only exist safely in communities. Belonging gave advocates a sense of identity, and they found themselves by looking into the faces of people that loved them, that needed them, and they defined themselves by social contexts. Tracking advocates' sense of belonging confronts some of the ways home-less people are framed as disempowered and disconnected. Topics of public space, safety and protection thematically explore advocates' belonging and perceived empowerment.

The concept of home-less peoples' sense of belonging is under-researched and under-recognised in social, public and political discourses. A search with the terms 'homeless' and 'belonging' in the academic database Premier, for example, uncovers papers on previously home-less peoples' sense of belonging in mainstream society (Patterson, Markey & Somers 2012), the health and welfare of dogs belonging to 'homeless people' (Williams & Hogg 2016) and the need for belonging in home-less children (Baggerly 2003).

Likewise, newspaper articles and websites published since 2014 attend to home-less peoples' 'belonging' in terms of material 'belongings', such as sleeping bags, tents, or textiles (Hurley 2016; Jefferson 2016a; Royall 2016). Each example suggests impotence and dependency, and

overlooks more socially beneficial ways home-less people gain a sense of belonging. The existing rhetoric is also troublesome because veracity is an essential component to how the home-less take care of themselves and how they form relationships that give virtue and happiness (Foucault 1990).

Before examining how advocates described belonging and perceived empowerment, it is critical to acknowledge that their stories of belonging were prejudiced by their homelessness. Empowerment is highly contextual (Cattaneo & Chapman), in other words, and homelessness constrained the capacities of advocates to feel embraced by mainstream society and narrowed and defined their alternative belonging experiences. Kenny (2011) says that belonging is defined by an individual's choice to belong, so definitions of home-less people as excluded and isolated in Australian society may preclude opportunities for people who are homeless to belong in many contexts. Sonn and Fisher (1998) have also submitted that a sense of belonging among people who are homeless may be a form of resistance against domination by other more powerful communities. Although overall experiences of homelessness are largely unwelcome and unpleasant, the second part of this chapter tracks three moments or operations within homelessness that afford perceptions of that role as empowered. The critical promise this analysis offers as a result is an intervention of existing scholarship that disempowers homelessness wholesale.

Public Space

At least since the 1920s, the identity of the home-less person has been characterised by their use of public space. Whether through the drifting figure of the 'Hobo' after the Great Depression (Parsell 2010), older men who visibly misused alcohol from the 1950s to early 1970s (Bahr 1973; Bahr & Caplow 1974; Blumberg, Shipley & Shandler 1973; Wallace 1965) or modern-day Melbourne 'street people' (Masanauskas 2016c), public space informs home-less peoples' powerlessness because private behaviours performed publicly are usually unsanctioned (Coleman 2000) or are inconsistent with social norms (Harter et al. 2005). While some advocates felt public space emphasised their exclusion and isolation, others disagreed and felt it offered opportunities to connect inter-personally in constructive ways. The public spaces discussed by advocates included streets, parks, local libraries, shopping strips and local neighbourhoods. Advocates considered these spaces to offer familiar and consistent opportunities to connect and bond: 'On the street, you know, it was very

communal. Everybody knows everybody on the street. You're never alone. If you want to be you can but you know, there's always people watching out for you' *Peter* (male, advocate, #24). Another said:

> You get the homeless people that are on the street and you find that they would stick together. You know, they would stick together and they would band together and they would look after each other especially if they know each other on the street. Even down Fitzroy Street [in Melbourne]. You know, they band together because like they're like their own little community because they know what it's like so, yeah, they do band together. *Kelsey* (female, advocate #23)

For Peter and Kelsey, public spaces hold meaning because they encourage interactions to share emotional experiences of homelessness. For them, belonging in public promoted psychological senses of togetherness and stimulated corporeal experiences that allowed home-less people to 'stick together'. Such descriptions of belonging risk romanticising homelessness if interpreted as evocative of a self-enclosed 'little community' from a bygone era when villages, set apart from frenetic lifestyles of modern societies (Ife 2016), connected populaces through feelings of intimacy and 'very communal' bonds (Tonnies & Loomis 2017). The decline of institutions in modern societies, such as the tribe, the clan, the church or the village (Ife 2016; Onyx, Kenny & Brown 2012), has made these particular types of spatial belonging seem old-fashioned and idiosyncratic. Even so, Peter's and Kelsey's sense of belonging is distinctive because it is not institutional; rather, it is felt as empowerment within the cycle of long-term vulnerability and range of traumas experienced while home-less.

Other advocates also illustrated how public spaces (here, libraries) contributed to their sense of belonging. 'Public spaces' here refers to a network of public spaces rather than the specific (idyllic) public spaces of the village to which Tonnies and Loomis refers previously. (i.e., in the sense that airports are more connected to a network of other airports than they are connected to a particular city they are built near.)

> Like obviously libraries, libraries [are home-less communities that are in public spaces], most, as an example, if you are in St Kilda you can go to St Kilda library. On

> any given day… There would be anywhere between five and probably 25 home-less people, you know, it's not like it's a private handshake, but if you just go, it's just go there with a latte and read a book and you'll go and if you do that for two weeks and you'll go, 'Shit, that person is here again'. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

The 'private handshake' metaphor reveals the complexities of Bill's social relations and represents his belonging as grounded within lived home-less experiences. The subtle social protocols that define homelessness were communicated to Bill in public spaces and made him aware that he was not the only person experiencing homelessness. And yet, intriguingly, the recognition of another home-less person that Bill and other advocates expressed was unrelated to optical or verbal cues and seemed to emerge through shrewd perception. Secret handshakes, codes and hidden messages revealed the underground nature of advocates' belonging. Public spaces offered occasions for these types of exchanges to take place and helped to reduce advocates' feelings of social disconnection and loneliness.

The view that public spaces offer people experiencing homelessness a sense of belonging and empowerment departs from some historical and present-day accounts of home-less people. For example, homelessness literature from the mid-twentieth century has described the use of public space by home-less people negatively: De Hoog in 1972 labelled the use of public space by 'homeless people' as a monotonous and boring drinking experience that centred around unemployment offices and homelessness services; and Jordan, in 1965, claimed that people who were home-less only felt connected to each other through the shared activity of drinking too much alcohol in public areas. Historical accounts like these have shaped, influenced and/or amplified the systemic public attitude that home-less people are powerless and incapable of confederating with mainstream society. Melbourne's popular media either lobby for 'moving on' home-less people away from public space or frame their use of public space (through rhetoric of sleeping or 'hanging out') as unacceptable behaviour (Jefferson, A 2016b, 2016c; Jefferson & Paynter 2016; Minear 2013). Words like 'deviant', 'dangerous', 'bums' and 'hobo's' often populate the depictions of park usage by people without a home in Melbourne (Hurley 2016; Jefferson 2016c; Panahi 2016). This discursive practice binds exclusion, isolation and disempowerment with broader and ongoing understandings of people who are homeless.

In contrast, some scholars (e.g., Coleman 2000; Perry 2013; Steffen 2012) have maintained that public spaces are important for people experiencing homelessness to enable the creation of identity, meanings associated with home and feelings of community belonging. Others have written that people who are homeless reinforce their togetherness, strong friendships and mutual care through constantly renegotiating their presence with the public, authorities and the police in public spaces (Sheehan 2010). These more positive views reflect how advocates spoke about public space and belonging:

> So people gravitate to Enterprise Park [in Melbourne]. Some of them dig in and make it their home. I've seen those down there will little handprints splitting up the concrete because that's their spot. It's touching and tragic all at the same time, but you think okay they live there so maybe there is a little bit of a type of community. *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18)

The phrase 'dig in' encapsulates how advocates attach personal and social meaning to Enterprise Park. The 'little handprints splitting up the concrete' refers to an area in the park where local home-less community members have imprinted their hands in wet concrete. Yobbo saw the handprints as a marker that signified the park as home-less peoples' 'spot'. The embossed concrete evidences how home-less people can belong to the park through mutual association and make it their home. The handprints may also be an expression of agency: an enactment of their selves through public proclamation, residence and ownership of space. The home-less peoples' marking-off of public spaces can thus be conceptualised in terms of resistance. By claiming these spaces, home-less people challenge the rules governing public places that otherwise render them unwelcome. Even when promoting a perception of empowerment, Yobbo was careful to not over-emphasise the importance of public space. He still acknowledged that the concrete artefacts of belonging in a public space contained elements of tragedy.

Safety

Entering into an association with a large physical group or mass reduces one's likelihood of becoming the victim of a mishap, accident or other negative event (Bednekoff & Lima 1998). Made evident in the study's narrative, advocates identified safety in groups of people experiencing homelessness as the second type of belonging. Whether safety was from attack

or attempted attack, or from sexual assault or verbal abuse, groups of home-less people offered a sense of community belonging and protection from the compounding traumas of violent victimisation. To be sure, almost all female advocates and most males reported being the victim of some sort of assault. One male advocate recounted a rape, whereby he was handcuffed and sodomised for a period of over twenty-four hours. Several female advocates left their homes because of family violence, and others bore the scars from their life on Melbourne streets. Vulnerability to violence worsened because of homelessness, particularly when advocates did not have a secure place to go or could not rely on friends and family to stay with. Perhaps missing the comforts of a safe existence and yearning for belonging and empowerment led advocates to seek sanctuary with other home-less people.

The advocates' narratives established that belonging can nurture personal and mutual safety just as a need for safety can generate senses of belonging. One stated that, 'You'll often find homeless do stick together. It's mainly for I think partially safety but also part of belonging' *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18). Another said: 'There's always somebody watching your back and you never have to worry. I mean there are hazards out there and dangers out there but there's hazards and dangers everywhere… Most of the times [homelessness] was communal, always safety in numbers' *Peter* (male, advocate, #24). Peter and Yobbo believed that belonging among home-less people fostered safety and empowerment. This view is similar to those put forward by scholars Coleman (2010) from Australia and Sheehan (2010) from the United States. But, the findings about safety and belonging detailed in this section insist that scholars now reconsider the work of Hoch, Parsell, and Snow & Anderson, who disavow the merits of recognising home-less peoples' belonging. Hoch (1994) has said that the call to recognise the community of the home-less lacks credibility because it evokes an imagined past of a placeless grassroots solidarity. Perhaps the most influential scholar on homelessness in Australia, Parsell (2010), has stated that the term 'homeless community' is problematic because it positions homelessness within negative norms and values like unemployment, disadvantage and drug use. Snow and Anderson (Snow & Anderson 1987; 1993; 2003; Snow, Anderson & Koegel 1994; Snow, Baker & Anderson 1989) have championed the view that people who are homeless are 'neither anchored in nor embodying a distinctive set of shared values' (Snow and Anderson 1993, p. 76)

Protection

The third type of belonging advocates' identified is protection. Whereas the previous section related to bodily safety and belonging, advocates in this section spoke of belonging as a shield from the values and understandings of mainstream society. One advocate stated:

> [Homeless] people get this mindset—that hang on we'll create this circle if you like, and we won't let the outside in because we don't trust them. They're all mainstream and they're all whatevers, there's a number of other words that go with it. Where they've got this feeling that everybody doesn't care and all that sort of thing. Okay there are a few out there that couldn't give a rip, you know they've got a truck full of money. Home to work, work to home. *Sam* (male, advocate, #27)

Another said:

> They're like a separate little village where the homeless are, and then there's that other side where you get that not everybody's like this, but then you get the other people that look down on the homeless, you know, and that's what band the homeless community closer together, yeah. *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #23)

Although there is a distinct element of pain, suffering, and indignity associated with homelessness, Sam and Kelsey suggest a strong component of agency available to resist oppression. They viewed mainstream society - or, as Sam called them, the 'whatevers' - as oppressive outsiders to home-less experiences, and, according to them, apathy and misconstructions of homelessness informed that mainstream's indignant views of people who are homeless. Such perspectives are contrary to the usual Other role of home-less people. For example, the role of the Australian 'homeless person' is typically understood as somehow 'different' or 'unusual' compared to 'normal people'. For Sam and Kelsey, however, the employed and privileged person was the Other, and it was Sam and Kelsey's life experiences that gave them valuable and special insights into homelessness. Sam's and Kelsey's sentiments stake a special claim to authenticity and invoke a moral righteousness unavailable to those Others whose lives have unfolded in safe, secure environments. This perspective

frames the role of the home-less person as empowered by way of her or his belonging to a banded community. Another advocate expressed a similar sentiment.

> Maria: [Home-less people] might help you, but it's a code, or respect between them. [They are] very protected to one another.
>
> Zachary Greig: Really?
>
> Maria: They are, yes. Like if a homeless person was sleeping on this corner tonight, he going to leave there a little blanket or something, no one going to touch it. The other homeless won't. If someone touch it, if someone who want to pinch it or no reason. But certainly—homeless, they respect their own, their own code. Like a secret society, and they all look after one another. *Maria* (female, advocate, #19)

Maria demonstrated that a sense of belonging among home-less people might offer some measure of personal safety. Although vagueness surrounds the type of threat Maria cited, in other parts of her narrative she spoke of the threat posed by society's persecution and oppression of home-less people. Maria's sense of belonging reflects a unique form of connection that is defined by its own private code. The code and respect may stem from shared understandings (e.g., Lee, B & Schreck 2005) of the traumatic and violent experiences home-less people encounter. A supportive and empowering post-trauma community—'all look[ing] after one another' - may prevent or mitigate the negative psychological responses to these traumatic events.

The image of community put forward by Maria makes available the interpretation that some home-less people may not always capitulate or assimilate to oppressive systems, like parts of the literature and popular discourse propose they do, and they may find ways to resist oppression and experience a community sense (Sonn and Fisher, 1998, p. 1). Maria's resistance to the repressive nature of homelessness is suggested by a development of trust for home-less others. Trust improved her sense of safety and was paramount to her reintegration process into more mainstream contexts. Believing that home-less others' 'had her back' and would protect her enabled Maria to turn to welfare services and programs to help improve her life. Her narrative teaches that it is possible for communities of home-less people to

contribute greater individual empowerment through mutual support. A hypothesis it yields is that people who are home-less are more likely to perceive their role as empowered when they feel emotionally connected and physically protected.

Three topics in this belonging section of the chapter covered the various ways advocates connected. They felt a sense of belonging in some public spaces, through mutual safety and as a protection from mainstream society.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to unveil the nuances of advocates' belonging and non-belonging. The chapter offered multiple perspectives on advocates' experiences of communities as well as how advocates saw and understood communities variously. Advocates' views in the first three sections (family, friends and home-less communities) were consistent with popular discourses and homelessness literature that has framed the role of the 'homeless person' as excluded, isolated and disempowered. The second three sections showed the alternative ways (public space, safety and protection) that advocates enacted and felt belonging, which enabled them to perceive themselves and their roles as empowered. The next chapter departs from advocates' views to reveal the nuances of volunteers' roles.

Chapter 8: The Volunteer's Role

Introduction

This chapter is a counterpoint to the previous section on homelessness: it engages the ways volunteers frame the volunteer's role through concepts of positivity and empowerment. It details multiple perspectives about the impacts volunteers feel they provide to communities as well as the personal benefits they acquire from volunteering.

The first three sections explore volunteers' community impacts through discussions on community building, giving back and making a difference. Community building refers to the way volunteers experience volunteerism as an activity that positively impacts their own sense of community and the communities of home-less people. The second section outlines the various ways volunteers understand their contribution to communities and to society more broadly. The third section describes how volunteers feel that they make a positive difference by enhancing community connectedness. Each 'Community Impacts' section demonstrates the power embedded within volunteers' views. Although most of the findings are broadly consistent with the literature and popular understandings, the volunteers present a model of volunteerism often at variance with community development values (e.g., volunteerism as 'power over' rather than 'power to'). The next sub-chapter, 'Personal Benefits', contributes another perspective and explores the personal benefits volunteers gain from volunteering. This discussion includes sections on good feelings and better people. With respect to good feelings, volunteers attribute feelings of love, importance, belonging, privilege and pride to the role of the volunteer. The section 'Better Person' illustrates that even as volunteers can benefit from social ideas that frame them as better people than mainstream community members, volunteers are overwhelmingly doubtful and uncomfortable with how contemporary culture perceives them. The chapter's final discussion brings volunteers' doubt and unease full circle by addressing the guilt volunteers felt about volunteering and their aversion to telling other people that they had volunteered. Collectively, the sections reveal that although volunteers may perceive the role of the volunteer as empowered, individuals may not always feel that they embody the socially expected features expected of their role.

Volunteers' Community Impacts

Ever since British working-class migrants and philanthropic bourgeoisie (Beilharz, Watts & Considine 1992) imported notions of charity into Australia, the role of the volunteer has been characterised by the positive impacts volunteers bear on local communities. Whether due to their capacity to build inclusive and resilient communities, to contribute to communities and/or to make positive community differences, volunteers are almost always framed as belonging and empowered community members. The next three sections corroborate this role perspective and illustrate volunteers' perceived empowerment through their descriptions of the benefits their volunteerism brings to their own sense of community and to the communities of home-less people.

Community Building

Volunteers felt that volunteering helped to build their own communities and the communities of home-less people. Helping to shape, influence and/or amplify a volunteer's social power, community building positively affected community members' social connections, feelings of acceptance and local control: '[Volunteering] It's about building [my] community, total community' *Paul* (male, volunteer, #3):

> We both kind of made a niche for ourselves here [with volunteers] and were able to build a community. So that's my [volunteer] community. It's those people you can call on and rely on and those people you want to celebrate with when joyous things happen. You know they were people that, if I go back to where I define community, people who knew me [from the soup kitchen], who would ask about work or something I'd mentioned or my family and then kind of shared all these kind of journeys that we went on in moving to the city. I remember when we were buying our house, every week there was excitement [amongst the volunteers]: 'What have you looked at?', 'have a look at this' and 'how did you go at the auction?' It was really lovely to share that and to know that people cared about whether or not we got this thing that was our dream and whether that happened. So, you know, it sort of tied in that way being part of something that we could contribute to. *Joanne* (female, volunteer, #15)

Volunteering 'built' Joanne's and Paul's sense of community by improving interpersonal relationships and awareness of belonging. For Joanne, community meant the collection of people who cared and shared life experiences. The value and empowering impact of this community became clear throughout Joanne's narrative. Her stories were imbued with a deep sense of connection and belonging to the people and the local neighbourhood around her. Joanne appeared happy and content and frequently used words, 'joyous', 'blessed' and 'lucky' to describe how volunteering facilitated her sense of belonging. Building this community was also expressed as central to how Joanne perceived herself as empowered. For instance, Joanne previously lived in rural Australia and when she moved to the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda she felt alone, disconnected and unsure of where she belonged. Joanne expressed a sense of powerlessness during that time because she lacked a familiarity with the local neighbourhood (e.g., where to find the best coffee and food, local street names and history, local political representatives) and lacked meaningful social connections. Like Zimmerman (1995, p. 583) highlights, Joanne's efforts to gain control were hampered by an inability to access resources and not understanding the socio-political context. Lonely and socially isolated, Joanne volunteered in a local soup kitchen that offered food to people experiencing homelessness in order to combat her sense of disempowerment. Volunteering enabled Joanne to rebuild a sense of community from the ground up: she developed camaraderie with fellow volunteers and felt a deeper connection with the local area. Volunteering motivated and empowered Joanne to change the problems she faced and allowed her to better mediate the negative effects from aspects over which she had no control (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman 1990; Florin & Wandersman 1990; Prestby et al. 1990).

Volunteering helped to build community. Community building was usually articulated in terms of its ability to empower and affirm the quality of a volunteer's life. Volunteers echoed how history and culture shape the volunteer's role. For example, Australia in the 1980s emphasised individual freedoms and the superiority of the private market as the best way to allocate wealth and resources (Ife 2016). The notion of a private citizen who works without pay fit elegantly into this ideology; therefore, the capacity of volunteers to 'build' communities was perpetuated by governments and private enterprise alike. These ideas continue today and are audible when the federal government describe volunteers as social networkers who promote community cohesion (ABS 2010). The popular media shape

volunteers as community-spirited social connectors (Rance 2015; White 2015) and volunteers are engaged through concepts of participation, social capital, active citizenship, partnerships and belonging (e.g., Florin & Wandersman 1990; Fyfe & Milligan 2003; Lee & Brudney 2012; Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka 2013; Marta, Pozzi & Marzana 2010; Onyx, Kenny & Brown 2012; Putnam 2000a). Each portrayal shapes, influences and/or amplifies Australia's mainstream understanding that volunteering helps to build volunteers' sense of community.

The word 'build' that modifies volunteers' community-building expressions is important. Words are signifiers for how volunteers think and can act as instruments of power (Foucault 1980). When volunteers spoke about community building, the 'building' to which they referred invoked a metaphor that presumes exertion, toil and discomfort:

> Part of building my community was coming and volunteering, that was the first step, and secondly was getting out of our comfort zone and sort of that realisation that we didn't have ready-made friends. We didn't know people, that we had to accept [volunteer] invitations when they were given and we had to extend invitations, maybe even if we were rejected but to kind of put ourselves out there and do things where we would be in a position to meet people. *Tania* (female, volunteer, #15)

Tania expressed the hard work of building her community by conveying that effort as initially uncomfortable. The struggle gives meaning to Tania's belonging because she feels she had earned her place in the volunteer group. The idea that Tania's community building requires personal investment, effort and risk parallels McMillan's (McMillan 1976) community work and can be seen across a wide range of circumstances whereby investment and risk strengthens group cohesiveness (Peterson & Martens 1972). Volunteers' personal investment in the community building process helped to develop emotional connections and a sense of empowerment: 'I feel empowered [when volunteering], I think because I'm a person who is willing to work very hard to do things that if I want to do something or make something happen I feel that I can because I am prepared to put work and effort into it' *Joanne* (female, volunteer, #15). Even though communities are 'built' by volunteers as well as people experiencing homelessness, an Australian culture that venerates strong work ethic empowers the figure of the volunteer

Finally, volunteering was described as an activity that helps to build the communities of home-less people: 'I guess the idea is that the [home-less people who come into the soup kitchen] have their meal together and that they're trying to build that community' *Fred* (male, volunteer, #13): 'When we're on the tram and going somewhere, and I say hello [to a client of the soup kitchen] it's nice because they're being recognised, it's nice for them as well...it's nice to be recognised, to have somebody say hello to you, it's more sort of like a village' *Ann* (female, volunteer, #12). Volunteering contributes to the creation of a safe and secure space for people experiencing homelessness to share a meal and to congregate. The particular milieu around which home-less people gather and build community also spills out into the broader community: onto public transport and mainstream streets. Voluntary spaces (e.g., soup kitchens and drop-in centres) offer young home-less people who use voluntary services a sense of community (Robinson 2011). Such community-building view is supported by voluntary organisations that market themselves as community development vehicles and locations that facilitate connections among socially disadvantaged people. The top volunteering body in Victoria also claim that volunteering 'builds' inclusive and resilient communities in which users benefit.

Giving Back

The second community impact addresses how volunteers felt that their volunteering 'gave back' to the community. Although they never articulated precisely what they had given back, their expression, tone of voice and broader stories indicated that they felt morally obligated to 'give back' out of an acknowledgement of enjoying positions of comparative social privilege and social power. The role of the volunteer was perceived as a powerful role that socially reimbursed and benefited the community; '[volunteers] should give back something [to the community]' *Pat* (female, volunteer, #14):

> The driving force [for volunteering] is that, I think that, *wanting* to give back, wanting to show my gratefulness to the world. To be aware of the fact that I *can* and I *should*, I feel like I should give back and that connection to my family and that upbringing and those values that I have. A way to kind of publicly declare that that is important to me, being kind to other people and I do… I think I'm a person who cares about other people. Not just people here but people in my personal life and my community

> that is growing and lovely, that there are people that I am kind to and caring of and they're kind and caring to me and that's something that's really important to me. *Joanne* (female, volunteer, #15)

Giving back solidified feelings of social power and reinforced social positions of privilege, prestige and authority. The moral imperative to provide assistance to the underprivileged was also expressed as a responsibility to step in and fill a gap. The social expectation that one 'should' give back is influenced by Australia's charity model whereby 'more privileged' members of society are expected give back to the 'less privileged'. The principles of this model were established at the beginning of white settlement in Australia (Kenny 2011) but became prevalent as Australia underwent a sustained restructuring in the 1980s when state, federal and local governments withdrew provisions of services at all three levels (Van Gramberg & Bassett 2005)). The shift in ideology of welfare provision from entitlement to one emphasising the obligations—the 'should'—of volunteers (Flick, Bittman, & Doyle, 2002, p. 4) was perfectly captured by the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, in 2000; 'those who have done well have an obligation to the less fortunate, and that those who are supported by the community should give something in return' (in Australia Politics). The notion that one ought to volunteer, however, is based on a conceptual distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Kenny 2002). Relationships between volunteers and the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor are embedded in unequal power divisions and are inconsistent with community development values (Ife 2016): rather than increasing the power of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, relationships between volunteers and home-less people are framed within discourses of privilege that allow unequal power relationships to emerge.

Pat and Joanne both felt they 'should' give back, but Joanne identified another two elements to giving back that she called 'want' and 'can'. Joanne's 'wanting' to give back to the community illustrated compassion, kindness and her wish to publicly proclaim gratitude for family and a capacity to help others. Her subsequent well-being and sense of empowerment are traits commonly used to describe volunteers (Lambert, 2015). For instance, charity is framed as an act of kindness (Kinbacher 2016) and volunteers as 'kind' and/or 'one of a kind' (Narelle 2015). Meanwhile, volunteers are socially understood as compassionate people who are grateful to the world and others (Bock, Eastman & Eastman 2018). Joanne pointed to the

legitimacy of these constructions and suggests altruism and caring for others is easily found in acts of volunteering.

The third component Joanne connects to giving back is that she 'can'. The capability she identifies to give back begs an interpretation linked with social position. Joanne is a private school teacher who owns an expensive house in St Kilda. She holds strong family and social relationships, is well educated and well-travelled along with her husband. She is childless, which she said provided spare time and additional opportunities to volunteer. Other volunteers articulated similar types of social arrangements. Common traits were financial independence, spare time (usually because of a retired or semi-retired status) and strong family connections. These social arrangements are consistent with how the role of the volunteer has been shaped, influenced and/or amplified by British notions of philanthropy as well as how charity in nineteenth-century Britain was often provided by upper-or middle-class citizens socially and publicly understood to be increasing their own power, religious influence and importance within society through volunteer work (Oppenheimer & Warburton 2014). Volunteers are still more likely to enjoy social advantages in Australia like good health, employment and shelter (ABS 2010). These social advantages may offer positions in society that complement the ability—the 'can'—to give back to communities. Capabilities afforded by these social positions also illustrate a volunteer's empowerment, because they suggest the volunteer's mastery of the environment to such an extent they 'can' extend themselves and 'give back' to the social structure that advantaged them.

A final power embedded within volunteers' expressions of 'giving back' was self-empowerment. For example:

> Zachary Greig: Do you feel empowered in your life?
> Louise: Fleetingly.
> Zachary Greig: Yep, right.
> Louise: I have moments. I think some of that comes down to, unfortunately, depression. So I have fleeting moments.
> Zachary Greig: Of control or…?
> Louise: Of control, yeah!
> Zachary Greig: So what do you do [to tackle feelings of disempowerment]?

> Louise: I try and give back.

Louise (female, volunteer, #9) directly attributes 'giving back' to overcoming the depression she experiences as an everyday part of her life. On face value, Louise epitomised privilege, success and authority. She is a successful business executive who manages a large group of colleagues. She drives a convertible vehicle and rents a nice apartment. She told stories that showed she was respected and well-liked and although she misses her family in the United Kingdom, she has a good support network of long-term friends in Australia. Despite Louise's seemingly privileged social position, she was incredibly unhappy. Louise described her depression and recounted stories of the difficulties she encountered in seeking help. She would leave her executive job and return home and for no apparent reason would cry for many hours. She also felt socially disconnected and lonely. To combat these emotions and to improve her life, Louise sought volunteering opportunities to 'give back' to home-less people:

> It's [volunteering] about giving back. I also hope that just by having a conversation and interacting, making somebody laugh and smile gives something back, but I still don't believe it's enough. I wonder what more we could do. Sometimes in the kitchens you get so busy doing your job that you forget perhaps it is about interacting, so getting out behind the kitchen interacting. You get your favourites. You get the ones that have now known you for a few years and you see them out in the street and say 'hello!' I love that, because that, for me, that is the community connectedness. They remember you, there's a smile and acknowledgement, and I find that quite powerful. *Louise* (female, volunteer, #9)

Power suffuses the interpersonal relationships between Louise and people experiencing homelessness. For example, when Louise interacts and exerts positive influence over home-less people's lives—even when these interactions are relatively innocuous and quotidian (e.g., having a conversation and making a person who is homeless laugh and smile)—she experiences a sense of power, support and community connectedness. Louise's expression of power is different from how broader society usually understands (or misunderstands) power as forms of oppression and/or a struggle for domination. Interactions between volunteers and home-less people may be considered negotiations of power whereby volunteers place in the

hierarchy of power is influenced by their perceived ability to exert positive influence over home-less peoples' lives.

Making a Difference

The third type of community impact volunteers identified was the positive differences they made in local communities. This impact was articulated from the perspective of improving volunteers' own social relations and facilitating social connections between home-less people. Feelings of influence, importance and community value beyond family and friends characterised this empowered role. The volunteer narrative demonstrated how volunteering is generally considered a noble way of providing assistance to home-less people. People who are homeless are hungry; the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing and home-less people 'need our help'. Volunteers are urged to donate their time and resources to 'make a difference' in the lives of 'less fortunate' people: 'The reason I wanted to volunteer was to have that connection in the community and try and make a difference to somebody locally' *Louise* (female, volunteer, #9). When I asked another volunteer 'How do you think your volunteering makes a difference?' she said:

> It was one of the volunteers himself that used to volunteer with us. At first meeting I didn't realise that he was homeless and it was only through conversations that it came out that he actually would sleep behind St Kilda Library. Then subsequently a few times I went to the library and I saw him there and one day we actually did get talking and he shared a little bit of his story with me. *Tania* (female, volunteer, #13)

The sense of making a difference may be as simple as getting to know a fellow volunteer experiencing homelessness. While Tania sensed that she improved another person's life, the simplicity of the interaction can also mask its significance. The unassuming acts of recognition, talking and sharing stories are an everyday part of the socially included life. Modest acts also offer useful micro-macro bridges that can translate into large-scale patterns (Granovetter 1973). Simple and spontaneous social interactions profoundly affect feelings of empowerment, expand social support networks and promote feelings of support and care. However, these 'no-frill' interactions are often devalued and/or overlooked by mainstream society in favour of more complex social arrangements: 'likes' on Facebook,

views on YouTube or hits on Instagram. But power is embedded in these types of interactions because they require commitment, duty, expectation and permission (e.g., liking a post on Facebook requires permission from each party and Facebook itself). They are also interactions that value quantity or quality. Volunteering offers an opportunity to strip back the curtain of modernism to reveal the empowering influence of 'bottom up' and organic social interactions.

Making a difference seem like an everyday occurrence was important to volunteers' perceptions of empowerment. Modern society needs organic and unplanned social interactions because Australian culture is increasingly fragmented: between 35-40% of contemporary marriages end in divorce, children are more likely to live with only one parent and Australia is experiencing its lowest birth rate in history (Mackay 2018):

> I mean just recently like I've gone out and sat with [clients from the soup kitchen] to like eat with them and stuff and I mean I feel like that's probably one of the — Like, for me, if I was in that situation I'd want to be there just as much for the food as I would be for the company…that's how I made that difference. *Judd* (male, volunteer, #8)

Judd feels he makes a difference by sharing a meal and talking to people experiencing homelessness. The empathy ('if I was in that situation') learnt through his volunteering has a meaningful and positive impact on the community. It promotes social networks, levels of trust and cohesion. The perception Judd holds of his role is consistent with how volunteers are characterised by their ability to make a community difference: that they reduce social isolation, empower individuals, foster active citizenship and develop inclusive and resilient communities (Volunteering Victoria 2018). These values, nominally, are consistent with community development principles (e.g., Ife 2016; Kenny 2011); however, perceptions of 'difference making' are embedded within unequal power relations. When volunteers claim a capability to 'make a difference' in home-less people's lives, for example, they accept favourable judgements from home-less people, such as the personal capacity to empower people experiencing homelessness and the willingness of home-less people to be influenced. While such may be true under certain circumstances, they also enact forms of 'power over',

because they assume home-less people's needs and a volunteer's ability to meet those needs. Assumptions of need and their solutions are inconsistent with community development principles, which aim to *transform* power relations (Rouhani 2017) and offer 'power to' (Riger, 1993, p. 182) people experiencing homelessness.

Contributing to the Australian economy is another way volunteers are constructed to 'give back'. However, 'When *words* are scarce they are seldom spent in vain' (Macari 2017): thus, when volunteers omitted this otherwise socially accepted information they provided another interpretation of their perceived 'difference-making'. For example, at least since the 1990s (Ironmonger 2000) volunteers have been understood in terms of their ability to make an economic difference. This view is heavily influenced by neo-liberal ideologies and by the fact that volunteerism can reduce the need for state spending. It saves the Australian economy billions and surpasses other key sectors of the Australian economy including mining, agriculture and government expenditure on health (O'Dwyer in Rance 2015). However, not one volunteer affirmed that volunteering impacted upon the economy. This suggests that mainstream understandings of volunteers rely heavily upon the voluntary sector and government ideologies. These top-down perspectives hold little relevance to volunteers working 'on the ground' and are inconsistent with community development values (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). The way contemporary culture frame volunteers through economics perpetuates the idea that volunteers are more fortunate than recipients of charity and that they mitigate structural or collective solutions to issues of social justice and inequality in favour of relationships based on patronage (Kenny 1997, p. 46). These perceptions are based on economic notions of management, reporting, accountability and procedures, and are increasingly regulated, professionalized and bureaucratized (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011). In contrast, grassroots organizations with fewer ties to economic or government agendas are ideal, because they focus on strategies of local empowerment and are more likely to be connected to their local community's needs.

Each of the three preceding sections investigated an important manner by which volunteers felt they made a positive impact on communities: community building, giving back and making a difference. Each type of impact contributed to understanding a role that volunteers perceived as empowered.

Volunteers' Personal Benefits

The personal benefits associated with volunteering characterise social, public and political understandings of volunteers. The next two sections support this view and explore how volunteers characterise volunteering in terms of personal benefits. The first section outlines the good feelings that accompany volunteering: feelings of love, importance, belonging, privilege and pride. The characteristics described are consistent with the literature and popular discourse. The next section differs by investigating how volunteers identified the social assumption that volunteers are 'better people' than mainstream community members (people who choose not to volunteer). Here, volunteers express that they may be able to benefit from volunteer constructions but that they also question the role's legitimacy. Volunteers stutter, pause and verbally question mainstream assumptions of the figure of the volunteer's privilege and power. These self-reflexive moments suggest that, although volunteers may perceive the role of the volunteer as empowered, they may not always feel they embody the features for which they are socially expected.

Good Feelings

Volunteering was personally beneficial because it felt good. Emotions of love, enjoyment, belonging and happiness characterised volunteers' feel-good role. Volunteering was also an empowering behaviour that enhanced a volunteer's positive feelings about others:

> I love it [volunteering]. Yeah. I love it. Yeah, I guess the people [who come into the soup kitchen], you get to know them as they come in every week. Yeah. Volunteering is positive on a number of different levels. I think you feel like you're actually doing something that's worthwhile and it is promoting community and bringing a sense of belonging for lots of people. I also enjoy the fellow volunteers. It's sort of, you know, you come in every week and [they say] 'What have you been up to?' It's…it's just, yeah, it's just really nice I think. *Tania* (female, volunteer, #13)

Volunteering promotes a sense of self-worth and enhances a belonging. The simple act of spending time with fellow volunteers and hearing about their activities each week is also enjoyable. Each of these positive features is consistent with how the role of the volunteer is

understood in Australian society. For example, volunteering feels good because it improves volunteers' social networks and sense of community cohesion (ABS 2010). Meanwhile, that volunteering feels pleasurable is also supported in the popular media and research literature. One's development of personal skills (Smith 2010), reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation (Rochester et al. 2009), higher levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction and improved health (Thoits & Hewitt 2001; Onyx & Warburton 2003) shape, influence and/or amplify the understanding that volunteers are empowered and capable community members. Some suggest 'good feeling' discourses are attempts by both government and the voluntary sector to encourage volunteer involvement (Kenny 2011):

> [Volunteering] does make me feel good about myself. So I think for me it's that kind of reflection of those family values as well, that I feel like I'm kind of continuing that tradition and that they would be very proud of me and that makes me feel good. I feel like I have such a privileged happy good life, because I haven't had a lot of hardships. *Joanne* (female, volunteer, #15)

Joanne connects the good feelings she experiences when she volunteers to her privileged social position. Social privilege is an unearned, invisible, systemic resource that can be accessed through group membership rather than through one's own actions or merits (Pease 2006). While volunteering can provide opportunities to learn about class inequality in order to challenge class privilege (Kawecka Nenga 2011), Joanne acknowledges the popular view in Australia that volunteers are 'more fortunate' members of society who give back to the 'less fortunate'. This model of volunteerism is unsettling given that it neglects structural resolutions to matters of inequality in favour of relationships based on 'giving' and 'taking'. It also frames volunteers by unequal divisions and distinctions between those who serve and those who receive. Notably, Joanne did not deliberately reinforce her privilege rather, the privileged model of volunteering migrated into her otherwise well-meaning views of the good feelings she acquired through volunteering. Instead of the ideal (which is volunteerism based on issues of redistribution, equality of services and outcomes), volunteers who noted the good feelings they experienced volunteering eroded the charity model.

Most volunteers framed the good feelings that accompanied volunteering positively. Some volunteers, however, described their benefits as selfish and self-serving. For example, 'So yes, so that was the reason I wanted to volunteer, completely from a selfish point of view I wanted to make myself feel better' *Louise* (female, volunteer, #9). Louise bluntly states the self-serving reasons for her choice to volunteer:

> Volunteering is selfish. Like in terms of I feel like it's like an emotional benefit to me it's probably bigger than the actual benefit to the community. Like in terms of sort of that because there's a saying of how you can't—it's not really a saying but there's an episode of Friends [the television show] where Phoebe [one of the characters] says that she can't do anything that's not inherently like selfish, as in if you give someone $5 you feel good about it because you've given someone $5, so like you can't do anything that's like totally unselfish and so she tries to get stung by a bee then the bee dies so she realises that it, yeah. That's what I sort of feel like. Yeah, it is sort of like inherently selfish to help because you do feel good about it that you're helping, so yeah. *Judd* (male, volunteer, #8)

Judd is confused and uncertain about the role he is socially expected to play: the self-serving volunteer or altruistic volunteer. Both assumptions are common, benefit volunteers and draw upon historical factors and interests of voluntary organisations and governments. The 'self-serving' volunteer is often assumed to help others because of the personal benefits they sustain from volunteering (Hibbert, Piacentini & Dajani 2003). Judd 'feels' good when he volunteers, which benefits him personally. The benefited construct is modelled on how charity in the nineteenth century was provided by upper- or middle-class citizens who were socially and publicly understood to be volunteering to increase their own power, influence and importance within society (Oppenheimer 2012; Oppenheimer & Warburton 2014). Stereotypes of the well-off and self-serving volunteer are also common in contemporary volunteerism contexts and are usually perpetuated by voluntary organisations (e.g., Salvation Army, Red Cross and Sacred Heart Mission) and governments (usually local Councils) in order to promote volunteering. The 'altruistic' volunteer is often assumed to help others out of a selfless concern for the other. Despite the selflessness, Judd still feels he benefits from the altruistic construction, perhaps because the act of volunteering socially builds the

volunteer as a saint, hero or humble person (Emerson 2014; Kinbacher 2016; Zufferey & Chung 2006). Social understandings of volunteers' altruism is modelled on its historical links to religious motivations (von Essen et al. 2015). Demonstrating this connection, religious scripture says "...do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Hebrews 6:10) and, "...whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done" (Proverbs 19:17). Even so, the literature recognises that volunteers are likely motivated to help others due to a combination of altruistic and egoistic factors (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen 1991). Judd's confusion and uncertainty about the role he is supposed to play comports with this mixture of motivations.

Better Person

Ever since the 12th and 13th century, when British women administered help to the poor and sick, the role of the volunteer has been characterised by mainstream assumptions that volunteers are 'better people' than mainstream community members. Volunteers acknowledged these portrayals of superiority and their subsequent potential for personal benefit. However, volunteers also expressed uncertainty and apprehension about that role and suggested they were undeserving of the role's characteristics. Some (i.e., Louise and Tania) suggested that volunteering made them 'better people' while others (i.e., Judd) were not as enthusiastic in their support of this view. The notion that volunteers are better people than mainstream community members reinforces unequal power relations between volunteers and home-less people and echoes throughout social, public and political discourses. Volunteers' reluctance to self-identify with the hierarchy of the role suggests that while volunteers may perceive volunteering as an empowered role, they do not necessarily feel they embody the features that society expects.

Prior to exploring the interpretation that volunteers perceive the volunteer role through the concept of betterment, it is important to acknowledge their narratives' intricacies and how meanings were communicated. For example, if the volunteer narrative was interpreted within a vacuum that ignored context, tone of voice and expression, then volunteer's views are relatively straightforward. The role of the volunteer is an empowered role that is characterised through notions of superiority. Yet the simplicity of this interpretation imperfectly captures how I experienced the data and recalled in-depth interviews. The simple

interpretation fails to reflect the more complicated ways volunteers saw themselves and how they understood and interacted with their world. I struggled between these two interpretations during analysis because the transcribed data failed to apprehend my 'sense' of the data and my recollection of the in-depth interviews. As a method to address my unease and sense of data 'absence', I engaged with interview recordings again without taking notes or transcribing and paid particular attention to the spaces that sat outside of language (St. Pierre, 2002); the silences, gaps and omissions (de Medeiros & Rubinstein 2015) in volunteers' stories. I read and re-read the narrative many times as my doubts grew. My persistence was worthwhile, because, over time, I realised the 'absence' within the data was essential to my understanding (or misunderstanding): it was not what volunteers said but how they had said it.

Three volunteers illustrated the nuance in how volunteers can benefit from views that volunteers are 'better people'. The first volunteer said, 'It sounds so cruel and mean, but I feel I can be a better person when I'm volunteering' *Louise* (female, volunteer, #9). Louise felt like a better person when she volunteered; however, the comment 'it sounds so cruel and mean' illustrates her uncertainty. The second volunteer said, 'Volunteering sort of helped me in that way, it made me feel good…like a better person. I feel good helping [people who are home-less] because I know they can be helped. Yeah, that's the way I look at it' *Hunter* (male, volunteer, #11). Hunter also felt like a better person when he volunteered, but modifying his view with 'sort of' and hesitating before saying 'like a better person' indicates an internal reluctance to agree with the role's positioning. The third volunteer said, 'the biggest thing I thought about [volunteering] is like it does, you know, it is like there's better people there [volunteering]…like…the people you volunteer with and the customers they're all like really nice people' *Judd* (male, volunteer, #8). Judd sees other volunteers as better people, but he stuttered across the words 'it does, you know, it is', and paused when he said the word 'like'. Judd's expression suggests doubt, and he seemed discomfited by his claims. One can interpret his statement 'customers are also really nice people' as a way to compensate verbally for betterment views. Judd, like Tania and Hunter, unconvincingly express that the role of the volunteer is characterised by the idea that volunteers are better people than non-volunteers.

The view that volunteers are somehow 'better' than mainstream community members is consistent with how the Australian volunteer is often understood. The media claim volunteers are 'angels', 'heroes', 'saints' and 'experts' (Zufferey & Chung 2006) and much of the literature focuses almost solely on the positive traits that accompany volunteering (Corrigall-Brown et al. 2009). Meanwhile, local, state and federal governments proclaim the virtues of volunteering, while volunteer organisations announce the wonderfulness of 'our volunteers'. Each descriptor and form of discourse contributes to how studies of volunteers recognise the social construct of the powerful and personally benefited volunteer. However, Tania, Hunter and Judd's uncomfortableness and hesitation suggests that just because volunteers perceive the volunteer's role as empowered does not mean they always 'play' that role or identify themselves as embodying the role's characteristics. Volunteers did not see themselves as 'angels', 'heroes', or 'saints'; instead they considered the role's power as contextually embedded.

The two preceding sections investigated the personal benefits that volunteers acquired from volunteering: good feelings and being framed as better people. Each type of benefit contributes to understanding the volunteer role that volunteers perceived as empowered. These interpretations are broadly consistent with popular discourse and literature, but the hesitation and reluctance by which volunteers self-identified with the role inspired new observations about that popular knowledge. The next section sits outside the themes of benefit and takes full-circle the volunteers' reluctance.

Guilt

This final section departs from the preceding themes because it does not directly speak to volunteers' community impacts or personal benefits. This section takes a different approach and reveals that some volunteers avoid self-identifying and feel guilty as a volunteer. Guilt as an emotional reaction to volunteering is uncommon and instead the emphasis in academic discourse tends to concentrate on the guilt people experience when they choose not to volunteer. The interpretation presented in this section is that 'Guilt' deals with volunteer's experience of shame and sensations of unworthiness as well as their reticence to identify or proclaim themselves as 'volunteers'.

Guilt was an emotion that volunteers articulated or implied to show they felt unworthy of the social label 'volunteer'. For example, 'Sometimes I feel a bit guilty [volunteering], like I don't want to do that [volunteer]. I don't sort of tell a lot of people that I do it because I don't, it's not about what I'm getting out of it so much' *Joanne* (female, volunteer, #15). Joanne feels undeserving of the role 'volunteer' and avoids revealing to others that she volunteers:

> Like I feel like I could be doing a lot more and I feel I probably should be doing a lot more. Because I mean even though I do work and I will be at Uni, I still do have time and so I feel I should be doing a lot more. I do feel like I don't do enough to tell people that I volunteer because again I just don't feel like I'm doing enough to say that I'm volunteering. *Judd* (male, volunteer, #8)

> I volunteer, I tell people they [that and they] say 'oh doesn't that sound wonderful' and sometimes I feel a bit guilty going well all I'm doing is turning up for a few hours, so we give food to people, what difference am I really making? *Louise* (female, volunteer, #9)

There is the reluctance in outwardly proclaiming an identity of 'volunteer' and instead expressing a sense of role unworthiness. Two concepts can be drawn from these responses. The first concept relates to how Australia's charity framework concentrates on the rhetoric of individual responsibility and mutual obligation (Considine 2001). This framework is a western construct that draws a distinction between deserving and undeserving 'poor' (Kenny 2002). The deserving/undeserving lens is usually applied to issues of social disadvantage like homelessness and rarely consider how Australia's charity framework may influence volunteers. Australia's charity framework also draws a distinction between the deserving and undeserving 'volunteer'. For example, the language of the volunteer (e.g., saint, expert, do-gooder and hero) is often based on ideas of moral discipline, asymmetrical power relations, individual patronage and duty (Kenny 1997, p. 46). The language implies that those whom it describes 'deserve' the label 'volunteer' only if they embody the positive features that society expects. If volunteers question whether they embody the features for which they are socially expected, they are more likely to express guilt about volunteering. They may feel unworthy and like frauds or imposters to the volunteer experience and identity. Under this framework, volunteers perceive their roles within community development values inconsistently because

they are reluctant to help others and base their relationships with home-less people on unequal power relations. This leaves little room for the powerless or downtrodden to volunteer because they do not meet society's expectations.

The second concept relates to the reluctance of volunteers to self-identify as a volunteer and how reluctance may relate to privilege and power. People who are socially privileged are often hesitant to speak about or acknowledge power. They deny power or try to appease those who point out their power (Flood 2018). Volunteers' expressions of guilt may therefore be used as a mechanism to correct or attempt to ameliorate the unequal power relationships that volunteers experienced as 'volunteers'. Privileged people prefer to use words such as diversity, appreciating difference, tolerance and cultural sensitively because they are constructive topics and the language is enjoyable (Flood 2018). In contrast, it is often more difficult to reflect on one's own role as an oppressor than it is on one's role as oppressed: the former involves a sense of guilt and the latter a sense of anger. Based on the data, the volunteer's narratives suggested that most volunteers simply volunteered and went home, rarely assigning time to think about their relationships with home-less people or how volunteering positioned them within broader society. The in-depth interviews offered volunteers the opportunity to understand that they belonged to a social group and were not just individual members of society. They acknowledged privilege and power and responded to their activities through relations of guilt. While volunteers may perceive the role of the volunteer as empowered they may not always feel worthy of embodying the features for which they are socially expected.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to unveil the nuances of volunteers' community impacts and personal benefits. The chapter offered multiple perspectives on how volunteers perceive their role. Volunteers' views in the first three sections (community building, giving back and making a difference) were broadly consistent with popular discourses and volunteerism literature, but showed that Australia's model of volunteerism is often inconsistent with community development values. The next two sections showed how volunteers reluctantly identified the personal benefits volunteers sustain from volunteering. These sections suggest

that while volunteers may perceive the role of the volunteer as empowered they may not always feel they embody the features for which they are socially expected.

Chapter 9: The Welfare-User's Social Role

Introduction

Participants frequently expressed that accessing homelessness welfare in Australia make them feel disempowered. There are a range of socially expected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs and norms that disempower welfare users. This chapter focuses on the ideas of 'welfare users' and their roles. The research diary as well as participants' identification and opinions of accommodation, Centrelink and volunteerism (as types of welfare commonly used by people experiencing homelessness in Australia) inform the content of this chapter. This chapter makes the observation that welfare users felt disempowered even when they self-identified as empowered individuals. Such accounts signal that the institutions, systems and structure of welfare have continued to disempower the users. The welfare system exercises power that influences socially disadvantaged individuals and groups.

The chapter's first section introduces how an advocate and I negotiated community development principles (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011) and the systems of welfare power in which advocates found themselves implicated. Subsequent sections include the themes of accommodation, Centrelink (a centralised welfare service in Australia) and volunteerism. The first three sections draw exclusively from the advocates' narratives and the research diary. The last section incorporates the volunteers' views in addition to advocate insights and observations from the research diary. The findings are broadly consistent with empowerment theory (Christens 2013; Perkins & Zimmerman 1995) and homelessness literature (Parsell 2011a; Robinson 2011; Snow & Anderson 1987), but contribute an alternative perspective to volunteerism literature, mainstream discourse and the societal belief that welfare is an exclusively empowering and life-improving source of support (Dagge 2015; Emerson 2014; Gillett 2015; Kinbacher 2016; Kinniburgh 2015; Masanauskas 2016a; Paul 2017; Pidgeon 1998).

Roles are 'Who we play' not 'Who we are'

Many advocates conveyed that when they used homelessness welfare they often felt, thought and/or behaved powerlessly. Simultaneously they recognised that their sense of or actual powerlessness was contextual and that disempowerment did not necessarily define who they were or how they felt in other contexts. Empowerment theories developed and advanced by Rappaport (1995), Christens (2012b) and Zimmerman (1995a) support that interpretation in its particular attention to the importance of relationships and circumstances. Indeed, the role of community development is to enhance agency (Shaw 2008), but this necessitates an understanding of power and how it mediates and controls. Chapter Eleven captures this need and champions advocates' potential to enact power and influence and argues people with experiences of homelessness are better suited to contribute, challenge and understand welfare knowledge and practice than mainstream community members. In the meantime, the discussion in this section demonstrates how human potential (Aronowitz 2002; Giroux 1992) was valued and reconciled with the systems of power in which advocates found themselves implicated (Freire, 1972) as consumers of Australian homelessness welfare.

The in-depth interviews were an incredibly rewarding personal experience and I strongly sensed participants felt the same. However, challenges occurred because some interviews lasted for almost four hours (split across emails, the street, phone conversations and informal catch-ups at local drop-in centres). Capturing the value-laden assumptions that I felt I shared with participants, for example, was a tricky compositional task with some shorter quotations. These assumptions (i.e., advocates' capabilities of contributing to society and their knowledge of the homelessness welfare sector) subtly imbued our interactions and refused to emerge in pithy extracts. While frustrating, such responses were not entirely unanticipated. Many scholars point out inherent conflicts between the neat classifications or ordered readability that define much academic research and organic and bottom-up community development attitudes and methods (Ife 2016; Kenny 1997; 2010; 2011). Consequently, one way to demonstrate how I sought to understand the various ways advocates saw themselves and how they perceived their roles as welfare users was to report upon a more prolonged and in-depth conversation between an advocate and I. This method supports the study's constructivist approach that allows researchers to analyse and present data creatively (Misra & Prakash 2012) in order to appreciate the varied meanings participants apply to different

situations or objects (Gergen 2014). While potentially 'non-academic', the approach supports and demonstrates the study's focus on valued and nurtured relationships. It reflects the respectful processes prioritised as it composes how participants and I reconciled the powerless meanings associated with welfare consumption conjoined with welfare users' broader sense of identity.

The mother of two young children attending school, Vicky (female, advocate #23), was experiencing homelessness at the time of our interview. Her lack of material resources and the social and other processes that impoverished, excluded and disempowered her, including exposure to violence, lack of family and institutional support and pressure to relinquish her children, characterised the eloquent and detailed stories Vicky expressed. Vicky's expectations of feeling, thinking and behaving as if powerless emerged through these narratives when she used homelessness welfare. Vicky also felt that public demonstrations of power, such as confidence, ownership of material goods (e.g., iPhone, vehicle, computer etc.) and a well-presented appearance in welfare settings, reduced one's opportunities to access welfare because of mainstream assumptions about homelessness defined through disempowerment. She said, 'I really am against the saying that you have to be homeless and powerless in order to get [assistance from homelessness welfare services], I'm against that [social image]'.

Vicky's identification of social expectations and assumptions that welfare users are powerless also emphasised the fact that performing the role improved her and her children's welfare opportunities. But, as Chapter One introduced, roles are not necessarily 'who people are' but are 'who they sometimes play'. Roles are akin to how an actor plays an expected part and how audience members conceptualise that actor's performance. This way of understanding roles is articulated by scholars like Biddle (1986) but also struck with how Vicky and I discussed roles during and after the in-depth interview.

For example, Vicky used the actor Tom Cruise to explore her role as a welfare user. This analogy extended over a period of weeks, and included emails, phone conversations and the in-depth interview. Vicky imagined Tom Cruise playing the role of a doctor. We discussed how audience members (us) would expect Tom Cruise to wear a white coat, treat patients, save lives and enact various other characteristics germane to the cultural norms and shared

understandings of what doctors do and how they appear in Australian society. However, if Tom Cruise were to play a doctor's role contrary to our expectations, audience members would likely notice something 'off' or 'not right' about the performance. Accordingly, Vicky and I connected a role's imbuement with social power to how audiences can impose their will upon the enacted role. Vicky's analogy acknowledged how an actor is encouraged or forced to justify and explain why her or his unexpected and offbeat performance challenges expectations.

Like Fearson (1999) illustrates, Vicky understood that self-identities can differ from roles because self-identities engender a set of distinguishing characteristics (or a single characteristic) in which a person takes pride and views as socially valuable. Vicky did not take pride in her reliance on homelessness welfare and she articulated this by returning to the performance analogy. Vicky described how Tom Cruise might identify as a privileged individual who holds knowledge, skill and talent but he could still perform a role of a powerless character with such authenticity that audience members would believe him as identifying as powerless. The terminology and performative differences of her analogy impacted the analyses and how I interacted and understood advocates. In short, Vicky contributed to my interpretation of how advocates negotiate unequal power relationships as well as the strengths and assets with which people who experience homelessness identify.

The next section introduces the first type of welfare that advocates connected to the role of the welfare user.

Accommodation

Advocates referenced several different types of accommodation welfare provided in Australia, including rooming houses, transitional and community accommodations. Rooming houses typically have one or more rooms available to rent, and four or more people can occupy those rooms (Department of Human Services [DHHS], 2019). Almost all male advocates tenured in rooming houses for at least some time (usually during the initial stages of homelessness). Female advocates used rooming houses less frequently and spent more time in transitional accommodation (crisis and supported), which is a short-term form of welfare with access to services and programs like social workers, counselling and education

(DHHS 2019). Transitional accommodation is, anecdotally, the preferred welfare option for family violence survivors. Two male advocates were sleeping rough at the time of the in-depth interviews. Other advocates were using community accommodation, which is most commonly a long-term rental unit managed by not-for-profit organisations for people on low incomes or with special needs (DHHS 2019). Excluding one rooming house in St Kilda, Melbourne discussed in 'The Gatwick' section of this chapter, advocates did not distinguish their perceptions of empowerment according to the different accommodation types available in Australia. This section will therefore refer broadly to the various kinds of accommodation welfare for people experiencing homelessness in Australia as 'accommodation welfare'.

Two topics begin the accommodation discussion: controlled accommodation settings and human rights.

Controlled Accommodation Settings: Rules

Advocates expressed that the strict rules forced upon accommodation users intensified and/or constructed the powerlessness of user's positions. For example, 'Well the fact that I can't do what I want to the [welfare provided] house, that's being controlled, what I can and what I can't do. The fact that I have to answer to everyone,' *Kelsey* (female, advocate #23). Another said, 'There's the limitations that I have [in welfare accommodation]. That I can't have somebody come down even from interstate for a couple of days and throw a fold-up bed or a mattress on the floor or whatever. If I did it I'd risk my tenancy,' *Yobbo* (male, advocate #18). Vicky stated:

> You know what, even though it's government [welfare] housing and they say you can't lose it ever, you can live in it until the day you die, it's still not my home. Because anything I want, if I wanted to put up pictures, or if I want to renovate or build something in the yard or something, you know what? I'd have to get permission for it. Well that's not my home. You know? I feel like I'm in a very controlled environment. I still feel like my life is being controlled. I still feel like I'm not in control.' *Vicky* (female, advocate #23)

Similar to Zimmerman's (1995) theories about empowerment and environments (settings), Kelsey, Yobbo and Vicky viewed their positions as accommodation users as powerless because accommodation settings were controlling and restrictive in their contexts of welfare. Other advocates spoke of the amount of time they could shower and night-time curfews to express how regulations acted as forms of coercive power that reduced opportunities to operate freely. One advocate drew my attention to a laminated sign posted on his rooming house kitchen that outlined over twenty rules tenants were required to follow to maintain their occupancy. While some advocates seemed to disobey rules deliberately as an attempt to exert power and to demonstrate agency, others obeyed rules, expressed a sense of powerlessness, and spoke with anger and resentment about accommodation providers. Two other advocates expressed that adhering to the rules caused anxiety and stress because they were concerned they might accidentally or innocuously misbehave and be forced back onto Melbourne's streets.

Rules in accommodation settings may represent a response to characterisations of the home-less person's role as irresponsible and care free (Waldron 1991). Whether it was Anderson (1923) who framed home-less people as seasonal 'hobo' labourers or Jack Kerouac (2007, 2016; 1996) who expressed his life and homelessness as a journey to freedom, mainstream society sees homelessness in the United States and Australia as a form of avoidance from the everyday responsibilities of 'normal life'. These stereotypical understandings of what it means to live without a home may shape, influence and/or amplify the regulatory approach that advocates recognised in accommodation settings. They relayed how people experiencing homelessness who use accommodation welfare are broadly assumed to be irresponsible, deviant and to neglect the obligations and expectations incumbent upon everyday homed Australians. This role construction consequently means that the rules that advocates experienced exercises a form of authoritarian control that shapes home-less people's sense of where they belong socially: submissive, under control and disempowered accommodation users.

Acclimation to powerlessness threatens to blur the distinction between identity and role mentioned earlier. Advocates also expressed that excessive control in welfare settings made it increasingly difficult to re-enter mainstream society because accommodation users became so accustomed to doubting their own readiness to thrive in a private rental. This view

undermines romantic ideas of homelessness (e.g., homelessness is a state of freedom from the responsibilities of everyday life (Anderson 1923) which gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s as neo-liberalism emerged and the use of welfare as a social privilege. This persistent ideology frames how modern-day Australian political leaders and the popular media articulate homelessness as a choice and accommodation welfare as a fortunate opportunity (Nader 2010; Panahi 2016; Perusco 2010). Although some academics argue that paternalistic approaches to accommodation use are necessary (Parsell, Cameron & Marston 2016) under some circumstances, advocates believed that rules merely reinforced the structural power imbalances between the state 'helper' and the home-less 'victim'.

Advocates submitted an alternative way for regulatory approaches to empower accommodation users. If designed by accommodation users themselves instead of '... housing rules and regulations that get made above you,' *Bill* (male, advocate #1) then accommodation arrangements might reinforce self-purpose and social cooperation.

Rights and Responsibilities

Advocates frequently spoke about accommodation in terms of rights and responsibilities. In terms of rights, advocates made statements like, 'You've got to start from that human rights perspective. Let's start from the point of view that we will do everything we can to make sure everyone has got a home,' *Leo* (male, advocate #25). Another said:

> So as example you are 47 years of age, as I am, and mate, I am paying rent here! I am actually paying rent! It should be my right to be able to say when my friend can leave and come and go. Rooming houses, the beds in the rooming houses are single beds. Single beds. You are 47 years of age you deserve to be treated like an adult not a man-child. *Bill* (male, advocate #1)

Leo's and Bill's quotations evoke politically left ideologies whereby rights are a central way of understanding and confronting social disadvantage. This view of rights rose to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s during the Welfare Rights period, whereby social justice and inequality inspired people to question homelessness as a daily indignity (Nadasen 2012). That image, however, shifted from the mid-1980s, and social disadvantage is now more pervasively interpreted as a 'problem' or an 'emergency' to be fixed (Zufferey 2013).

Advocates identified how 'problem' and 'emergency' views of homelessness are reactive responses to coping with social disadvantage and are top-down responsibility judgments of accommodation users.

When advocates spoke about rights to accommodation, they almost always spoke about responsibility as well. That connection links the exercise of rights to a discussion of who is responsible for ensuring the realisation or protection of those rights. Yet, despite the unambiguous associations between rights and responsibilities, advocates expressed that political, ideological and public discourses often separated them and emphasised the notion that accommodation users are responsible for their own circumstances or are irresponsible. Without endorsing a hard-line view that home-less people are personally responsible for homelessness and accountable for their own disadvantage, advocates did concentrate more on the responsibilities of people experiencing homelessness than on an absolute right to safe and adequate accommodation. For example, '[The Government think we as 'homeless people'] should count our lucky stars we've got housing, which is partly right but we still have rights and responsibilities and these are the things that they tend to forget,' *Andrew* (male, advocate #20). Andrew acknowledges that he holds rights and responsibilities as an accommodation user, yet the government's framing of accommodation welfare as a social privilege suggests the relationship disadvantages accommodation users.

Advocates believe that views of accommodation users reliant on claims that people who are homeless should be grateful to receive any welfare at all (see, for example, Panahi 2016) overlook and or undervalue human rights and unfairly focus on the user's responsibilities. For instance, advocates often felt an expectation—irrespective of the quality of accommodation—to demonstrate that they were meeting their 'side of the welfare bargain' by going out of their way to behave like responsible accommodation consumers. When asked if he felt like he had to act responsibly, one advocate emphasised how he struggled with the relationships between rights and responsibilities: 'Yeah, like putting up curtains and fixing lights [in accommodation welfare], and you know, just general maintenance stuff, and I'm probably being exploited. Not probably, I'm being exploited,' *Greg* (male, advocate #22). The expectations of responsibility inscribed upon an accommodation user in Australian society fortified a position of subjugation. Demonstrating responsibility fulfilled Greg's side of the welfare bargain and justified and legitimised his use of the accommodation.

In addition to the two accommodation topics discussed so far, participants also considered the use of a specific rooming house in Melbourne, Australia, as indicative of homelessness and notions of powerlessness.

The Gatwick

The Gatwick was one of the most discussed accommodation topics in the narrative. These conversations illustrate another pervasive way advocates' perceive the role and connected positions of accommodation users as disempowered. The Gatwick, briefly mentioned in Chapter Nine, is a rooming house in the suburb of St Kilda, Melbourne. St Kilda is an affluent bay-side community three kilometres from the central business district of Melbourne. Ever since the 1960s, the suburb has been famous for its vibrant nightlife and eclectic music scene that attracts a diverse range of domestic and international visitors. By way of contrast, the Gatwick has been variously decried as 'notorious', a 'festering flophouse', and as a 'flea pit' (Cavanagh 2015). Seen as a place to avoid, it is associated with poverty and social disadvantage. In early 2016 the Gatwick housed 44 women and 68 men[3]. The rooming house closed down towards the end of the year to make way for its renovation by a popular television program. Up until this time, advocates and volunteers alike agreed that Gatwick inhabitants and the building itself were synonymous with homelessness in Melbourne and that it represented and contributed to the worst of the harmful and damaging myths and beliefs surrounding accommodation users and people experiencing homelessness.

Advocates for this study were not living at the Gatwick during the time of the in-depth interviews. Nevertheless, several had stayed there previously and they spoke at length about their experiences and their perceptions of the user's role. Three topics cover the numerous ways advocates and myself perceive the role of the Gatwick user: violence and danger, drug use and surveillance.

[3] This number was collected from the Australian Bureau of Statistic's Census Table Builder Program using Mesh Block: 20528771000.

Violence and Danger

Advocates characterise the Gatwick and its users with notions of violence and danger. 'There's one death there every two weeks [at the Gatwick],' said one advocate; 'There was a 19-year-old last week that hung himself there and then the week before that there was a 21-year-old that OD'd on drugs there and he was dead sitting in one of their couches and they didn't even realise [for two weeks]! So, yeah, it's that bad,' *Kelsey* (female, advocate #18). Another confessed that, 'You wake up every morning [in the Gatwick] and think, well, sometimes you think 'thank God, I survived the night [because it is so dangerous]''. *Leo* (male, advocate #25). A third said, 'Stabwick. That's what I call it. I tell people you get a carving knife on a key ring, not a key. It's that bad,' *Yobbo* (male, advocate #17).

Death, carving knives and survival symbolise some of the ways Kelsey, Leo and Yobbo characterise the role of the Gatwick user. Violence and danger imply breakdowns of social relations, and the loss of feelings of security, stability, control and self-identity. This sense of loss may explain advocates' perception of the role's powerlessness. It is also a role likely amplified, agitated and/or constructed by popular media and the claim that 'homeless people', beggars and hobos embody a violent threat to other members of the public. One article wrote, for example, the public 'feel unsafe and intimidated by the increasingly aggressive behaviour of some [homeless people] cluttering the streets' of Melbourne (The Age Editorial 2016). Other articles impress upon readers that 'violence, drugs and alcohol are issues that accompany homelessness' (Masanauskas 2016b) and that home-less people 'refuse to live by other people's rules' (Masanauskas 2016b). Even organisations that assert to speak on behalf of people experiencing homelessness stress that 'homeless people' are prone to 'violent outbreaks' (Dow 2015).

However, people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately and violently victimised (Lee, B & Schreck 2005). Violence characterises the lives of people during their experience of homelessness (Alder 1991; Heerde, Scholes-Balog & Hemphill 2015; Robinson 2011). Domestic and family violence in particular continue to be the major driver of homelessness (Oberin 2009). Advocates responded to corresponding feelings of victimisation during their tenure at the Gatwick by acting violently and aggressively. Although such behaviour

reinforces stigmatisations and stereotypes of homelessness, Gatwick residents stated that physical aggression was an often necessary and or encouraged as a survival mechanism:

> The hallways were alleyways [at the Gatwick] and you think that once you walk off the street, you walk into a place that is … it isn't. I'd be super vigilant when I opened up the front door. I'd be super vigilant anyway. I had to have a milk crate next to my door because I couldn't look through the door. Whenever I opened up the door there might be an opportunity to barge it open, but I had the milk crate in their face and it really hurts them. I worked out that was a good idea, so they'd be on the ground, so I'd find their wallet and I'd start throwing their money around and things like that, so they were too busy trying to—well you had to you know, stop stealing off people will you. *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate #2)

Jack Chadwick describes himself as a bowling ball, violently disrupting Gatwick corridors. Acting with force and violence may have been a survival mechanism that preconditioned stay at the Gatwick. Jack did not describe violent behaviours outside the Gatwick setting and he was otherwise peaceful and non-violent. Congregating many men in a small, uncomfortable and derelict building invites disagreements and conflict and behaving with force may position the resident into a more dominant position than those who act non-violently. Adopting a passive approach toward other residents in such accommodation settings opens one up to physical or mental injury because others, in turn, hurt them. The expectations of the public and consumers of welfare services are consistent with the violent behaviour of Gatwick residents. It is therefore not entirely surprising that some advocates relinquished their roles to context and expectations by acting violently to protect themselves.

Drug Use

Exposure to drug-use was prevalent and inescapable among residents of the Gatwick: 'Dope, speed, you name it—all the drugs, you name it, are at the Gatwick,' *David* (male, advocate #10); 'You want to buy drugs; go to the Gatwick,' *Leo* (male, advocate #25); 'The homeless that live at the Gatwick they're mostly drug users and all that and sometimes right,' *Kelsey* (female, advocate #18).

David and Kelsey illustrate and reinforce the perception of Gatwick residents as substance abusers. Advocates suggested that the powerlessness associated with residents defined as 'addicts' assumes that they are unable to exercise agency and self-determination. Addiction infers a lack of personal control and signifies social failure (Lancaster & Ritter 2014). Addicts are also feared as unpredictably violent, pathologised, pitied and disempowered as mentally and physically sick and viewed as unable to make life-decisions (International Network of People who Use Drugs [INPUD] Drugs 2014). This role is amplified, agitated and or constructed by popular discourses and literature that links homelessness to drug dependency, welfare consumption and disempowerment. Research in Australia and internationally on the causes of homelessness commonly involves investigations of drug and alcohol dependency factors (McVicar, Moschion & van Ours 2015). People who are homeless are described socially as drug addicts who do not want to help themselves (Zufferey 2013) and the government highlights drug and alcohol abuse as a significant cause of homelessness (ABS 2016a).

This study's research findings challenge the popular view that substance abuse fosters homelessness because advocates showed that drug and alcohol consumption was often a response to Gatwick residency rather than the cause of their need for welfare accommodation. For example, 'I went into the Gatwick for a year, people they listened, you can talk to them, so you say this story and this, I started drinking then,' *Andy* (male, advocate #16). Or, '[Before staying at the Gatwick] I wasn't addicted to marijuana, but if I go up there to stay at the Gatwick and I'll say, "Oh gosh! I just sort of feel like some marijuana is there anybody can get me some?" They're [other tenants are] very helpful with that,' *Andrew* (male, advocate #20).

Andy and Andrew describe alcohol and marijuana consumption as a means of fitting into a new accommodation setting and socialise with other residents. They could not find employment and substance abuse was an efficient way of spending the day whilst forgetting about their social positions. Most advocates were acutely aware of how substance abuse reinforced the stigmatisations and stereotypes of homelessness and Gatwick residents. Contextually, however, some advocates felt that as long as others thought they were drug addicted, they might as well use drugs to alleviate the trauma associated with their circumstances, "I don't know how I'd go if I ended up in a place like that [the Gatwick].

Even though I can look after myself, psychologically I don't know if I could deal with it. I'm really at the end of the food chain. If that's where I am, you know, what chance is there for me?' *Andrew* (male, advocate #20).

There is a sense of hopelessness and desperation. It is a worrying response to a type of welfare claimed by broader society as an opportunity for empowerment (Act 1994). There is a question as to the capacity of accommodation options such as the Gatwick to empower 'individuals and their families to enter and maintain private rentals' (Cattermole 2016) and 'each person to achieve meaningful participation in the community' (The Salvation Army 2018b). Whilst statements of empowerment are likely accurate under some circumstances and for some people who are homeless, public comments likening Gatwick to living in a private hotel and dismissing its image as a place of murders, suicides and overdoses (see, for example, www.thegatwickhotel.com) differ significantly from advocates' own experiences. Drug use as a convivial pastime for listening to others, as a strategy to fit in and as a coping mechanism to 'deal with' living at the Gatwick narrates acts of empowerment that fly under the public radar attuned to receiving forms of agency and self-determination antagonistic toward the use of drugs. How that radar is calibrated and its influence on users forms the final topic about the perceptions of the role of accommodation options such as the Gatwick.

Surveillance

Surveillance also characterises the role and connected positions of Gatwick residents. Unlike the previous two sections, which drew upon advocate's views, my own experiences also contribute to this section. My almost-daily interaction with the Gatwick as a site, its residents and the broader St Kilda community underwrite my knowledge of Gatwick residents as highly visible members of the St Kilda community who are criticised and stigmatised in private, public and political conversations. I also recognise that the broader St Kilda community position Gatwick residents as responsible for St. Kilda's reputation as a place where the poor and disenfranchised congregate and hold that their destitution in part accounts for the suburb's economic and social failures. This perception is often played out in the attitudes and actions of authorities i.e., the police:

> Today I walked by the Gatwick after conducting a research interview and noticed a

> young lady lying on the pavement asking passers-by for assistance. I was surprised by the number of people who seemed not to notice or care because she appeared visibly upset, so I stopped and asked if there was anything I could do. She explained she had fallen and hurt her knee and was unable to walk. I called for a taxi to take her to the hospital and we had a conversation while we waited. I helped her into the cab and continued to walk down the street. After walking a short distance, a police car with sirens and lights pulled up in front of me. I felt intimidated, concerned and perplexed as the police officers approached. They requested I sit on the pavement and asked me who the lady was, where I had been and where I was now going? I explained the circumstances and asked why they had not assisted the lady lying on the pavement or assisted me. They laughed and responded, 'Mate, it's the Gatwick'. *Zachary Greig* (Research Diary, 24 February 2016)

Similar to Foucault's (1979) theories about power and surveillance[4], powerlessness defines me in this example because the police's gaze differentiates my social role from other more mainstream community members. When entering the physical space where the Gatwick resident usually belongs, surveillance acted as a ritualised form of examination that subjected me to deployments of force and what it meant to be a Gatwick resident. I was objectified and felt that the police officers saw me as unimportant, dangerous and untrustworthy. For a brief moment this encounter made me feel like they might be right. I related emotionally in this circumstance to how some advocates believed a tenancy at the Gatwick reinforced stigmatisations and stereotypes of homelessness and why some advocates often preferred to sleep on Melbourne streets in preference to staying at the Gatwick. The Gatwick was a residential trap. Being 'seen' publicly as a Gatwick resident opened up the user to the unfavourable meanings associated with homelessness. Despite this, it is likely that the police's objectification and power were justified in their mind because of the way they understood the Gatwick as a place for the drug-addicted and violent.

[4] These findings differ from those of Parsell (2016) who found surveillance in supported housing in Australia promotes the conditions for people to feel safe and to exert control over their lives.

The manner in which the police officers responded to my position in front of the Gatwick was consistent with the discourse of friends, family and colleagues around Gatwick residents and homelessness. These conversations often revolved around the Gatwick residents' consumption of drugs and alcohol and violent behaviours. At the time of the conversations and during the analysis, I interpreted these discussions through the perspective that Gatwick residents were often forced to perform roles publicly that were typically enacted privately. Similar to Foucault's observations (1979); sleeping, relaxing, eating breakfast and drinking alcohol with friends are behaviours characteristically conducted within private domains or intimate spaces. Few judge an individual drinking a glass of wine on their couch alone and disagreements or arguments with family in one's own home are not infrequent. Similar behaviour on Melbourne streets by Gatwick residents, however, are spoken about and seen differently. The behaviour is regarded as an insult to Australian norms and culture and as a display of deviancy and powerlessness.

To conclude the accommodation sections, two topics introduced the accommodation discussion: controlled accommodation settings and human rights. A discussion of a rooming house in St Kilda, Melbourne called the Gatwick followed. It covered three topics: violence and danger, drug use and surveillance. Each topic suggested that people who are homeless interpret the role of the accommodation user as disempowered. Although some behaviours, such as substance abuse and violent conduct, reinforce stigmatisations and stereotypes of homelessness, it might sometimes transpire as necessary and or encouraged to survive the welfare experience and to fit into the environment.

The next section follows a similar trajectory to the accommodation discussion in the context of Australia's most prominent welfare agency.

Centrelink

The second type of welfare context in which advocates' felt little control as welfare consumers was within the Australian welfare agency, 'Centrelink'. Centrelink is a program of the Federal Government managed under the authority of the Department of Human Services (DHHS), and it delivers a range of government payments and services to Australian citizens. The research findings suggest that Centrelink may connect to some harmful and damaging

mainstream myths, expectations and beliefs of people experiencing homelessness and welfare reliance i.e., laziness and untruthfulness. The advocates perceived this role of the Centrelink consumer from perspectives of disempowerment, insomuch as expectations of consumer's laziness and untruthfulness may socially justify and encourage the unequal power relationships often played out within the social dynamics evident in the service processes of Centrelink.

The first characterisation of a Centrelink consumer that advocates identified was laziness: 'People think you do nothing when you use Centrelink. "You are on the dole! You got it easy!" No dude, I am doing more now than what I did six years ago [when I owned a home and was employed] because [now] I gotta manage expectations' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1). 'I've got somewhere between 80 and 100 dollars a week to live on [from Centrelink] and I say to people, "Try and live on it and then come and tell me I'm a bludger". It's a nightmare' *Paul* (male, advocate, #7). These advocates were angry and frustrated at pervasive social expectations and belief that consumers of Centrelink services were lazy. Other advocates agreed and related accounts about their Centrelink experiences which entirely justified their angry emotions and reactions to this form of welfare assistance. In contrast to those reactions, one advocate entertained the topic with a sense of humour and cheeky playfulness:

> Shamus: Maybe I'm seen as lazy [when I use Centrelink], I don't know!
>
> Zachary Greig: I like your t-shirt, by the way!
>
> Shamus: I just was talking about this today because someone mentioned it and I said, 'This is probably the oldest t-shirt I've had'. I bought it in an op shop, so that just shows you. I've had this for at least 10 years, 'Mr Lazy', it says. And, yeah, I've had it and I do go to the gym once a week, generally, if I've got money but I don't use any of the weights. I just use the bike because I had a bike but it's got a flat tyre and I haven't got around to do anything with it. And so I just use the gym bike and I like it. I like staying there for an hour and I've worked out a routine with it. Shamus (male, advocate, #6):

Shamus was acutely aware of how being associated as a consumer of Centrelink services informed and inscribed others' perception of his social role. His 'Mr Lazy' t-shirt toyed with

this mainstream expectation. The widespread assumption that Centrelink consumers are lazy may also connect to how people who are homeless are stigmatised and stereotyped as passive, lazy, disaffiliated and disempowered (Cohen, MB & Wagner 1992). For example, four in ten Australians believe people who are homeless are lazy, freeloaders, stupid, or not hard enough workers (Doherty 2016). Broad public opinion holds a presumption that if people who are homeless can exhibit enough self-discipline to sit in the same Centrelink office every morning before others even arrive at their places of employment, then those people can hold down jobs on their own accord (Janine in The Herald Sun, 2016 – Hot Topic). Shamus' immediate shift to a discussion of his gym routine illustrates how he and other advocates were quick to confront stereotypes and stigmatisation and to reaffirm their capabilities and willingness to work. In reality, advocates wanted to avoid Centrelink welfare and many explained how a reliance on Centrelink was time-consuming, challenging and cumbersome. Many likened it to the difficulties of employment because of the number of interviews recipients were asked to attend and the number of forms and bureaucratic processes they were asked to participate in and complete.

The assumption of laziness is one of the many challenges people who are homeless encounter as welfare consumers. Another challenge was the societal assumption that Centrelink consumers are untruthful; 'I'm thinking, hang on, I'm saying to the representative from Centrelink, "What am I doing in a crisis centre if I have got money stashed away in a bank account?" Give me a break!' *Sam* (male, advocate, #26). Others said:

> [The Centrelink officer asked me] … "Do you have anything that you can show me about your history? [response] Nah! Do you have any references? [response] Nah! Do you have any, you know, that sort of network [and proof of welfare entitlement]? [response] I don't have any [because I do not have a home]". So that it is my hard part. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

> It took a while before I could get anything from Centrelink … [because they did not trust me]. That dragged out for about three months in the end. I was basically out of money, all alone and what have you there and I was really kind of desperately thinking about, you know, most of my waking time I was thinking about how I could finish everything. *Greg* (male, advocate, #22)

The characterisation of Centrelink consumers as exploitative of the broader Australian community of taxpayers was a common perception. This construction is part of the vernacular of Australian culture and parliamentary debate. The traditional media and academic discourse attest to how frequently Australian culture connects welfare fraud with Centrelink consumers. This particular misperception of people experiencing social disadvantage not only lacks compassion, understanding and thoughtfulness but can also explain why some advocates felt obligated to demonstrate honesty continually to Centrelink staff. The concomitant demand for veracity made it more difficult to re-enter mainstream society. The amount of time advocates spent proving their welfare eligibility often meant that they were unable to retain long-term employment. One advocate recounted that he was unable to accept paid construction jobs because of his duty to meet almost daily with Centrelink staff. This advocate, as well as others, believed Centrelink perpetuated their disadvantaged states: mainstream expectations of consumer's untruthfulness acted as a justification for the unequal power relationships that advocates sensed as Centrelink consumers.

This looping effect suggests that Centrelink operates as a type of welfare within existing power structures and thus reinforces unequal power relations. In this context, mainstream society's belief of a consumer's untruthfulness and laziness may rationalise the subjugation of welfare consumers to unrealistic characterisations and obligations. The impressions of consumers, often persecuted by the privileged and well-to-do, bears little resemblance to the actual experience of what it is like to rely on welfare. When welfare users do not feel that institutions believe in or trust them, they find it increasingly difficult to perform in ways that challenge expectations. For example, several advocates felt it was difficult to behave in ways that promoted their trustworthiness and independence: 'People that I personally know, they don't use Centrelink because they think the government is taking their control away' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1); 'Centrelink is a very vicious cycle [and] another form of violence' *Vicky* (female, advocate, #23).

Taking control away, a vicious cycle and another form of violence are troubling responses to one of Australia's most common forms of welfare. These reactions intimate that Centrelink is an institutional form of coercive power that encourages welfare consumers to feel powerless and forces some to engender disempowered roles as a response to social demands that

consumers justify and legitimise. But as part of this section's discussion, advocates also highlighted the value of trust-based support approaches that emphasise welfare recipients as capable and willing to improve their own lives.

The following section finalises the chapter's theme and presents some of the most unexpected and troublesome responses about the use of welfare services.

The Loose and Baggy Volunteerism Monster

Ever since British working-class migrants and philanthropy-minded bourgeoisie (Beilharz, Watts & Considine 1992) imported notions of charity into Australia, volunteerism has been characterised by moral judgments. Made evident in the study's narrative, participants identified volunteerism as the third type of homelessness welfare linked with popular notions of homelessness and mainstream expectations of behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs and norms. This perception of volunteerism implied welfare users' disempowerment. This final section of the chapter explores the role of the volunteerism user. It chiefly analyses perspectives from advocates who frequently used volunteerism services from non-profit organisations such as the Salvation Army, local community groups, churches and mobile soup kitchens during their experiences of homelessness. This section occasionally draws upon the views of one volunteer or upon personal observations to assess how advocates' perceived their roles and related positions.

By investigating the role perceptions of volunteerism, the following discussion contributes a viewpoint predominantly absent from contemporary volunteerism discourse and literature. For example, the literature review established that volunteerism discourse often overlooks and or undervalues the users' opinion as a way to make broad and often unsubstantiated claims (i.e., that volunteering is beneficial to the volunteer, to the recipients of volunteer services and society more broadly). Meanwhile, bold declarations that 'volunteering benefits all of our lives' (Pidgeon 1998) permeate the political, social and public discourses that frame volunteers' 'good work'. This section takes an alternative view of mainstream volunteerism knowledge by employing the community development method of listening and valuing the perspectives of volunteerism users (de Medeiros & Rubinstein 2015). This method

illuminates the shadow lands in which some suggest (Oppenheim 2008) the loose and baggy volunteerism monster dwells (Kendall & Knapp 1995).

Despite almost every advocate perceiving the role and related positions of volunteerism users as powerless, downtrodden and or forgotten, it is prudent to emphasise that they also identified the essential part that volunteerism plays in Australian society. For example, many advocates recognised that the provision of food and essential items like toiletries, clothes and sleeping equipment (e.g., swags and tents) were practical and beneficial to people experiencing homelessness. Advocates also felt that some volunteerism settings offered opportunities for social interaction and thus alleviated a sense of social isolation amongst home-less people.[5] My personal perspectives supplement these advocates' views, insomuch as the study's participants seemed kind, intentioned and driven by genuine interests to reduce social disadvantage and inequality.

Volunteer perspectives are largely absent from this chapter. Notwithstanding the last section titled 'gratitude' (p. 182), there was limited evidence to suggest that volunteers characterised volunteerism users in the same disempowered ways as characterized by advocates. Three reasons may explain this discrepancy. First, power and privilege often go unnoticed by the powerful privileged (Kimmel 2018). Scholars make this point in relation to gender inequality; men often show disinterest in engaging in dialogue about their dominant social roles (Flood 2018). Like men, our volunteers were socially advantaged and held positions of authority in society (e.g., teachers, successful business people, police officer etc.). It is therefore plausible that the less favourable impacts the volunteers exerted on volunteerism users went entirely unnoticed by the volunteers. The second reason is less flattering towards volunteers. Power and privilege are at times actively denied and repudiated by the powerful and affluent (Flood 2018). This phenomenon explains how volunteers may interpret actual social equality as oppression. Overlooking power imbalances is therefore a psychological attempt to divert attention away from the social benefits volunteers receive from that power. This view accords with how I noted, in the beginning of this thesis, my awareness of the power that volunteerism emboldened within me as a volunteer and how I drew upon that power to

[5] The final chapter of the study's findings (Chapter 10, p. 163-186) discusses another way volunteerism can in some circumstances empower people experiencing homelessness.

enhance my sense of self. The third explanation is more pragmatic. The views of the twelve volunteers who participated in the study may not represent the beliefs of Australian volunteers more generally. What makes this reason unlikely is not only because my sample size is consistent with similar research (Marshall et al. 2013) but because the volunteerism literature and related social, public and political discourses tends to overlook the power that volunteerism holds over volunteerism users. The interpretations I present in this section do not aim to overlook the intentions or motives of individual volunteers and do not desire to subjugate individual volunteers to the plurality of group membership.

This section tracks four topics to explore the role of the volunteerism user: institutional power, infantilism, need and gratitude.

Institutional Power

People who rely on volunteerism services when experiencing homelessness perceive volunteerism as a form of institutional power embedded within broader structures, institutions and social arrangements. Advocates usually expressed this view by portraying volunteerism as an omnipresent 'system' or 'entity' in which volunteers operated and in which its users suffered. One man, for example, said, 'Volunteers are part of the system, [so] they're part of the problem' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2).

This advocate's interpretation of volunteers as 'systematic' components was commonplace. It regards volunteerism as a system of power that disciplines users' actions and emotions through punishment. Advocates believed that this punishment, enacted through an emphasis on popular and often untrue notions of homelessness, reinforced mainstream expected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs and norms of welfare consumers and implied powerlessness. This discipline, as Foucault's (1977) would argue, creates 'docile bodies' out of volunteerism users because the voluntary sector constantly observes and records the bodies they control and ensures the internalisation of the disciplinary individuality within the bodies being controlled. Discipline comes about without cohesive force but through vigilant observation of the user and through this observation the moulding of the bodies into its 'correct' form. Advocates recounted these experiences of the power that volunteers exercised over volunteerism users and understood that influence as reflecting the interests of the already powerful. This interpretation suggests that the volunteerism sector while claiming to

put one group in a position to empower another also works to undermine the act of empowerment itself (Gruber and Tricket 1987). These findings were unexpectedly striking not only because I volunteer but also because the advocates' opinions broke through the salient barrier Cox (2002) identified about speaking poorly of behaviour perceived as noble. Advocates overtly expressed such views with ferocity, anger and resentment.

The discursive constructions of volunteerism, its users and people who are homeless translate into modes of political reasoning that not only inform the volunteerism processes and practices but also reshape the institutional arrangements through which volunteers gather authority over the users. For example, the literature review revealed the common and deep-seeded understandings that Australian home-less people frequently rely on the volunteerism sector, that that sector is performing 'good work' and is a helpful intervention to issues within homelessness. Volunteers are described as amazing people, saviours, kind, do-gooders, brave, skilled and empathetic while the broader public perceives homelessness as a 'problem' or an 'emergency' to be fixed and home-less people as a financial drain on society and a cultural embarrassment (Baldry et al. 2012; Emerson 2014; Kinbacher 2016; Masanauskas 2016c; Lambert 2015; Batterham, Hollows & Kolar 2011; Johnson & Chamberlain 2011). Such discourses construct volunteerism and produce the diseconomies of power that cast home-less people who rely upon volunteerism services into the shadow of welfare institutional power and in turn denying visibility and understanding. Advocates were acutely aware of this power imbalance and presented long and at-times heart-wrenching stories about how they felt oppressed, burdened and confused. They described how they often thought and or behaved powerlessly when using volunteerism services.

The stories related to the institutional nature of volunteerism power revealed that advocates felt that volunteerism involved unequal relations of power and a pervasive pattern of volunteerism dominance. Dominance was enacted through three powerless expectations and beliefs of the volunteerism user. These included infantilism, need and gratitude.

Infantilism

Advocates frequently communicated that infantilism expectations and beliefs characterised the role of the volunteerism user. Paternalistic control was one form of response to the assumption that volunteerism users lacked the capacity for autonomy: 'Volunteerism - I try and avoid it [using volunteer services] because for me it's a drop-in centre for homelessness and mental illnesses. Basically 'daddy-day-care'. "Come in and we'll make you coffees and we'll listen to your stories and we will send you on your way". Okay, no responsibility, no bullshit' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1); 'I felt just condescended to a lot with volunteers because they don't really appreciate what it is like to have nothing' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2): '[One volunteer] always gives me a smaller serving [at the soup kitchen] and there's another [volunteer] at breakfast. She's always there at breakfast and she'll make sure that she's always watching. It makes me feel like I'm a kid'. *Shamus* (male, advocate, #6)

The analogy of volunteerism users as children in daddy-day-care centres and the impression that volunteers condescendingly and autocratically regulate food servings reveals how the advocates felt that volunteers conceptualised volunteerism users as infantile and powerless. Such notions position users as incapable of autonomy and agency. This relationship recalls how parents monitor their children, may keep them prisoners in their homes or may discipline them to brush their teeth and make them adhere to a strict timetable (Foucault, in Taylor, 2012, p. 204). Compulsory school attendance for minors is also in line with Foucault's and Chloe Taylor's (2010) contentions. The paternalist approaches toward volunteerism users that advocates identified stem from the social, public and political discourses about homeless people's irresponsibility, deviant (e.g., Petty 2017) behaviours and incapacities to operate within mainstream society. Existing academic literature similarly recognises and supports the welfare sector's authoritarian approaches towards people experiencing homelessness (Parsell, Jones & Head 2013). The mainstream media help to shape, influence and/or amplify this approach by suggesting that infantile misbehaviour defines people who experience homelessness.

Perceptions of volunteerism users as infantile also link with Haslam et al. (2016) notions of dehumanisation and Christens (2013) aspect of relational empowerment. Following Haslam et al.'s theories, infantile characterisations dehumanise people experiencing homelessness by

denying them the perception of human uniqueness. Volunteers respond to dehumanised home-less people through paternalistic control and 'benign neglect':

> Volunteerism can damage [volunteerism recipients] quite seriously [because] they [volunteers] are not accountable; the people using them are not very selective. "You want to volunteer? Sure. You want to do that? Sure". They don't know who they are. Surely a working-with-children's check doesn't mean you're not sending a paedophile into a preschool; that's bullshit. Volunteerism is really, I think, is part of the problem in this country. *Leo* (male, advocate, #25)

There is a feeling of indifference within the volunteerism system towards users. A sense that anyone can undertake volunteer work because users are infantile enough that 'the people using' volunteers can neglect auditing those volunteers' qualifications. This characterisation was unexpected not only because the advocate expressed his views with anger, resentment and frustration but also because it rebuffed a common frame of volunteerism as 'good work'. While Leo was the only participant to use such striking language, three other advocates expressed a similar sense of dehumanisation and infantilisation: 'I've seen you [the volunteer said], you're…but he didn't see me actually' *Andy* (male, advocate, #16); 'Many people walk out of [volunteerism] services just ranting and raving because they haven't been heard' *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18). One advocate, meanwhile, demonstrated a comparable sense of expected volunteer disregard by conveying surprise when he was recognised as human by a volunteer: 'She's, [the volunteer, was] like, "Oh, you must be David", like, she remembered my name. I freaked out because, like, it was a good month' *David* (male, advocate, #10).

The infantile dehumanisation of volunteerism users psychologically facilitates negative stereotypes of home-less people who use welfare services. For example, people who are homeless are politically, socially and publicly constructed as inactive agents in their own lives and as personally responsible for their disadvantage. Regarded as powerless and unable to support themselves, people experiencing homelessness, like infants, become excluded from that which affect them. Advocates' accounts of volunteerism delivery illustrate the above interpretation. Volunteers controlled the amount of food and resources available to volunteerism recipients like they would a misbehaving child. Volunteers condescended

advocates and not evident were Christen's (2012) relational elements of empowerment in relationships between advocates and volunteers.

Dehumanisation interconnects with relational empowerment with regards to the role of the volunteerism user. For example, Christens (2012) writes that power develops and is exercised through relationships, and that relationships are mutually empowering when there is a shared sense of collaborative competence, a reduced social or demographic division, empowerment facilitated, networks mobilised and legacies passed on. Entirely absent from advocates' stories of volunteerism use, the stories, instead, suggested that infantile notions counteracted discrete components of Christens's (2012) network. For example, infantilism concepts heightened the perceived demographic differences of volunteerism users compared to volunteers because volunteers are generally older Australians (ABS, 2012). Advocates expressed that infantilising notions encumbered rather than supported collaborative empowerment because children are socially understood to cry at awkward and inappropriate times, throw tantrums and generally misbehave. In short, normative social relations situate children as wilful and in need of control.

Need

Need was the third characterisation that advocates connected to the role of the volunteerism user. The idea of need i.e., what is needed, who is in need and who meets that need, linked power, volunteerism and homelessness. Advocates also expressed that expectations and beliefs about need shaped encounters between volunteerism users and volunteers when users were told they were undeserving of services or outright rejected from services:

> David: I remember walking in there … [to the soup kitchen] … and … [the volunteers] … looked at me and I was clean—clean and straight and everything and not psychotic and they just said, "No, we can't help you. We've got much more, you know, needy people than you". I was a bit taken back by that; very upset actually, to be honest!
>
> Zachary Greig: They rejected you?

> David: Yeah, because I didn't—because I had—I didn't present myself as needy, as needy enough to be given a food voucher. That's the only reason because I would—because one of—especially one of the times with the drop-in I asked. I said, "Why not?" They said, "You've had a shower today". I said, "Yeah". They said, "Well, you know, we've got people that haven't had a shower for a week and got nowhere to live and, you know". That's where—and I was still ill at the time so I would just say, "Okay". I would accept it and go home and not eat for the next two days until I got paid again or whatever. Feel sorry for myself or whatever but—and maybe drink, you know.

David (male, advocate, #10) believed he was denied access to a service because he did not present himself as needy enough to warrant volunteerism support. His conspicuous response may illustrate mainstream expectations and beliefs that volunteer users are poor, destitute and underprivileged. In other words, they must look needy if they are to be verifiably needy:

> I had clean clothes every three days. I had clean underwear to wear every other day because I made sure that my laundry was done and when I needed to use those … [volunteerism] … services, I looked outta place, because I didn't have anybody to tell me that, but I looked out of place because the other 60% of those people look like they need a shower, look like those clothes were going to break and fall off, they had rips and tears and what have you. I was never told, but I felt this way. I have gone to a couple of different … [volunteerism] … places for food vouchers and the odd bit of food parcels here and there and I was shunned. I felt that I was shunned because they felt I wasn't deserving of that particular [volunteerism] service that I needed to have. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

Bill's quotation echoes Foucault's (1977) contention that a need is a political instrument, meticulously prepared, calculated and used by individuals or groups who hold power in society. David's and Bill's statements expose a practice of shunning volunteerism users away from services in Melbourne, Australia because they did not present themselves in ways that correspond with mainstream expectations, assumptions, beliefs and norms about need or the neediness of volunteerism users and or people experiencing homelessness. The literature review highlighted in part that this role is likely and in itself propagated by the academic

literature which focuses more on what home-less people need than on the skills, attributes and knowledge that home-less people possess. Even the 'less' enfolded in the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness' rhetorically carries an assumed 'need' for home. The volunteerism sector and the popular media also claim that Australian 'homeless people' are needy (i.e., Sydney Homeless Connect 2016; Manna 2016; Dole 2015) and that volunteer organisations entirely meet those needs. Advocates felt need-talk inscribes powerlessness upon volunteerism users and forms characterisations about the role as oppressed, unclean and poverty-stricken. They also spoke to the limited scope within which they could define their own needs as well as how discourses of need relied on broad assumptions and interpretations of what people experiencing homelessness need, who should fulfil those needs and the most efficient way to meet those needs.

Discourses concerning people who are homeless and volunteerism frame volunteerism practices through a distinction between deserving and undeserving recipients (Kenny 2002). Advocates identified need as the filter that facilitated this practice. Because experts, including academics, professional human service workers and public administrators, defined 'need' in this frame, it is based upon an objectivist positivist view of the world. Fraser (1989) and Ife (2016) highlight how measuring and determining home-less needs emphasises 'expert opinions' and allows political power to be applied to home-less people through volunteerism. Indeed, while many advocates acknowledged that they occasionally needed volunteerism services, the way volunteers defined and judged needs as deserving or undeserving made advocates perceive the role and related position of volunteerism users as dis-empowered. Need is used as a mechanism to triage volunteerism users and such control may perpetuate structures of oppression and disadvantage among people experiencing homelessness.

The final section follows a similar trajectory from the perspective of gratitude.

Gratitude

The following supports the view that volunteers may use gratitude as a form of coercive power against volunteerism users and that popular notions of volunteers performing 'good work' may shape this behaviour: 'All I ask—and this is the only thing that ever makes me cross—is when people … [who are homeless and who use volunteerism] … don't say please

or thank you' *Ann* (female, volunteer, #12).

Ann frames the role of the volunteerism user through notions of disempowerment. While consistent with how volunteerism is understood in Australian culture and is perhaps true under some circumstances, the view is constructed by assumptions that volunteerism benefits recipients. It is also a perspective that puts the volunteer in a position of power because it authorises her enactment of power if users fail to display gratitude. One advocate signalled that this relationship was a form of 'social dictatorship' in which the expectation of gratitude was plain 'wrong':

> If … [the volunteer] … smiles at you … [there is an expectation that you] … automatically socially—society dictates that you smile back and you know, you maybe haven't talked for a week, you're not going to crack a smile. Well you could through social dictatorship or whatever, but you don't really want to be, where you feel that you have to reciprocate. Christ it's only some food, mate, you know? Do you want me to smile back because it makes you feel better? That's wrong. *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2)

Similar to Kenny's (2002) claim that volunteer-based organisations practice social justice in hostile environments (p. 237), an expectation of gratitude subordinated Jack Chadwick's role as a volunteerism user. Although Jack felt an obligation to show gratitude by smiling back, perhaps the most obvious example of how expectations of gratitude frame volunteerism users as powerless comes from the research diary:

> A homeless man approached one of the volunteers today and asked if he could use the shower to freshen up. The volunteer appeared disgruntled and refused. I wondered why because the shower stall was designed and provided for the specific purpose of providing a safe and clean environment for people sleeping rough to use. I asked, and the volunteer said the man asked rudely (e.g., he did not display gratitude). I approached the man and informed him he could use the shower if he wanted. After he had used the facility he approached and thanked me. His shoulders slumped, he avoided eye contact. *Zachary Greig* (Research Diary, 27 February 2015)

The volunteer described in the diary extract volunteered in association with her local church

group. Her function was to stand at the entrance of the community centre and pass out three food tokens to each recipient (one each for an entrée, main and dessert). On several occasions as I worked alongside her, I observed her correct, chastise or reward a recipient's behaviour when her or his 'gratefulness' responses either met or did not meet her expectations. She would occasionally order a patron to the back of the line and supply additional tokens to those whom she thought behaved well. Her behavioural patterns formed, through a discipline of gratitude, two distinctive species of knowledge, power and discipline: those deserving and those undeserving of volunteerism help (Rosenthal 2000). This power dynamic entrenches a decades-old discourse about performance of 'good work' by volunteers.

This section about volunteerism utilised four topics to explore how the 'the loose and baggy volunteerism monster' (Kendall & Knapp 1995) influences advocates' perceived roles. It discovered that, while advocates viewpoints were consistent with claims that empowerment is contextual and relational (Christens 2012b; Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 1990a), volunteerism settings may offer hostile environments in which to perform community development (Kenny 2002). Characterisations of infantilism, need and gratitude implies that people who are homeless and volunteers perceive the role of volunteerism users as disempowered. This interpretation re-examines popular and academic views that volunteerism 'benefits all of our lives' (Pidgeon, 1998. p. xi), is a helpful intervention to issues of homelessness and volunteers are amazing people, saviours, kind, do-gooders, brave, skilled and empathetic.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to reveal data that showed some homeless and some volunteers continue to see welfare consumption as a role and position of disempowerment even when welfare users self-identify as empowered individuals. Such accounts signal that home-less people will continue feeling disempowered in welfare contexts if mainstream attitudes towards homelessness and welfare remain stigmatising and stereotypical. The chapter analysed the social power that the welfare system exerts over Australia's socially disadvantaged. It also tracked the ways societal expectations of welfare consumers and people experiencing homelessness authorised this power. The section highlights that community development work must promote an understanding of the systems of power in

which people find themselves implicated (Freire 1972) and studies that portray people who are homeless in only pejorative ways distort that role by magnifying the blemishes or imperfections of homelessness (Snow et al., 1994). The next chapter departs from welfare consumption to reveal the study's most unanticipated finding. It explores how both advocates and volunteers saw the role of the welfare provider as empowered and how almost every advocate used the welfare provider's role to improve their sense of self and perceive themselves as empowered.

Chapter 10: The Role of the Home-less Person Who Volunteers

Introduction

This last chapter concludes the study's findings. It investigates how advocates perceive their role as volunteers. That advocates volunteered was entirely unanticipated by me prior to participant recruitment and this insight expanded the study's analytical focus beyond the oppression-privilege binary to understand the nuances of these complex social positions. Advocates identified themselves neither as oppressed nor as privileged but as having experienced both (Kearney, 1984, p. 110). They filtered contextual influences like homelessness, volunteerism, privilege and disadvantage in ways that dismantled an oppressed or a privileged identity. By doing so, they determined how context influenced the ways empowerment is experienced and felt. The term 'home-less volunteer (or volunteers)' is therefore used in this chapter to identify and analyse the role of an individual or group who volunteers in the homelessness sector and holds first-hand experience of living without a home.

Each advocate cited in this chapter volunteered in the homelessness sector. In total, 13 of the 18 advocates volunteered in the welfare sector. They volunteered in soup kitchens, food vans or for other homelessness services; some supported home-less people through local Councils and a well-known Australian homelessness not-for-profit organisation. These advocates' views and experiences of volunteering contribute a perspective currently absent from volunteerism and homelessness literature as well as social, political and public discourses. Filling those gaps, this chapter's first two sections investigate home-less volunteers from the perspectives of boundaries and then expectations. The section 'Boundaries' outlines how home-less volunteers must cross and/or escape the physical and symbolic boundaries that control behaviours and social status within voluntary organisations. The subsequent section explores how home-less volunteers confront social expectations. Both sections demonstrate the power embedded within home-less peoples' volunteering. The sub-chapter 'Role Features' examines four ways home-less volunteers experience empowerment through community development values and characteristics: valuing lived experience (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011), positivity (Schenck 2002; Freire 1972), inclusiveness

(Kilpatrick, Field & Falk 2003) and self-worth (Cahn 2000). The chapter's final section, 'Empowered and Empowering', underscores advocate perceptions of their volunteering role as powerful. It also confirms the interpersonal transactions and processes that undergird advocates' affirmations of volunteering as an effective exercise of transformative power. Collectively, people who are homeless possess the resources, abilities, skills, knowledge and potential to improve their own lives and determine their own future.

Boundaries

The notion of boundaries was a central way that advocates characterised their volunteering. Two types of boundaries were recognised in the narrative. The first boundary was between voluntary organisations' spaces (e.g. different dining areas where home-less people receive food) and the kitchen (where volunteers serve and prepare food). Table-top counters (referred to as counters henceforth) usually separated these two spaces interior layouts. The second boundary type advocates recognised was the presence of queues: people arranged together waiting for food in soup kitchens. Advocates expressed views that reinforced counters and queues as instruments of physical and symbolic (social) power (Foucault, 1991), instruments that objectify volunteers and home-less people to social meanings. For one to volunteer, therefore, advocates felt a 'homeless person' had to transgress boundaries to escape the social, public and political expectations and assumptions circumscribing 'homeless people'.

Space

For example, 'you've got the service area [of the soup kitchen], you're sort of, like, you're on the outside of the counter, or you're on the, that side…you can't really see yourself on the other side of it [before you volunteer]' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1). Bill discussed his volunteering in how it counters entrench forms of social difference and reinforces unequal resource access and distribution. 'If I can help in any way, because I know how it is like to be on that other side [of the counter]' *Maria* (female, advocate, #19). The idea of 'the other side' suggests a socio-spatial and political boundary that encourages division.

David, meanwhile:

> It's a bit weird to say this but you're sort of, like, because you've got the service area [of the soup kitchen] you're sort of, like, you're on the outside or you're on the, that side. Do you know what I mean? If you're on the inside and you're just, like… When you're on the other side and you have to rely on services like that to survive, you sort of—you can't see yourself there, because you're just worried about your next meal. You can't really see yourself on the other side of it. I've, you know, speaking to people—when I was sitting down I pretty much—very rarely did I go there and I'd have a meal. *David* (male, advocate, #10)

While merely functional and/or innocuous upon first-glance by mainstream community members, counters represent a form of physical and social boundary that correlates with social status. Like all boundaries, counters are ambiguous and two-faced (Ursula 1974), and what is 'inside' or 'outside' of that boundary depends upon one's social position. Such boundaries are often actively denied and repudiated by people who are socially privileged (Flood 2018) while simultaneously reinforcing their power through the subjugation of 'outsiders' behaviour (Foucault in Rabindow 1991). For advocates, when an individual is physically positioned on the receiving side of a counter she or he is anonymised, stigmatised and judged. The receiving side manifests an 'outsider' position reliant upon others for support. In contrast, advocates felt an individual positioned on the providing side of the counter becomes an 'insider' who occupies a privileged, advantaged and powerful social position. Counters establish forms of social difference and reinforce home-less people and volunteers' unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities. Volunteer advocates had to confront the social *and* physical barrier counters posed.

Attempts to cross these physical and symbolic boundaries was also policed. Under the guise of safety and order, signs often prohibit home-less clients from entering the kitchen and volunteers frequently chastise those who accidently or deliberately enter volunteers' space. I observed and noted in the research diary the way counters physically and socially separate people who are homeless from volunteers. For example, in order to volunteer people (usually

experiencing homelessness) had to negotiate the power implications (e.g., those on the inside 'powerful', those on the outside 'powerless') that boundaries present. The counter in two soup kitchens in which I volunteered separated the main dining room from the kitchen galley, where the trashcan for leftover food was located. Volunteers would usually collect empty plates and dispose of leftover food in the trashcan before putting those plates in the dishwasher. Several individuals who frequented these soup kitchens preferred to clean up their own dishes and avoided and or refused help from volunteers. Their thoughtfulness and agency were thwarted, however, because each soup kitchen's management forbade clients from crossing the counter into the kitchen area. On many occasions an individual stood at the boundary with a plate of leftover food looking at the trashcan with an expression of indecision and worry. Some would sheepishly seek my approval to break the rule. Others would quickly tip-toe across the boundary, dispose of the leftover food and race back into the dining room before being noticed. Counters constrain home-less peoples' possibilities to act and limited their relative capacities to shape and control their own lives. Counters also operated as a form of social regulation that typifies the separation of social privilege and disadvantage (Foucault in Rabinow 1991).

Queues

In addition to counters, the 'queue' represents a second boundary type. One advocate expressed that, in order to volunteer, he had to break away from queues of people waiting for food in soup kitchens. Queues enact another way of physically and symbolically grouping 'homeless people' together:

> People would go to that [voluntary] place and stink, literally stink. Now, I'm homeless, I had a right to stink. But these [homeless] people were dirty and these [homeless] people, a high percent of them, were in a rooming house. The staff there, I am sorry there should have been two lines [queues], if you are that like me [a person who volunteers], and I don't want…[pause]…they had showers, it's a large budget. They had showers. They had laundry facilities!! *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

The context of the expression, tone of voice and broader stories promote the observation that queues act as a form of coercive power that define social status. Queues physically

assemble—and therefore separate— the 'dirty', 'stinky', needy 'homeless person' from well-off and privileged mainstream community members. When people are corralled in support facilities, they are more likely to identify as 'homeless' and feel pressure to perform associated social roles. To escape queues and volunteer is meaningful; it indicates that person is transgressing the social meanings of homelessness and provides a measure of self-worth and dignity. Bill frequently shifted his self-identification in relation to his physical positioning. For example, during his stories of volunteering, Bill would not identify as a person experiencing homelessness; instead he referred to people experiencing homelessness as 'those homeless people' or 'these home-less people'. In contrast, when he was telling stories about his homelessness and queuing in homelessness organisations he would proclaim 'us homeless' or assert 'I'm homeless!' Linguistic transformations capture how Bill's role and identity shift in relation to boundaries. When Bill waits in a queue he feels socially and symbolically objectified as different and when he proclaims that 'there should have been two lines' (one for people who are 'dirty' and another for people who volunteer) he demonstrates that boundaries participate in the construction of home-less identities and can forge distance between social roles.

Advocates' narrative about voluntary organisation boundaries contribute to formative research conducted by Snow and Anderson (1993). They found, for example, that people who experience homelessness distance themselves from homelessness as a general social category and from specific groups of homeless individuals by verbally derogating the institutions that attend to the needs of people who are homeless. Likewise, some advocates in this study dissociated themselves from home-less identities by speaking poorly of homelessness institutions (e.g., the Salvation Army). Furthermore, advocates expressed that volunteering for these organisations provided an effective distancing technique. For example, the act of volunteering confronted the intricate hierarchies, traditions and interpersonal ties that supported the stereotyping, self-identification and categorization of home-less people in voluntary organisations and the broader welfare system (e.g. drug-addicted, violent, passive, lazy, seceded and disempowered). Volunteering also created an effective counter-discourse that helped shape a new role—a better, more life-affirming role—characterised by the valuable lived experiences of homelessness and the positive characteristics that accompany volunteerism.

Importantly, and to summarise the preceding sections on space and queues, some advocates communicated discomfort with their volunteer positions. For them, volunteering was not a panacea to the challenges that homelessness posed. Outside volunteering contexts these advocates still encountered negative social stigmas and stereotypes. In other words, the powerfulness of advocates volunteering role was contextual and bounded by inside and outside facilities. Notably, advocates used boundaries as the framing metaphor when articulating their uneasiness towards a volunteer *and* 'homeless' person social position. Bill comments on the 'liminal'[6] character of borders: 'If you live homeless and volunteer for a period of time you are always straddling two worlds' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1). David: 'I had a foot in each camp almost as a volunteer' *David* (male, advocate, #10).

Confronted Expectations

The home-less volunteer confronts the social constructs that underpin stereotypical views of 'homeless people' (e.g., poor, dirty, deviant and/or drug users). Volunteering in contrast affirms that people who are homeless possess resources, abilities, skills and knowledge and that they hold the potential to improve their own lives and determine their own futures, '…if I started doing volunteering, people would look at me different, that I'm beating it [homelessness] … 'When I was with people that I trusted at voluntary jobs, I would get the opposite message, without them telling me. So it really confused me; it really, really confused me' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2).

The greatest impediment to a person taking full part in society are not that person's physical flaws but the tissue of myths, fears and misunderstandings that society attaches to them (Goffman in Ingstad and Whyte, 1995, p. 144). Indeed, people look at Jack Chadwick differently when he volunteers. He is no longer observed as a powerless, violent, lazy, deviant, misbehaving, drug-using 'homeless man' and his role is differently repositioned as positive. In this context, volunteering allows Jack Chadwick to challenge and confront the homelessness and welfare discourses previously objectifying and excluding him from mainstream society. Jack expresses confusion about this process. He became so accustomed

[6] 'Liminal' is from Victor Turner (1969) but others have extended that work like Watson and Austerberry (1986) and Hopper et al (1996) in the context of homelessness.

to judgement and stigma that hearing the opposite message requires re-adjustment. Because the production of homelessness knowledge is often based on dissent and difference, disbelief was perhaps foreseeable.

Jack Chadwick's socially confronting image of the home-less volunteer also provides for an interpretation that role enactments are frequently public demonstrations (behaviours) of intrapersonal and interactional empowerment. With the more privileged, the demonstrations are often intentional and deliberate and a person may benefit from their enactment. In contrast, people who are home-less usually fall outside the hierarchy of structurally available societal roles and find themselves beyond established role-based sources of moral worth and dignity that most people take for granted (Snow & Anderson 1993). Jack Chadwick could not easily select roles because he was trying to survive homelessness. He lived on Melbourne's streets and suffered from childhood trauma. Often hungry, exhausted and lonely, Jack Chadwick's arduous circumstances meant he was deprived of opportunities to play socially beneficial roles. His disadvantaged state created a feedback loop, whereby roles enacted perpetuated his exclusion. Volunteering, conversely, arrested that loop and helped renegotiate his social position.

In addition to Jack Chadwick, home-less volunteers challenge social expectations:

> I think they [volunteers] get the experience of listening to somebody that's homeless [when I volunteer] you know? Like with my story, people that hear my story, they hear my story but they go to me, 'Wow, we never knew' [that] because I'm always bubbly and they're like, 'We never knew that you went through that. We never knew that you had brain damage. We never knew'. Because I don't tell people and I think they hear the stories and I think that makes them more aware and more, yeah, this shit is happening—sorry. [You can swear as much as you like on this] You know like shit like that does happen, you know, and they wouldn't think it happened until they hear your story and then it makes them realise. You know, this [homelessness] does happen. It's not something they see on the news or read in the paper. This actually does happen to people, you know? *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #18)

Kelsey's story recounts the practice of informing others about experiencing homelessness. The reactions she encounters - 'Wow, we never knew [that]' - illustrate surprise that some home-less people also volunteer. The reactions also indicate surprise because Kelsey's 'bubbly' demeanour, kindness and hard work fail to fit the 'hobo' image (Nels & Leon 1923) that avoids everyday responsibilities of 'normal life'. The ability to confront expectations also improved Kelsey's sense of power, because others' perceptions of Kelsey changed and she gained influence over volunteers' social understandings. Volunteers became more aware of the 'shit that is happening', which develops new understandings of the social world and strengthens their commitments to civic engagement. Drawing on Christens (2012), when Kelsey personally informs volunteers about homelessness, they become more adept at bridging social divisions and they can be expected to understand the roles that isolation and group division play in maintaining power asymmetries. Accordingly, the home-less volunteer's role possesses strategies for bridging social divisions, developing trust and creating norms of reciprocity.

Another interpretation of Kelsey's narrative is that her volunteering confronted expectations of home-less people through the practice of humanisation. Humanisation is the process of making an individual or group more human by considering them beyond a set of stereotypes and stigmas (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018 p. 234). People who are homeless are often dehumanised in Australia, particularly through their consumption of welfare. Smith (2016) in the USA reported that college students and fire-fighters were less likely to mention a home-less person's emotional state when asked to describe a day in the life of a home-less person. What aggravates dehumanisation in welfare contexts and underscores the importance of the home-less volunteer role is that volunteers are socially constructed as particularly virtuous examples of mainstream community members. Haslam (2006) notes that the group perceived as superior is more likely to attribute additional human-nature personality traits (or emotions and values) to itself than to other groups within society. Kelsey's volunteering therefore assails dehumanisation by presenting a more (and better) human perspective of 'homeless people'. Her volunteering removes the home-less person from television programs, newspaper articles and political debates. It dislodges people who are homeless from streets, parks and welfare service providers by positioning the home-less person right in front of fellow volunteers. The gesture insists, 'they cannot be ignored here, they are human here, and it is harder to stereotype and stigmatise here'.

In addition to advocate views, volunteers also recognised that the very idea of home-less people volunteering confronts expectations:

> And I noticed with the [home-less] people that came in [and volunteered], I actually thought 'Oh, this is going to be crazy, havoc!' I said, 'It won't work. They'll be coming in drunk, and druggos and they'll be a bloody nuisance. Probably we'll end up we'll have to shut, stop it!' But it wasn't like that at all, no. That's what I'm saying to you…I was surprised about these people, they're not what I thought they were; you know, homeless people. *Hunter* (male, volunteer, #11)

Hunter held strong preconceptions about home-less people (as drunk, drug addicts and bloody nuisances) before the organisation at which he volunteered recruited home-less volunteers. Interacting with people experiencing homelessness as volunteers instead of as volunteerism-users shattered his initial social barriers and positions. Hunter began to relate to home-less people and developed a sense that people experiencing homelessness were similar in many ways to him. He struggled with alcohol addiction and the role of the home-less volunteer taught him about this endeavour. All of this surprised Hunter; for him, 'it wasn't like that at all'. Another volunteer expressed similarly:

> [What do you think the stereotype of a home-less person is?] Well again it brings it back to that visual problem, like it's usually someone that's not very well kept or something and the stereotype is that they are sort of—they're quite abrasive as well. Like you hear a lot of people say like someone was like yelling at them on a tram or something and then it's just the assumption that a person is homeless or vice versa. Like they see a homeless person and they assume they're crazy or something like that. Again that's just because of their mental illness. It's a mental illness and that's why it comes across like because people like that are quite visual and so that's why I guess that would become a bit of a stereotype because that's what a lot of people see. A person yelling or whatever, yeah. *[**Interviewer:** Do you find that stereotype fits the people that are home-less who volunteer with you?]* No, not at all. Yeah, not at all. They're all really like polite people. All really nice. All offering to help a bit. Well a few of them offer to help and stuff like that and even with the unkempt thing like

> that's just the nature of their situation. You know, they don't always have access to sort of good hygiene and stuff like that. *Tania* (female, volunteer, #13)

Tania stereotypes home-less people visually ('unkempt'), behaviourally ('abrasive' and 'yelling') and cognitively ('their mental illness'). These disparaging notions often frame public attitudes towards people who are homeless; they reinforce stereotypes about the home-less and stigmatise an already disenfranchised population (also argued by Bartholomew, 1999). In other parts of her narrative Tania disclosed that these stereotypes previously caused her anxiety. For example, she would cross the street on occasion to avoid people experiencing homelessness out of fear of being physically hurt. She also explained various other unflattering ways she viewed home-less people. These typecasts, however, were challenged by Tania's capable, polite and nice fellow volunteers who were experiencing homelessness. She encountered people experiencing homelessness who confronted her socially constructed expectations. This type of response can also be interpreted from various perspectives on the cause of homelessness. Individual perspectives of homelessness can emphasise the active role of the home-less in making decisions and taking responsibility for their own circumstances (Johnson & Jacobs 2015). Differently, structural perspectives can construct the home-less role more positively by acknowledging the complexities of homelessness and identifying structural inequalities.

The two preceding sections introduced the role of the 'home-less volunteer' by investigating the physical and symbolic boundaries advocates crossed to volunteer as well as the expectations they confronted concerning people who are homeless. Each section contributes to understanding the home-less volunteer's role as empowered. These interpretations are broadly consistent with empowerment literature, but they offer new observations about the ways people who are homeless can distance themselves from homelessness as a general social category and from specific groups of homeless individuals.

Role Features

The following four sections explore the various ways advocates characterised their volunteering through community development's values and characteristics: valuing lived experience (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2010), positivity (Schenck 2002; Freire 1972), inclusiveness (Kilpatrick et al, 2003) and self-worth (Cahn 2000). Each section highlights the

resources, abilities, skills, knowledge and potential that home-less people can possess. Collectively, the findings illustrate that volunteering amongst people experiencing homelessness can redistribute power and help to confront inequality and social disadvantage.

Lived Experience

Valuing lived experience is the cornerstone upon which community development is built (Ife 2016; Kenny 2011; Ledwith 2011). It is also central to how advocates described their volunteering. For example, exposure to homelessness and the need for welfare services—in conjunction with humanistic responses to social disadvantage through care, kindness and compassion—characterised how advocates described their volunteering role. One advocate stated:

> [Volunteering] gives you something to do for one; it's a positive thing that you're doing; it's giving hope to an individual. Look I go out there and talk to people on the streets and they thank me for listening to them and understanding them and it's just talking to them because I understand what they're going through. It's surprising the amount of people that just say 'you understand me'. But you'll get some [volunteers] that have gone through their studies and get their diplomas and all that; that's that little niche they're missing is actual experience. If the volunteers come from—how can I put it—from homeless stock like myself, the value is so much more. *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18)

After living in various rooming houses throughout Melbourne, Yobbo recounts the empowerment he experienced when volunteering. He also articulates how his embodied knowledge of the psychological and physical suffering of living without a home contributed to his understanding, empathy and meaningful connections with home-less people. In short, Yobbo's deep sense of care and empathy towards people experiencing homelessness stemmed from his specialised and unique appreciation of their needs, problems and strengths. But while Yobbo tracks the benefits acquired from lived experience, he also notes that the home-less experience is an uncommon characterisation of the Australian volunteer. For example, the image of the volunteer usually depicts people who have undertaken formal courses or education, or who hold degrees or diplomas. This image, however, renders home-less peoples' voices as 'silent as a breath' (Foucault, 1972, p. 27). It denies them legitimacy

and control, which are exemplified by their lack of presence and voice in social, political and public discourses. The role of the home-less volunteer, according to Yobbo and other advocates, might increase the power of Australia's socially disadvantaged because it can offer opportunities for people who are home-less to feel valued, appreciated and understood.

In addition to Yobbo, other advocates described the importance of personal experience for volunteering:

> It's very empowering! You feel that you're not doing it out of charity or pity, you do it because you've been there; it's a completely different encounter. That you do it—yeah, I do it and God be good to me. No, you do it because you were there. So that's very important. We should. You know how sometimes these people get very much ignored? *Maria* (female, advocate, #19)

Maria differentiates between a traditional form of charity and her charity as a home-less person taking up volunteering. Traditional charity, she suggests, devalues lived experience and is more likely to take on the characteristics of religious duty, exclusion, disempowerment and a lack of understanding of social disadvantage. This form of charity is more likely to perpetuate structures of oppression and disadvantage. Maria's volunteering, however, re-assembles the charity framework within the context of lived experience, mutual empowerment, insight and understanding. This makes for good volunteering:

> With volunteering and being homeless I think it is connected because if you're not homeless and you're volunteering for the homeless you don't have an idea. Unless you're homeless you don't have an idea like volunteering and these people out there that are homeless you can't connect with them. Like you can't get somebody that hasn't been homeless, this is my opinion, to volunteer with people that have been homeless because they just don't get it. Do you know what I mean? They've got their home every night and everything right and the homeless haven't got their home so you've got to relate to somebody that's been there and had nowhere to go and all that. *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #18)

Maria and Kelsey, whose daily lives and life paths revolved around providing material and emotional support to people experiencing homelessness, were upset by the view that volunteers rarely first-hand experiences homelessness. Kelsey was irritated and frustrated. She verbalized that volunteers 'have no idea' about homelessness and 'just don't get it'. Maria expressed that people who are homeless are marginalised and ignored in volunteerism (and other) settings. Even so, they agreed that when volunteers truly understand what it is like to live without a home then encounters between people who are homeless and volunteers can change in meaning and substance. Under this context, the emotional and corporal experiences that accompany homelessness embody the volunteer's role and a home-less volunteer can compassionately identify with disadvantaged others on a 'gut level'. Volunteering figures as a process that empowers group membership and solidarity. It promotes a set of abilities and propensities necessary to form positive and life-affirming interpersonal relationships.

Positivity

Community development is an inherently optimistic and positive set of values and principles (Schenck 2002)[7]. Freire (1972), who strongly influenced how community development is understood and practiced in Australia focused on peoples' aptitudes and the pleasant aspects of life (i.e., strength and ability). Community development therefore tends to focus on how life-affirming values and traits can help to mitigate some of the insecurity and fear that accompanies social disadvantage. Keeping this in mind, positivity formed the second community development characterisation advocates connected to the role of the home-less volunteer. Advocates felt good when they volunteered and their accompanying stories were almost always filled with a sense of happiness, love and invigoration.

For example, when responding to the direct question '[Do you think that volunteering gives you more control over your life?]' 'Certainly, certainly! Volunteering is when I'm the most happy' *Maria* (female, advocate, #19). 'You are feeling, you are making yourself feel good,

[7] The claim that community development is characterized by positivity does not mean community development workers do not experience frustrations when struggling with modern institutions, structures and systems that supports people of power and privilege (Law 2018)

because you think you're volunteering' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1). [Volunteering] makes my life seem better. So when I have a down day it actually picks me up that little bit more knowing that hang on a second I'm where most of those people would give their right arm to be' *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18). 'When you volunteer and do, especially in a place like that, so open, warm and friendly and intimate it was—it's just so—it's sort of invigorating. It just really pumps you up' *David* (male, advocate, #10):

> It [volunteering] makes me feel great. I love volunteering. I'm always putting my hand up for anything that come up to volunteer I put my hand up. Yeah, I love volunteering. I feel like I'm giving back something because when I was homeless people gave to me so I feel like, you know, I'm giving back and I love it. I love giving back because if I can make one homeless person's life a little bit easier it makes me feel so good. Yeah, it makes me feel good, yeah. *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #17)

Volunteering picks the advocates up and makes them feel happy, good, great and invigorated. This emotional well-being that accompanies advocates' volunteering was also central to their perceptions of empowerment. For example, when advocates 'felt good' they were more likely to avoid individuals or groups who posed a negative influence. They would side-step unsafe situations and were less inclined to drink alcohol or take drugs. Volunteering, therefore, created an environment whereby favourable occurrences were more likely (e.g., finding permanent housing, meeting an intimate partner or getting physically well) and advocates experienced more positive emotions. Advocates' positive emotions led to self-confidence and associated feelings that generated psychological empowerment (noted by Narayan-Parker, 2013).

Emotions like joy and satisfaction that advocates encountered when they volunteered productively trouble the banal pity the image of the 'homeless person' elicits'. The discourse of 'pity' articulates homelessness as a problem of social, physical and emotional confinement. It simplifies the 'homeless person' as weak and miserable and inevitably reinforces their powerless social positions. Advocate volunteering challenged these constructions because they could publicly demonstrate confidence and strength. They could laugh and enjoy time with fellow volunteers and clients of a homelessness service. They felt good and were able to - at least momentarily - escape and confront some of the difficulties of homelessness.

Another interpretation of the positive feelings that arise with home-less peoples' volunteering connects with community development's inherently optimistic worldview. For example, the image community development paints of society and its members is progressive and personally appealing. Its optimism is visible within many Australian and international community development textbooks emphasising values, integrity, cooperation, peace, non-violence and strength (e.g., Ife, 2016; Kenny, 2011; Ledwith, 2011). They emphasise people's capabilities and strengths and recognise that social disadvantage is often caused by subtle, complex and pervasive inequality. Scholars broadly recognise the 1950s and 1960s as a time when inequality and social justice were a daily indignity (Nadasen 2012). Social disadvantage was viewed during this time as everyone's responsibility, and everybody valued the right to a good and prosperous life. From the 1980s, neoliberalism and populism occupied centre stage in popular discourse and social disadvantage became increasingly viewed in terms of personal responsibility. Advocates described the positive feelings they encountered while volunteering in terms of their ability to divert some insecurity and fear that had dominated them as modern-day home-less people.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion (or inclusiveness) forms the core principles in community development work (Ledwith 2011). Inclusion was predominant in how advocates described their volunteering. Senses of permanence, inter-personal connection, community, belonging and equality characterised advocate descriptions of their volunteering role: 'Everyone's equal [as a volunteer], I love that' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2):

> I think it's really important for me first like with social inclusion because I feel isolated because I've got an illness. I can't work or study even part-time so I get very isolated because I would come out and do stuff like this and then I'll go home and I'll have less energy so I won't feel like calling people up or going out for a coffee and stuff. So volunteering gives me a bit of a social outlet and I feel like I'm achieving something because not only am I helping people, I'm building up volunteer hours which can go towards work placement in some of the courses I'm doing. So yeah, I really feel like I'm getting to know people which is great because I'm so used to going from place to place. You get to know someone and then you leave and you have

> to get to know everyone all over again and that gets really lonely because you're always the newcomer or the stranger. So yeah, volunteering is definitely like a community that makes you feel like, you know, there's people who know you and they like you and I think every human needs that. *Jade* (female, advocate, #21)

Volunteering as a social outlet causes and results from the strengthening of bonds and social connections between individuals and broader society. While this study's literature and findings recognised the view that volunteering promotes a sense of belonging, feelings of inclusion are particularly valuable for Jade given her acclimation to the loneliness and marginalisation of her homelessness. Jade was familiar with being typecast as a newcomer or stranger because of homelessness. She would sometimes leave after getting to know someone because her transience and feelings of disconnection within particular places (Robinson 2011) made it difficult to stay in one location. Other stronger individuals (usually men) seeking refuge commandeered the doorways or abandoned houses where Jade slept, which exacerbated her feelings of dislocation. The commitment she made to volunteering helped to change all this, because it gave her reason to stay in the local area. Jade also found the process of helping others empowering: she 'achieved something', 'built hours' and developed relationships. Her empowerment demonstrated that she was in control of her own destiny and that she could influence the decisions that affected her life.

Another interpretation of the home-less volunteer's social inclusion arrives from advocate's experiences of socialising with volunteers and their use (or non-use) of appellations:

> When I started working [at the voluntary organisation], I had no choice but to chat. I had to find out people's names and things, otherwise it's just discourteous you know? So I had to change my whole thinking about, 'okay, well I'm going to put myself in a position to really know people now', and because they're going to see me walking down the street bowling people over. *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2)

> That really is how I begin this. You know, I like the community of it… Wednesday is usually the day that I used to volunteer. It's not easy, it's not five days a week and its maybe three hours. Now, I am thankful I do it. I get a feed out of it. I speak to

> different people that I have come across and met overtime and we had conversation and that is good because that allows me to move back into the community. *Bill* (male, advocate, #1)

For Jack Chadwick and Bill, whose daily lives prior to volunteering revolved around watching television in their bedrooms or avoiding social interactions on the street, the chance to reconnect and to feel like community members was fundamental to their empowerment perceptions. Socialising was not always easy. Conversations, courtesy and remembering names were often difficult. A challenging aspect of their re-socialisation was the innocuous act of referring to fellow volunteers by their given name. For instance, home-less friends and acquaintances were often referenced in terms of their 'nicknames' e.g., Tricksy, Mouse, Jivs and Chaddy. Although nicknames can reveal fondness and care, their use can also be interpreted from the perspective of exclusion and the sense of 'Otherness' homelessness brings. Dordick (1997) recognised that nicknames enable people who are homeless to establish boundaries between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Therefore, birth names reassigned to nicknames during experiences of homelessness process, construct and negotiate personal identities away from mainstream society. From personal experience and observation, volunteers almost always refer to themselves and others with given first names. Volunteering can therefore transform the way people who are homeless change think and identify. Home-less volunteers are no longer Mouse and Tricky, but are Paul Menz and Andrew White. This meant that when they were seen out on the street and in the community they were socially accountable and perceived to fulfil that responsibility. Performing the role of the included home-less volunteer offered valuable opportunities for identity reframing.

Self-Worth

Self-worth was the final way advocates characterised the role of the home-less volunteer in a notion similar to community development. Feelings of confidence, strength, self-respect and motivation accompanied the role. Performing the role reinforced advocates' strengths and abilities and helped them to overcome some of the trauma and discomfort that accompanied life without a home. Advocates used different words to articulate self-worth: 'Every time I've walked out of doing a couple of hours volunteering it makes me feel like I'm worth something again' *Andrew* (male, advocate, #20). '[Because of volunteering] I've got this

newfound confidence and newfound ability to maybe find a new path' *Greg* (male, advocate, #22). 'Being homeless and doing the volunteering and everything like made me a lot stronger' *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #17). 'Working at [at the homelessness organisation] for five years as a volunteer has been extraordinary for me, because every year I can literally measure my growth' *Jack Chadwick* (male, advocate, #2), and 'Confidence'; 'volunteering just gave me the—it gave me confidence. It really gave me that confidence that, you know, I was no longer seen as home-less' *David* (male, advocate, #10). The process of developing self-worth is articulated in the following quotation:

> Three and a half years ago I was literally, it was life or death, where my mind was at. I don't - I mean it's still there, but it's not at the forefront and I feel like I don't feel totally useless anymore. I felt absolutely useless, totally a waste of time, which I don't feel anymore. So doing all these [voluntary] things, and saying, 'yeah, well I can do this', and getting my self-respect back and motivation and almost looking forward to things in the future. You know, I can see a bit of the future now. *Greg* (male, advocate, #22)

Humans' most basic motivator is a sense of self-worth (Becker, 1962). The advocates confirm that view. They express volunteering as instrumental to providing a sense of self-worth. Volunteering made them feel confident, worthwhile, respected, motivated and strong. It provided advocate's sense of hope and belief in the future and helped them to generate identities and roles that afforded some measure of dignity, high self-esteem and competence. Self-worth is particularly treasured in the context of people who are homeless whose homelessness represents an enduring assault on self-esteem and dignity. For example, trauma, shame and a profound sense of sadness permeated advocate counter-narratives about their homelessness. Two advocates wept during the in-depth interview, while the voices of others stuttered and broke with barely contained emotion. Advocates' expressions and body language changed as the sorrow dissipated during the process of providing their stories. Volunteering helped advocates feel worthwhile again and 'no longer homeless'.

Community development values and characteristics portrayed the role of the home-less volunteer. Themes included lived experience, positive feelings, social inclusion and self-worth. Each illustrated that people who are homeless are experts in their lives and

communities and that the role of the home-less volunteer can be used as a mechanism to redistribute power and address social inequality and disadvantage.

Empowered and Empowering

This final section of the chapter concludes the study's findings and brings the chapter's discussion full circle. It shows that people who are homeless often possess the resources, abilities, skills, knowledge and potential to improve their own lives and determine their own future. It contends that they are experts in their own lives and hold the potential to perceive their role as empowered *and* empowering. Advocates take control of the loose and baggy monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995) and use the social constructs that accompany volunteerism to their own advantage. In doing so, advocates confront the often negative and disempowering role perceptions that have characterised people experiencing homelessness. Understood in these terms, the role of the home-less volunteer is a form of change with the potential to overturn existing structures and discourses of both homelessness and support use that dominate Australian home-less people.

While previous sections from this chapter emphasised the power embedded in home-less peoples' volunteering, advocates explicitly state their perceptions of role empowerment in this section. Two advocates expressed that view by responding to my direct questions: [What type of things in your life make you feel in control?] 'Cooking and volunteering' *Maria* (female, advocate, #19); [Does volunteering make you feel more in control of your life?] 'Yeah, it does actually. It does because I feel yeah, you know, I've done something good and I feel really good about it, you know, and I'll be doing the same thing next week, you know, yeah' *Kelsey* (female, advocate, #17). Other views of empowerment emerged organically: 'I think a lot of that might have been the new me after discovering myself eventually and then realising I'm not going to sit back and let life control me anymore. I'm going to go out and control life and basically that's what I did by volunteering' *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18

> I'm feeling more and more empowered. I've struggled with shyness like I said and lack of confidence. That's because I've let a lot of people in my past dominate me too much and dominate me now and they're not even here anymore, like keeping on thinking of what they've said to me and that sort of thing and that just builds up lack

> of confidence. So now I'm just annihilating it slowly by doing certain things I've decided to do that are building it up [Like what?]. One example would be [volunteering at] Our Voices program. *Jade* (female, advocate, #21)

Advocates characterise their volunteering as a powerful role. Volunteering is presented as a behaviour that helps to overcome oppression and dominance. It enables a growth in confidence and reinforced inherent resources, abilities, skills and knowledge. Volunteering also allowed a challenge to the passive and subservient role expected of 'homeless people'. Helping others showed that advocates were no longer going to sit back and let life control them and they identified themselves with that of the 'free man' (Freire, 1972, p. 45) or woman. The role also deconstructs understandings of welfare and establishes an alternative understanding of what constitutes power in these contexts. For example, home-less volunteers subvert traditional and mainstream understandings that power often 'belongs' to the powerful because they are smarter, work harder and make better decisions. The mainstream assumption that home ownership is an expression of hard work and dedication (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998) is an example of how power is understood. Home-less volunteer's, however, illustrate power's moveability and its shifting and malleable nature. They demonstrate the socially powerless as entirely willing and able to enact power and suggest that powerlessness is often unfair and is caused by structural inequity.

The structural and individual causalities of homelessness assume people who are homeless are unable to control their *environment* (e.g., unemployment, housing and poverty) or *themselves* (e.g., poor choices, alcohol and drug consumption and violent behaviors). Each cause is contested by the advocates' volunteering. For instance, when advocates volunteered they demonstrated their *environmental* independence. They were no longer financial drains on the system (Baldry et al. 2012) who chose to be home-less (e.g., Perusco 2010), victims of welfare or casualties of political or other social circumstances. As volunteers, advocates felt authoritative and believed their voices were present and valued in the processes and outcomes of society. Cultivating a sense of environmental control also developed an advocate's understanding of their socio-political setting. They began to see homelessness as a cultural (rather than a personal) issue that required cooperative decision-making, commitment to interests and mutual assistance. In short, when advocates volunteered they felt *part of* the

environment and not a victim of it. In addition, volunteering also challenged the view that advocates' homelessness resulted from individual factors. For example, volunteering meant advocates modelled themselves as members of Australia's charity framework whereby 'more fortunate' members of society give back to the 'less fortunate' (Kenny, 2011). Volunteering nourished advocates' sense of responsibility, moral character and good decision making and they painted themselves as angels, heroes, saints and do-gooders. In short, when advocates volunteered they accepted that previous poor decisions did not define them. They were human and fallible, but still possessed the resources, abilities, skills, knowledge and potential to improve their own lives and determine their own future.

In addition to individual empowerment, advocates identified their volunteering as mutually empowering. For example, 'I've done amazing things. I got to see the other side of the [voluntary] system, so now I can also educate ones out of the professional side, and people out on the streets, I'm able to educate them as well, and give them a better understanding' *Vicky* (female, advocate, #23):

> Well, I did a sleep out one night in the city. One young fellow decided he wanted to open up [and learn] about homelessness so he went along as well. The next day he's wanting to do things [for people who are home-less] and I'm going hang on, no, no, no, no. He's wanting me to go over and talk to the Salvation Army—I said 'listen mate you set all this up. You've got to learn to go and do all this yourself. I will tell you what you need to go over and say and that but I will not go and do it for you. I will give you the empowerment you need to go and do it for yourself'. That's the way that I deal with it. I will not take somebody by the hand and do the job for them unless there's good reason that they can't. But I will empower them in the best that I can whether it be being with them when they go along to an interview. So if they do get lost I can quickly jump in and bring them back on track or whatever. Or if I feel they're not being heard fairly I can do something about that. But I will not sit there and give their whole case without that person there and try to deal with it. That's too easy because the people rely then—what happens when they're out somewhere and they've got no help around them? They've got to be able to train their brain to start thinking and know their capabilities. Everybody's got the same capabilities. *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18)

Another said:

> I think that I can honestly look them in the eye and try to have a resolution for them or give them some sort of…not directions. I wouldn't like to say that. But some sort of help to point them in the right direction I suppose, because I have been there. And because the—the work that I've done, I understand the agencies that are available and the members in the agencies that are available. Not all of it. But at least I can—I feel I can, you know, be on their level to some degree, you know, and I try not to be condescending and that sort of thing. *Andrew* (male, advocate, #20)

Advocates explore the relationships between power and education. They articulate, for example, that when they share knowledge of homelessness and the welfare sector with home-less people they help others to help themselves. They do this by considering themselves '*on the same level*' as home-less people and by relinquishing managerial control. This way of understanding education contrasts how 'all-knowing' homelessness experts (e.g., academics, service providers and governments) claim positions of power in Australian society. Advocates' education is based on the liberation and freedom of home-less people. In this pedagogy, home-less people are recognised as freethinking, independent and empowered.

When advocates volunteer they assert their autonomy and rights, which allows for self-determination. They express the potential to enlighten fellow volunteers and welfare providers about homelessness as a form of social disadvantage that requires compassion and care. When home-less people volunteer they engage with others as 'experts' and promote a meaningful dialogue that collectively challenges the root causes of oppression (Freire 1972). They demonstrate (to themselves and others) that people experiencing homelessness often possess the vocabulary, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to determine their own future (Ife, 2016).

In terms of collaboration, instead of taking peoples' hands and doing jobs for them (Yobbo) advocates relinquished and delegated control. They challenged social inequities, supported and advocated on behalf of home-less people, championed their interests and brought them 'back on track'. These approaches forged group membership and solidarity (Christens 2012b), and facilitated home-less peoples' empowerment. Advocates' collaborative approaches achieved greater social justice and community wellbeing. Collectively, advocates

new relationships dispel oppressive social myths, values and practices because advocates volunteer their power in ways that differ from how they experience receiving support (e.g., control, responsibility and surveillance). This divergence shows the transformative nature of the home-less volunteer and that change prevails when it comes from below.

This chapter and the study's findings conclude with the following extract from the study. Yobbo beautifully captures how home-less people are reframed as experts and power is redistributed to address inequality and disadvantage when people who are homeless take control of the loose and baggy volunteerism monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995):

> But as I said the survivors [of homelessness] are coming up and want to do something. They're the ones that can empower others into actually taking on responsibility and ways for their own ways of dealing with life because as I said homelessness attracts homeless. *Yobbo* (male, advocate, #18)

Summary

This chapter has shown that volunteering can challenge what it means to be 'homeless' in Australia and help some home-less people overcome some of the power inequalities they encounter in mainstream society and welfare contexts. This form of volunteering can also empower personally and relationally by legitimising 'homeless people' and giving them a voice and presence in the processes and outcomes of society. In addition, volunteering signals the personal resources, abilities, skills, knowledge and potential that home-less people possess to improve their own lives and determine their own future (Ife 2016). In coming to this conclusion, the chapter analysed how people who are homeless may need to cross and/or break away from physical and symbolic boundaries to escape the social, public and political expectations and assumptions that apply to 'homeless people'. The second section tracked the ways home-less peoples' volunteering confronted societal expectations. The third section explored the various ways advocates characterised their volunteering in community development values and characteristics, how volunteering amongst people experiencing homelessness can redistribute power, and how it can help to address inequality and social disadvantage. The final section demonstrated that advocates established control of the loose and baggy monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995) and used the social constructs that accompany volunteerism to their own advantage.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is the conclusion of my study of the roles of home-less persons, welfare users and volunteers. Its first section conveys the study's constructivist position and recognises the impact my shifting roles and identity exerted on the conduct and outcomes of the research involved. The second section outlines an overview of the major themes from the study, which are discussed with reference to my research aims and research question. To better understand how roles are understood and controlled, this study began by suggesting that the significance of participating in and undertaking research on home-less people and volunteers in Australia lay in its potential to listen and value *both* of their voices. The second section therefore evaluates that hypothesis about roles in relation to the study's approach to listening and valuing home-less peoples' contributions that is mentioned on page 10 of the introduction. The third section proceeds to discuss possible implications obtained from the participants' narratives. It also acknowledges the limitations of generalising this study's conclusions.

My Role as Student Researcher

Researchers undertaking social constructivism and qualitative studies must probe the minds of participants *and* themselves in order to understand the different ways that one may see the world (Cresswell 1998). Consequently, before discussing the extent to which the study succeeded or failed to respond to its research question, it is imperative to acknowledge the impact my shifting roles and identity bore on the study's conduct and outcome. I examine how I felt, thought, and behaved throughout the doctoral research journey as a way to reflexively acknowledge how participants may have responded to my social role and position. This section suggests that the research journey and process were equally (if not more) important than the research outcome.

When I began doctoral research in early 2013, I held limited experience conducting qualitative research. Although I had earned good grades and received positive supervision feedback throughout my Master's degree, I largely considered myself a community development worker rather than an academic. I favoured, for example, working side-by-side

with socially vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and saw limited value in spending time in an office writing essays exploring theories. Demonstrating my preference for 'field work', I took an elective as part of my Master's degree that allowed me to return to East Africa to work with local NGOs instead of completing a research thesis. After returning to Australia and completing the degree, I applied for a doctoral research program because I found its practical aspects appealing. I was also absorbed with questions about how settings of help challenge and/or reinforce roles of social privilege and disadvantage. Research on this topic promised to offer an enjoyable and life-changing opportunity to immerse myself in community development values and techniques. At the same time, my relative inexperience in academia meant I lacked the confidence to conduct research. Among doctoral students undertaking research on topics like cancer, science, water filtration and mental illness I felt like an imposter during candidature year.

Nevertheless, although imposter syndrome is a common condition among doctorial researchers (Bowman & Palmer 2017), my difficult journey towards research confidence was profoundly influenced by my interactions with research participants. I characterised academia through notions of power before I commenced doctoral research. My mental image of a good academic is someone of: social privilege, intelligence, secure employment, writing skills, theory knowledge and the ability to speak publicly. Throughout the research it was my interpretation that participants held similar assumptions of academics and that they responded to my role accordingly. For instance, during the initial stages of the in-depth interviews (usually the first 10 to 15 minutes) many participants made comments like: 'I don't know as much about this area as you' or 'I'm not smart, like you'. Some detailed their education, experience and knowledge of homelessness and volunteerism issues; others responded behaviourally by remaining quiet, avoiding eye contact or acting with more assertiveness than seemed characteristic. These reactions were almost always unprompted and went against the conversation grain. One participant stated halfway through a conversation about the upcoming weekend: 'I know a lot, you know?' Another claimed 'I'm not very clever' halfway through our conversation about her daughter's school. In each case, the participant appeared accept their less privileged social position or fight against a power they sensed was embedded in the academic's role; their experience that mirrored my own emotional struggle between role and identity.

I did not feel powerful throughout the in-depth interviews. In fact, I felt scared and uncertain about the role I was potentially embodying and was encumbered by my own expectations. But it was this fear and reluctance to perform the role of 'academic' that seemed to elicit each participant's open, honest and thoughtful responses. Interviews became forums where I could actively participate and express (where appropriate) my experiences, thoughts, vulnerabilities and fears. This dynamic challenged my own expectations of what it means to perform as an effective scholar. The willingness and ability to listen - to offer kindness, sympathy and compassion - reconfigured my understanding of scholarly social research. My existing skills and temperament supplemented (rather than displaced) my ability to complete a doctoral degree: my propensity to question and think beyond traditional roles and positions were the tools that ending up producing useful research. Academic rhetoric and theory certainly helped develop my understandings of power, homelessness, volunteerism and my interpersonal research, but they neither determined nor framed my encounters with participants.

Participants, meanwhile, appeared to respond to my role re-construction and the distance between 'academic' and 'interviewee' slowly dissipated as each in-depth interview progressed. Participants smiled, relaxed and sat back in their chairs as they realised our interactions were not pre-defined or controlled by social roles and positions. Homelessness and/or volunteerism - or other socially constructed roles and identities - did not define them or how they were treated. Chapter 6 highlighted this point in discussing the study's methodology, noting how Louise (female, volunteer, #9) said after an in-depth interview: 'I could feel your lack of judgment, particularly talking about something like Christianity...and it was good. I could just feel you were just allowing me to [speak]...so thanks. I appreciate that'. Another participant said, 'You know why this will work? Because you listen' Andrew (male, advocate, #20). And another expressed '[it's] good that you listen I love that, someone listening' *Bill* (male, advocate, #1). In these examples and others, participants communicated the empowering nature of being listened to and understood beyond socially constructed roles, and the stories narrated among us challenged and questioned roles and power relations. The in-depth interviews therefore built mutual understanding and trust whereby participants *and* me came to realise that social roles are constructs that can limit the ways in which people understand and interact with the world.

The insights into 'my role as student researcher' represent a moment where academic theory *and* personal experience collide. Creswell (2013), Lincoln and Guba (2013) discuss the potential of qualitative interviews and constructivism to challenge pre-conceived notions, I now understand that listening and responding to a story of empowerment enabled Louise, Andrew and Bill (and others) and I to hear new roles emerging from the in-depth interviews. We jointly re-constructed the role of volunteer, home-less person, welfare user *and* home-less volunteer and explored their meanings. This role rebuilding seemed to reconfigure the participant's self-image and sense of empowerment, which was an experience that mirrored my own.

Meanwhile, Ife, (2016), Kenny (2011) and Ledwith (2011), highlight the value of community development approaches (e.g., process, valuing lived experience and interrogating power etc.), which enabled me to understand the complex ways participants challenged roles and/or were reluctant to self-identify to them. These scholars therefore helped me to look for cracks in the narrative, cracks which participants and I could tease-out and agitate to develop new understandings of how people who are homeless and volunteers perceive their roles in terms of empowerment or disempowerment.

Revisiting Aim and Research Question

This section provides an overview of the major themes from the study and discusses them with reference to the research aim and research question. The research question was: 'How do people who are homeless and the volunteers who work with the home-less perceive their roles in terms of empowerment and disempowerment?'. Although the study found that participants held multiple identities and played numerous roles, previous chapters showed that four main roles emerged from the narrative: 'home- less person', 'volunteer', 'welfare-user' and 'home-less person who volunteers'. In accordance with the study's aim, each of the next four sub-sections discuss how the findings chapters drew upon participants lives, interactions and subjective experiences to explore how help settings, communities and broader society challenged, reinforced and/or negotiated these roles.

The Role of the Home-less Person

In terms of the research question, the findings of this study build on and extend the social, political and public constructions of 'homeless people'. For example, the first findings chapter revealed that advocates (as research participants who held first-hand experience of homelessness) perceived the role of the Australian home-less person in notions of disempowerment *and* empowerment. The chapter reported that rejection from family, lack of companionship from friends and low-quality or precarious relationships within the home-less community produced disempowering experiences of homelessness. Each type of disconnection was consonant with the literature and popular discourse, and each contributed to understanding a homelessness role that advocates perceived as disempowered. Nevertheless, the study also recognised that concentrating on home-less peoples' powerlessness acts as a form of control, manipulation and judgement that objectifies and further excludes home-less people from mainstream society (Snow and Anderson, 1993). Keeping the contextual nature of empowerment in mind (Cattaneo and Chapman 2010), the study also examined advocates' perceptions of empowerment through their senses of belonging in public spaces, personal safety and protection that accompanied homelessness. These findings countered conventional understandings of what it means (as a role) to be home-less in Australia. Furthermore, the findings emphasised the under-recognised fact that people experiencing homelessness are entirely capable of belonging in some circumstances and perceiving their roles as empowered.

The Welfare User

In the second findings chapter, advocates discussed their perceptions of welfare users' disempowerment. Three types of welfare emerged as central to advocates' views: accommodation, Centrelink and volunteerism. Accommodation was the first type of welfare advocates used to illustrate the welfare user's powerlessness. Here, the strict rules, rights and responsibilities that applied to accommodation users and the obligations advocates felt they had to meet to demonstrate their 'side of the welfare bargain' framed advocates' discussions of power. Based on these stories, the chapter interpreted that accommodation users' powerlessness may connect to mainstream assumptions of home-less people as irresponsible and carefree (Waldron 1991) and that stereotypical understandings of what it means to live

without a home may shape, influence and/or amplify the regulatory approaches advocates recognised in accommodation settings.

Advocates also felt that violence, danger and substance addiction characterised accommodation users. Unflattering portrayals insinuated the user's powerlessness because violence and danger implies breakdowns of social relations and the loss of feelings of security, stability, control and self-identity. Substance abuse, too, assumes an individual or group is unable or unwilling to exercise agency and self-determination. The chapter complicated this portrayal by finding that people experiencing homelessness were disproportionately and violently victimised in accommodation settings and that violence was used as a protection mechanism. The study discovered that drug and alcohol consumption were often a response to living in welfare accommodation rather than their cause.

The study's qualitative and constructivist approach allowed for examining the role of the accommodation user from perspectives other than those presented by advocates. For example, drawing on the research diary invited analysis of my experience entering the physical space of a rooming house in St Kilda Melbourne (the Gatwick). In this personal example, the rooming house deployed surveillance as a ritualised form of examination: it subjected me to force and it provided insight into what it meant to use accommodation welfare. The subsequent analysis drew upon Foucault's theories to demonstrate how police officers differentiated my social role from other more mainstream community members because I was physically located nearby the Gatwick. The experience defined my setting-based powerlessness and left me feeling objectified, unimportant, dangerous and untrustworthy. It also assisted my construction of meaning and illuminated participants' narratives of disempowerment as accommodation users.

Second, advocates identified Centrelink as another type of welfare that disempowered homeless people. Here, advocates connected the use of Centrelink with harmful and damaging mainstream myths, expectations and beliefs about people experiencing homelessness and welfare as lazy and untruthful. Advocates suggested that such mainstream expectations were socially justified and encouraged the unequal power relationships present in the service processes of Centrelink. The chapter established that welfare users—when they did not feel institutions like Centrelink believed in or trusted them—found it increasingly difficult to perform in ways that challenged expectations.

Volunteerism was the third type of welfare that advocates explored from users' perspectives. The study tracked four topics to interpret the role (e.g. Institutional Power, Infantilism, Need and Gratitude) and to illuminate the shadow lands (Oppenheimer 2008) within which some the loose and baggy volunteerism beast dwells (Kendall & Knapp 1995). The narrative suggested that people who rely on volunteerism services when experiencing homelessness may perceive volunteerism as a form of institutional power embedded within broader structures and social arrangements. Advocates often portrayed volunteerism as an omnipresent 'system' or 'entity' inside which volunteers operated and within which its users suffered. They also expressed that infantilism expectations and beliefs characterised their role when they engaged with volunteerism services. Advocates disclosed that volunteers used gratitude as a form of coercive power over home-less people. Such findings contradict the broad claims made in popular discourses and some literature that volunteering benefits everyone's lives.

In exploring the role of the welfare user, the chapter illustrated that the welfare system makes some home-less people feel disempowered even when they self-identify as empowered individuals. These accounts signalled the negative influences the welfare system could exert on some socially disadvantaged individuals and groups. While the findings were broadly consistent with empowerment theory (Christens 2012b; Zimmerman 1995; 2015) and homelessness literature (Coleman 2000; Parsell 2010; Robinson 2011; Snow & Anderson 1993), they contributed a different viewpoint to volunteerism literature, mainstream discourse and the societal belief that welfare and charity are solely empowering and life-improving sources of support (Dagge 2015; Emerson 2014; Kinbacher 2016; Kinniburgh 2015; Naughtin 2014; Panahi 2016; Paul 2017; Pidgeon 1998; Smith 2010)

The Role of the Volunteer

Whether due to their capacity to build inclusive and resilient communities, to contribute to communities and/or to make positive community differences, the research in this study found that there are elements of perceived and actual power in volunteerism. The power that accompanied a volunteering role stemmed from volunteers' beliefs that they benefited from social assumptions about volunteers as better people than mainstream community members. Such findings were generally consistent with the literature and popular discourse; however,

the study also identified a reluctance for volunteers to self-identify as volunteers. This reticence accompanied their scrutiny of the truthfulness of that role's characterisation as superior.

The study's positioning of volunteers' community-building, together with the personal and social benefits that accompanied volunteering, emphasised some of the struggles I encountered when interpreting the narrative. For example, the analysis of the narrative recognised that if I read volunteers' stories within a vacuum that ignored context, tone of voice and expression, then their views were relatively straightforward: the role of the volunteer is an empowered role characterised through notions of superiority. Yet that reading imperfectly captured how I experienced the data and recalled the in-depth interviews. The study therefore documented how volunteers stuttered, paused and verbally questioned mainstream assumptions of the figure of the volunteer's privilege and power. This insight yielded the understanding that volunteers may not always feel they embody the features socially expected of volunteers.

After further reflection of volunteers' narratives and existing literature, I noted that volunteers exhibited less insight into their roles and social positions than advocates did. Some volunteers seemed to take their social positions for granted and appeared to rarely reflect upon the roles they played in society. Others avoided self-identifying as a 'volunteer' and/or expressed a sense of guilt about volunteering. The study then conversed with Flood (2018) to analyse the data's absence. Here, volunteers' obliviousness and guilt may have connected to their social positions because people who are socially privileged are often hesitant to speak about or acknowledge power. Expressions of guilt may also have been employed as a mechanism to correct or attempt to ameliorate the unequal power relationships that volunteers experienced as 'volunteers'. Together, the research suggested that blindness towards ones' own roles of power may negatively influence socially disadvantaged people and perpetuate structures and process of oppression.

The Role of the Home-Less Person who Volunteers

One of the main concepts from earlier scholarship applied in this study is recognition: recognising peoples own abilities, skills and resources (Ife 2016). This concept has proven useful when describing how participants perceived their roles. Perhaps the study's most

noteworthy finding was that advocates also acted as volunteers; when they volunteered, the vibration between their roles as 'home-less person', 'volunteer' and 'home-less person who volunteers' exposed their latent resources, abilities, skills and knowledge. That activity helped them and me recognise that home-less people hold the potential to improve and determine their own lives and future. The study therefore identified the role of the home-less person who volunteers as an empowered role that that challenges the social constructs of homelessness.

This study has recognised that when people who are homeless volunteer they unshackle themselves from the damaging stigmas and stereotypes that accompany homelessness. The image that advocates painted of the home-less volunteer was simultaneously positive and detached from the poor, dirty, deviant and drug-using characterisations of home-less people (Petty 2017; Panahi 2016; Novaks 2015; Parsell & Parsell 2013; Zufferey 2013). Analysis also showed that volunteering was not always easy for advocates because they had to cross and/or break away from physical (e.g. counters and queues) and social boundaries in order to escape the social, public and political expectations and assumptions that framed their homelessness (e.g., choice as seen in Perusco, 2010). The interpreted these boundaries as instruments of physical and symbolic (social) power (Foucault 1991) that objectified volunteers and home-less people.

In terms of the research question, the findings of this study particularly build on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Resonant with Snow and Anderson's (1987) distancing techniques, this study found that volunteering amongst people experiencing homelessness was an effective way to detach from homelessness as a general social category and from specific groups of homeless individuals. Volunteering confronted the intricate hierarchies, traditions and interpersonal ties that supported the stereotyping, self-identification and categorization of home-less people in voluntary organisations. This study also found that volunteering could create effective counter discourses in relation to which advocates developed a better and more life-affirming role characterised by lived experiences of homelessness and volunteerism.

Community development is the foundation on which this study was built. The findings into the role of the person who volunteers *and* is home-less therefore complimented the formative

work of community development scholars like Jim Ife, Sue Kenny and Margaret Ledwith, and others. Recognising what it is like to be home-less and to rely on welfare, positivity, social inclusion and self-worth were all community development values and traits that empowered advocates to redistribute power and to address their experiences of inequality and social disadvantage.

Implications and Limitations

This section explores some practice and policy implications from the study. It accords with the study's objective (i.e. to determine what structural processes to implement or change to empower the disadvantaged and to develop volunteers' understandings of their own roles in a help setting) by appreciating the empowering nature of the role's (of the person who volunteers *and* is home-less) ability to challenge social, public and political expectations of 'homeless people'. As the opening discussion showed, the ways by which people perceive roles can speak to how one may challenge and/or reinforce positions of power. In addition, a lack of political energy and funding currently exists to reduce homelessness or change the ways home-less peoples' roles are understood. This section therefore illustrates how one can analyse participants' contributions for suitable practical and policy responses. The chapter then concludes with a consideration of the study's limitations.

Conceptions and perceptions of people who are homeless and volunteers are fluid over time. Chapters 2 and 7 observed that the ways society thinks about and responds to people who are homeless results from social constructions across hundreds of years. To improve their lives by seeing their roles as empowered, people who are homeless must therefore overcome deeply entrenched - yet historically contingent - beliefs and attitudes about who they are and what they are capable of. Individual action is overwhelmingly difficult because surviving and/or fitting into welfare environments encourages some home-less people to behave in ways that reinforce the very stigmas and stereotypes that socially disempower them. People experiencing homelessness may therefore benefit from engaging with the welfare system in ways that society does not expect. Here, in its discussion of the volunteer role, Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 established the historical and contemporary frames by which mainstream Australians view volunteers. Community and personal benefits and social ascriptions of angels, heroes, experts and saints frame the ways mainstream society understand the role of volunteers.

This study found that a home-less person who volunteers could improve her or his life by working *with* roles rather than fighting *against* them. Volunteering diminishes the negative impacts of homelessness and ascribes the positive characterisations that accompany volunteerism. That particular negotiation exhibits a process of liberation whereby the home-less person distances him or herself from mainstream and scholarly beliefs and attitudes. Interestingly, whether social constructs of volunteers are true or not may not matter (this study found that volunteers do not always self-identify with the positive characterisations of volunteers) because unchallenged words become truthful for the believing public. The significance overall is that when people who are homeless volunteer they are likely to improve their lives precisely because they are thought about socially and thus treated as empowered and legitimate members of society.

The research findings speak to the way Australian homelessness research and practice focus on improving home-less peoples' lives. Practitioners and scholars often attempt to change and/or influence the political and welfare system by advocating for more affordable housing and improved resources and support (e.g. financial advice, financial health, etc.). While such efforts are critical to improving the lives of people who are homeless, peoples' experiences of homelessness and seeking assistance may remain socially disempowering if disparaging and unfavourable notions continues to frame the way mainstream society *thinks* about people who are homeless and welfare consumers. Structures of oppression and disadvantage in Australia may perpetuate the difficulties that socially under-privileged people confront when attempting to perform powerful roles in society.

This study's findings advocated for practitioners and scholars to benefit home-less people by working *with* roles rather than fighting *against* them. For example, the review of literature and popular discourses found little mention of volunteering among people who are homeless in Australia. Instead, home-less people and volunteers are too often portrayed and discussed in terms of what makes them different. Such conversations trouble empowerment because they perpetuate and reinforce (often unintentionally) the stereotypes and stigmas that surround homelessness and volunteerism. This study argued that not-for-profit organisations and government agencies that cater towards people experiencing homelessness could

consequently break down damaging social constructs by encouraging and promoting volunteerism opportunities among home-less people.

This study tracked several relatively simple ways to achieve that outcome. Policies that require voluntary activities to include a percentage of people experiencing homelessness as volunteers could begin to balance the power inequalities people who are homeless encounter when seeking support. Statements within a policy like 'the organisation will actively promote, encourage and request that people who hold lived experiences of homelessness to volunteer in the organisation' would help to achieve this end. In addition, because action plans and strategies often drive the activities of many not-for-profit organisations and government agencies, including actions and strategic indicators that require the recruitment of home-less people into voluntary activities may also benefit people who are homeless.

Not-for-profit organisations that involve volunteers, this study suggested, could also undertake practical measures to encourage volunteering among home-less people. Signs and posters indicating an organisation's focus on recruiting home-less volunteers may help deteriorate challenges and barriers that home-less people encounter in welfare settings. Managers could invite clients directly to volunteer (e.g. face-to-face or through newsletters) and teach volunteers about the personal and social benefits sustained from home-less peoples' volunteering. Lockers could be made available for home-less clients to leave their belongings while they volunteer, and, where appropriate, bathroom facilities could be made accessible for their use. People who are homeless may also benefit if voluntary organisations took steps to remove and/or adjust the physical boundaries that separate volunteers from home-less clients. Based on analysis of the narratives, volunteers should be encouraged and in some cases actively required to get out from behind counters and interact as much as possible with clients. Removing counters and lines would create settings whereby volunteers could intermingle and interact freely. If volunteers and people who are homeless are encouraged to engage with each other in different and meaningful ways they may collectively challenge the root causes of oppression (Freire 1972).

This study took seriously the work of Freire (1972), whose insights helped its analysis grip the potential role that volunteers can play in reducing home-less peoples' social powerlessness. For example, while this study showed that volunteers sometimes felt guilty

about their volunteering because they did not always feel they embodied the socially expected features of their role, it also suggested that the simple act of welcoming home-less people into volunteering opportunities helped to challenge the many practices and processes that sustain home-less peoples' inequality. Ensuring that home-less volunteers are included in social gatherings within and outside of an organisation, actively demonstrating empathy and compassion, and trying to see and understand the world from home-less peoples' points of view promises to degrade power inequalities. In addition, volunteers can help people who are homeless to perceive their roles in terms of empowerment by working to challenge the stigmas and stereotypes that accompany volunteerism and homelessness. Here, education can operate as an instrument of liberation: volunteers inform friends, family and colleagues about the work home-less volunteers do to overcome social disadvantage and inform others of the knowledge and expertise home-less people often possess.

Chapter 2, Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 explored the social constructions of home-less people and welfare users: Drug addicts, lazy, excluded and violent, for example. Chapter 10 challenged these assumptions and showed that volunteering exposes home-less people's latent resources, abilities, skills and knowledge. These findings suggest that people who are homeless are absent or excluded from the construction process of their own roles. Indeed, the home-less participants were smart, brave, kind and passionate; they had been successful business people, parents and artists. Homelessness therefore did not define who they were or how they thought about themselves, and they were often capable of participating in mainstream society. Rarely mentioning these positive features, mainstream discourses are factually incorrect much of the time and are constructed by people who are already powerful. In addition, the 6% of home-less people who live in public spaces (Council of Homeless Persons, 2018) and who use homelessness welfare often reinforce these damaging stereotypes and stigmas because their personal circumstances make it difficult to behave or appear in ways that challenge expectations. This scenario creates a looping effect whereby the people who are homeless because of severe conditions (e.g., they are escaping family violence, are poor and/or are suffering from mental illness or disabilities) are socially assumed to be unable and/or unwilling to participate in society even when they are often entirely capable of doing so. Including and valuing home-less voices in mainstream processes and wider structures, institutions and social arrangements that affect them will help people who are

homeless and society more broadly perceive the home-less person's roles in terms of empowerment.

Another implication of the study stems from the nature of power in mainstream society. For instance, the way friends, colleagues and family have misunderstood or been oblivious to issues of power has often surprised me throughout the research journey. From these personal experiences as well as the volunteer narratives, I concluded that many mainstream community members hold limited understandings about the forms and types of social power. Indeed, the study found that socially privileged people often hesitate to speak about or acknowledge power, and they sometimes deny power or try to appease those who point out their power (Flood 2018). It also suggested that one is more likely to recognise and feel power if an individual or group is experiencing powerlessness. This scenario is troubling, however, because powerless voices are often ignored or dismissed; the powerful benefit from the assumption that they earn their power through personal characteristics (e.g., intellect, hard work and dedication) instead of social factors like race, gender and education. Academics, social commentators and practitioners can therefore challenge unequal power relationships by acknowledging the ways social factors have privileged them. The study found that these interventions must be expressed simply and accessibly because—although many academics write about power, and social commenters and practitioners advocate for the powerless—the discourses they generate often exclude the public through unnecessarily complicated language or by using power as a buzz word that holds limited meaning or relevance to people who have always held positions of power. Researchers, social commentators and practitioners may therefore help socially disadvantaged groups to perceive their roles as empowered by speaking about power simply (i.e. explaining the differences between coercive power and social power) and by attempting to relate power to peoples' everyday experiences (e.g. unpacking what it means to wear a tie).

The positive effect achievable from community development is the final implication this study notes. For example, community development is fundamentally about social change by increasing the power of the powerless and vulnerable (Kenny 2011). While organisations and government agencies often champion a commitment to community development practices in various forms, efforts are tokenistic and unsuccessful at times because they are layered over a framework of charity. That framework is premised on the idea that providing resources (e.g.,

money, food and housing) to socially disadvantaged people is an act of empowerment. While in some cases this basis holds true, it highlights the resources, abilities and skills of the people and institutions that provide resources while maintaining the taker's need, subserviency and inability for power. This dynamic inevitably reinforces and perpetuates power differences rather than challenging or shifting them. Organisations and government agencies must relinquish power by valuing the lived experiences of home-less people above traditional experts' and professionals' (e.g. academics and politicians) views to generate chances for people who are homeless to exhibit their abilities, skills and resources. Overall, the study suggested that when people who are homeless are provided opportunities to wrangle the loose and baggy volunteerism monster (Kendall & Knapp 1995), they control the beast for their own empowering purposes.

Despite the study's positive outcomes, there are limitations to its findings. First, as with much qualitative research, the ambiguities inherent in the interpretive lens (Atieno 2009) and behaviours may mean I interpreted the narrative and actions of participants differently from their intent. This limitation is common (even expected) in qualitative research (Atieno 2009), but it was mitigated as much as possible by the methodological approach outlined in Chapter 4. For example, my approach facilitated a process whereby I could explore any uncertainty I had about participants' intended meanings. That is, I could ask participants to expand or explain their thinking and/or behaviours during or after in-depth interviews. When Bill (male, advocate, #1) said during an interview 'I hate my family', I was able to ask follow up-questions to better understand what he intended by the word 'hate'. I asked, 'why do you hate them?' and 'tell me more about your brother', which encouraged Bill to expand and explain that he loved his family and his expressions of hate stemmed from feelings of rejection. In another example, I clarified two weeks after an in-depth interview what Louise (female, volunteer, #9) meant when she spoke about religion. I was able to note Louise's feedback in the research diary, which re-informed how I understood her comments. Although qualitative research is limited from perfectly capturing each participant's meanings, the methodological approach greatly reduced any misunderstandings.

This study's research question concerned empowerment and disempowerment and the findings about roles and power are generalisable to a wider population. Nevertheless, the second limitation of the study is that it cannot extrapolate the frequency of advocates'

volunteering to wider populations of home-less people and volunteers (Atieno 2009). The findings are based on a relatively small sample size drawn from a specific place, space and context and leaves several important questions unapproachable. Questions like ‘how common is volunteering among the home-less?’ and ‘is volunteering an effective pathway out of homelessness?’ may help policymakers, scholars and practitioners develop better interventions to reduce homelessness. Future research will benefit from long-term and/or quantitative approaches to investigating home-less peoples’ volunteering.

Finally, as I prepare to submit the PhD thesis in 2019 I find myself reflecting on what this study’s research participants are doing in the new year. This study took six years to complete, and the in-depth interviews were conducted towards the end of 2014 and start of 2015. Although I kept in contact with most participants for at least a year after the in-depth interviews, I am uncertain of most participants’ life circumstances now in 2019. I find myself wondering if any are still volunteering and/or experiencing homelessness. When I pass street corners or libraries where participants once slept, I discover myself looking for them; I hope they are doing well. While losing contact with research participants (particularly ones experiencing homelessness) is not uncommon (Parsell 2011), it remains personally unsettling. What gives me solace is the sense of identity I found from the study and the realisation that I discovered myself by looking into the faces of participants. I needed them. I may not know where they are physically located today, but their stories and wisdom will remain with me forever, guiding my practice and worldview. These factors can be improved in future research by taking a longitudinal approach to home-less and volunteer roles. Acknowledging the challenges of conducting such longitudinal study but following up with participants five years after a study might therefore yield helpful insights into how performing roles allows people to overcome and/or reinforce ones experiences of structural inequality and social disadvantage.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Information Sheet for Participants

Project title: Empowerment and engagement: Case studies in Victoria, Australia of people who are homeless and volunteers who are working in services for the homeless.

Researcher: Zach Greig. PhD student with Victoria University.

Purpose of the research:

The research project is being undertaken as part of my PhD. The purpose of the research is three fold. First, to understand how empowerment is experienced in people who are homeless. Second, to understand how empowerment is experienced in volunteers working in services for the homeless, and third, to determine if there is a relationship between the two. To do this, people who are homeless and volunteers will be interviewed and asked to tell stories about their lives. It is important to know the empowering relationship between people who are homeless and volunteers because, this way, policies and services can be influenced to ensure mutual benefit for both.

Your role in the research:

If you agree to participate there will be a one off interview. Interviews will go for approximately one hour, however, they can go for as long or as short as your wish. You will be asked to tell stories about your life, your dreams, your aspirations and challenges, and you will be encouraged to take these stories in any direction you wish. With your permission, a tape recorder will be used to record the interviews.

If you find telling stories about your life and homelessness as upsetting, then there may be some risk in participating in this research.

Interviews will be conducted at the Community Centre or a local coffee shop. At the completion of the interview, there will be an opportunity for you to provide feedback or discuss any questions or concerns you may have. If you feel in need of support after the interview, support options will be discussed with you. A week following the interviews, you will be provided with a written summary of what was discussed, and you will have an opportunity to expand or clarify anything you may have said, or remove yourself completely from the research project with no adverse consequences.

Everything you say in the interviews will be strictly confidential, however, it is possible others may see us speaking and conclude you are participating in my research, this should be considered before you agree to participate.

The researcher:

Zach Greig is a PhD student who has completed a Masters in Community Development and worked as a volunteer internationally and here in Australia. Zach is particularly interested in hearing stories about peoples lives. You are welcome to contact Zach directly if you have any questions about the research, or your participation in it.

Voluntary participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary and if you agree to participate you may refuse to

answer any question. You may also withdraw from the study at any time without reason. If you do choose to withdraw any information you have provided with be destroyed.

Confidentiality and privacy:

All information provided by you in relation to the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your name or any identifiable information will not be included in the analysis, or in any written or verbal report or publication on the research. All data will be stored in password protected electronic files or in a securely locked area. The researcher is the only person who will have access to this information.

Benefits of the research:

There will be no short term benefit for you to agree to participate in this study. The research is concerned with learning if there is a relationship between how people who are homeless and volunteers are empowered. The research results will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals with the hope to improve the practice of volunteer organisations and improve policy.

Ethical review:

This study has been cleared by Victoria Universities Ethics committee. If you have any questions you are free to contact Zach directly on 0438 650 569. If you have any complaints regarding this research and you do not feel comfortable speaking to the student researcher, you may contact Victoria Universities Ethics committee directly on (03) 9919 4058 or one of the research supervisor below.

Thank you for your participation

Zach Greig	Prof Michael Hamel-Green	Dr Siewfang Law
PhD Student	Victoria University	Victoria University
PH: 0438 650 569	PH: 03 9919 5222	PH: 03 9919 5224
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APPENDIX 2 – STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION INFORMATION FORM

Information Sheet.

Project title: Empowerment and engagement: Case studies in Victoria, Australia of people who are homeless and volunteers who are working in services for the homeless.

Researcher: Zach Greig. PhD student with Victoria University.

Supervisors: Professor Michael Hamel-Green & Dr. Siewfang Law

Purpose of the research:

The research project is being undertaken as part of my PhD. The purpose of the research is three fold. First, to understand how empowerment is constructed in people who are homeless. Second, to understand how empowerment is constructed in volunteers working in services for the homeless, and third, to determine if there is a relationship between the two. To do this, people who are homeless and volunteers will be interviewed and asked to tell stories about their lives. It is important to know the empowering relationship between people who are homeless and volunteers because, this way, policies and services can be influenced to ensure mutual benefit for both.

Your role in the research:

Written support to contact volunteers and clients of your organisation is required before research can begin. The researcher will collaborate with you regarding who to approach and only people who you feel are appropriate will be contacted. If a client or volunteer agrees to participate, there will be a one-off interview. Interviews will go for an hour and participants will be asked to tell stories about their lives. What is discussed in the interviews is confidential.

The interview will be conducted by the researcher during working hours, preferably, interviews with people who are homeless will be conducted on site, however, if the participant wishes a local coffee shop will be used, interviews with volunteers will be conducted at a location convenient to them.

The researcher:

Zach Greig is a PhD student who has completed a Masters in Community Development and worked as a volunteer for people who are homeless for a number of years.

Voluntary participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participant, your organisation, and participants, may withdraw from the study at any time without reason. If you do choose to withdraw your support from the study, any information provided will be destroyed.

Confidentiality and privacy:

All information provided by you in relation to the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your organisations name or any identifiable information will not be included in the analysis, or in any written or verbal report or publication on the research. For participants themselves, pseudonyms will replace real names and identifiable information will be

removed from the analysis. All data will be stored in password protected electronic files or in a securely locked area. The researcher is the only person who will have access to this information.

Benefits of the research:

There will be no short term benefit for your organisation to agree to participate in this study. The research is concerned with learning if there is a relationship between how people who are homeless and volunteers are empowered. The research results will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals with the hope to improve the practice of volunteer organisations and improve policy. These report, and final dissertation will be made available to your organisation.

Ethical review:

This research project will be considered by Victoria Universities Ethics committee. Once your approval is on file I will liaise with you further regarding who you feel may like to participate in the study. The research is supervised by Professor Michael Hamel-Green and Dr Siewfang Law of Victoria University.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask either myself or my supervisors.

Contact Information:

Zach Greig	Prof Michael Hamel-Green	Dr Siewfang Law
PhD Student	Victoria University	Victoria University
PH: 0438 650 569	PH: 03 9919 5222	PH: 03 9919 5224
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APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:
We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into empowerment. The title of the study is: Empowerment and engagement: Case studies in Victoria, Australia of people who are homeless and volunteers who are working in services for the homeless.

The purpose of the research is three fold. First, to understand how empowerment is experienced in people who are homeless. Second, to understand how empowerment is experienced in volunteers working in services for the homeless, and third, to determine if there is a relationship between the two.

You will be interviewed for approximately one hour, or as long or short as you wish, you will be asked to tell stories about your life. Although your identity is confidential, it is possible others may see us speaking and conclude your are participating in this study. Your agreement to participate should take this into consideration.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, ...

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: Empowerment and engagement being conducted at Victoria University by student researcher Zach Greig.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Zach Greig

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- One hour narrative interview where you will be asked to tell stories about your life, your dreams, aspirations and challenges. If you feel telling stories about your life may be upsetting your agreement to participate in this study should take this into consideration.
- Interviews will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher
Prof Michael Hamel-Green PH: 03 9919 5222

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.