

# *No Exit: Violence, Gender and the Streets*

SUZANNE E. HATTY,  
NANETTE J DAVIS &  
STUART BURKE

---

*Living on the street is like living on the edge . . .  
There's no place for you.*  
(Homeless young person, Sydney, 1994)

Homelessness is a politicised issue in Australia today. Recently, a background paper released by the Labor Party of New South Wales declared: 'homelessness, particularly among the young, continues to be an unresolved tragedy and a source of embarrassment for politicians and society as a whole' (Labor Party NSW 1993, p. 8). At present, a Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee is inquiring into the problem of youth homelessness in Australia. This follows on the heels of the national inquiry conducted in 1989 by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Current controversy surrounding the issue of youth homelessness focuses upon the large numbers of state wards living on the streets of our capital cities, especially Sydney. A recent survey by the Youth Accommodation Association (1994) claimed that there has been a 64 per cent increase in the number of state wards seeking crisis accommodation from 1992 to 1994. Only slightly more than half of these young people could be accommodated. Another issue generating controversy is the apparent ease with which young people can obtain the Federal Government's Homeless Youth Allowance. This allowance is available to young people aged 13 years or more who claim that they have been subjected to abuse or violence in their families of origin, or who claim that they can no longer endure the domestic disharmony of the home environment. This allowance has been available since 1986, but is now coming under increasing scrutiny. With the shift in emphasis in the child welfare system away from concern over 'moral danger' and toward the promotion of law and order solutions to the current 'youth crisis', there is a perceptible hardening of attitudes towards homeless

youth. A prominent media commentator recently announced: 'Kids on the streets are very often there because they choose to be there, and *because the Government funds them to be there, with our money.*' (John Laws, *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 July 1994; our emphasis). Another recent newspaper article stated, with reference to the approximately 10 500 young people receiving the Young Homeless Allowance in Australia (Kate Legge, *The Weekend Australian*, 13 August 1994):

*They are a small but visible group, alienated from their families and the broader community; flotsam swept up in social, political and legal currents that affect all parents and adolescents to some degree.*

Hence, youth homelessness in Australia today is embroiled in debates about children's rights, parental and state responsibility, and rational choice models of crime and deviance. All of this is occurring in the context of claims of a trebling in the number of homeless young people on the streets of Sydney during the last year (Streetsmart Youth Centre, Wesley Mission, Sydney, cited in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 15 May 1994).

Very little of this public discourse on youth homelessness is informed by a comprehensive knowledge of the backgrounds and experiences of the young people who live on the city's streets. This paper will attempt to fill this vacuum in public and professional knowledge. In particular, we will analyse the link between gender and homelessness. This often-neglected relationship is of deep significance to an examination of victimisation of young people in society. It also reveals a great deal about how we perceive the nexus between gender and public (and private) space. For homeless women challenge the stereotypes surrounding domesticity. By their very existence, homeless women also challenge the social construction of the family as a site of nurturing and caring in which women figure prominently. As Golden (1992) notes:

*[Fe]male homelessness means something different to society than does male homelessness: whereas a homeless man can be assigned comfortably to a variety of categories (hobo, tramp, bum, vagrant), and be relatively easily dismissed, a homeless woman creates discomfort because she cannot be categorised . . . (p. 5).*

*The homeless woman is far more anomalous than the homeless man, for since there is no category to which she can be said to belong, she is indefinable; she has no recognised status (p. 217).*

## **The Definition and Scope of Youth Homelessness**

*What does it mean to be homeless?* The recent National Inquiry into Homeless Children convened by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission defined homelessness as 'a lifestyle which includes insecurity and transiency of shelter'. Further, the Commission declared that homelessness 'is not confined to a lack of shelter . . . [but] signifies a state of detachment from family and a

vulnerability to dangers including exploitation and abuse broadly defined, from which the family normally protects a child'.

Worldwide, there are approximately 100 million children who live on city streets without care or shelter (World Health Organization 1993). The United States has about 1.5 million homeless and runaway children, 16 per cent of whom have run away more than five times (Janus 1987; White 1989; Regoli & Hewitt 1991). Los Angeles county alone has over 10 000 young people living on its streets. Canadian cities have 150 000 homeless youth, many of whom are at high risk of contracting HIV (Radford, King & Warren 1990). Indeed, chronically homeless youth may number as many as 500 000 in the United States (Baggett & Donough 1988). A significant proportion of these youth are juvenile prostitutes who are among the growing population of covert homeless not included in statistical reports (Sereny 1985). These young people live a precarious existence, exposed to the risk of violence or harm inflicted by boyfriends, dealers or others who wield power (King 1991).

In Australia, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1989) estimated that between 50 000 and 70 000 youth were homeless, or in danger of becoming homeless. The Youth Refuge Association estimated in 1991 that in New South Wales there were between 20 000 to 25 000 young people, aged 12-18 years seeking accommodation because of homelessness (Coffey & Waderton 1991). This number does not include those living in squats, sleeping outdoors, living in temporary accommodation and the like. Covert homelessness is similarly patterned in both Australia and the United States, where the practice of short-term live-in relationships with boyfriends or older men may account for the gross under-representation of young women in official counts (King 1991).

## **Victimisation and Homelessness**

*Why are so many children living on the streets of the world's cities?* In order to answer this question, we need to address issues of power, violence and social control. A theory of structured violence which underscores the institutional nature of many of the 'hidden and private injuries' directed at women and children in society (Graycar & Morgan 1989; Hatty 1992a, 1992b, 1993) is relevant to our understanding of youth homelessness. This theoretical framework is helpful in making sense of the type and nature of harms inflicted upon women and children in society. It argues that a pervasive imbalance of power between men and women in contemporary society legitimates the application of violent forms of control, and perpetuates both inequality and suffering among the powerless (Hatty, Davis & Burke, in press).

The theory of structured violence suggests that women and children may be regarded as paradigmatic victims of male violence (*see* Davis & Hatty 1990), in that their social position renders them vulnerable to assault. Further, this violence against women and children is often employed as a means of social control. This concurs with the position adopted by Campbell and Muncer (1987) which suggests that violent male behaviour is a goal-directed or instrumental activity. According to these authors, violence is both a gendered and a socially-

transmitted behaviour: male violence is directed at influencing the reactions and behaviours of others; women's violence is, in general, expressive.

In contrast to expressive theories of violence, in which violence is seen as a manifestation of stress, arousal or affect, instrumental theories focus on the behavioural rewards of the violence. These rewards generally take the form of enhanced status, coercive control, obedience, and the gaining of approval or material resources. Violence, for males, is outcome-oriented; its objectives are to improve self-esteem and to establish control over others. Our social understandings of violence are shaped by gender, and engagement in violence carries different meanings for men and for women (Campbell 1993; Campbell & Muncer 1994).

We argue in this paper that the sheer frequency and volume of violence directed at children in the family, and their perceived need to escape in order to survive, is a critical factor in producing youth homelessness. However, as we will show, the attempt to escape the culture of violence—its very embeddedness in the lives of young people—is thwarted by the hazards of street life. For homeless youth, whether living without security or shelter, the search for a safe haven is often futile.

### **Homeless Young Women: A Shelter Study**

To illustrate the larger processes that propel youth out of the home and onto the street, we present a case study of 105 young women interviewed in Sydney, Australia in 1992. Fifty per cent of these young women were living in a shelter at the time of the interview; the average number of shelters utilised by this group was eleven. Excluding nine young women who had stayed in 50 or more shelters, there was an average of 5.6 different shelters used by the remaining 71 girls. The age range for the shelter sample was 13 to 21 years. A typical respondent was between 14 to 18 years. Additional interviews were undertaken with chronically homeless women over the age of 21 years, and young women living in juvenile detention centres in Sydney. Fourteen young women were living in such centres at the time of the interview. Most of the respondents in the total sample were Anglo-Celtic in origin, and the majority were from metropolitan centres (Sydney or Melbourne). Twenty-two young women were born overseas and had migrated with their parents as children to Australia. Only nine of the young women were Aboriginal.

The average age for first living on the streets was between 12 and 15 years, but some young women were homeless at much younger ages, for instance, one was six and the other nine when first on the streets. About 62 per cent of the young women had been on the street for six months or more. Over 40 per cent reported they have been on the streets for over one year, usually moving from one location to another.

### **Violent Beginnings**

Violence is endemic to the lives of runaway and homeless youth. Frequently, the violence has been a staple feature of the family experiences of these youth

(Davis, Hatty & Burke 1995). The homeless young women interviewed in the inner-Sydney study reported extraordinarily high levels of violence in their families of origin. Approximately 65 per cent of the young women stated that they had been physically abused within the family, about 43 per cent by their father. Half of the girls interviewed said that they had been sexually abused, the majority by fathers or stepfathers. Over 80 per cent of the young women claimed that they had been emotionally abused by family members. The comments of the young women illustrate the severity of the violence and the impact it had upon them:

*I'd get bashed or locked in my room if I did something wrong. I was always afraid to talk to my parents in case I got flogged.*

Another young woman said:

*I'd hide under the bed 'cause I was afraid Dad would bash me. He's dead now. When he died, it was as if the whole world lifted. He can't hurt me any more.*

Other young women were aware of the negative consequences of sexual abuse. Some of the young woman in inner-Sydney commented on the role that this abuse had played in shaping their lives.

*I had no privacy. I didn't belong to me. My uncle would come on to me all the time. I had to get out.*

The research undertaken, to date, clearly indicates that child physical or sexual abuse engenders particular effects. It injures the child's sense of self, and gravely interferes with the adaptive processes of individuation and differentiation from others. Interference with these processes is implicated in the development of such psychological difficulties as boundary inadequacy in the abused individual. Boundary inadequacy has been defined as 'a pattern of ambiguous, overly rigid, or invasive boundaries related to physical or psychological space' (Coglan 1987, p. 75). The creation of boundary inadequacy within the individual involves behaviours which confirm and perpetuate existing power imbalances in society.

Boundary inadequacy, particularly boundary invasion, has a catastrophic impact upon the fragile, developing self. As female children are more vulnerable to abuse, and possess less social power, they are less likely to successfully defend themselves against the effect of the trauma. As Evans and Schaefer maintain (1987, p. 147):

*When boundaries are violated by emotional, physical or sexual intrusions it is as if someone rips open the victim, reaches in and 'steals their soul'. In later relationships, they often experience a feeling of being 'swallowed up' and losing their sense of self for they have learned that closeness/touch 'takes away' rather than 'gives' to them. The struggle to protect themselves from intimacy feels like a life/death struggle for survival.*

Individuals subjected to child abuse may respond to this experience in a variety of ways, for example, children and adolescents may engage in behaviours

which have the effect of removing them from the abusive situation, either psychologically or physically. International research studies show that girls, victimised in the home, will often respond to this abuse by running away. Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1993) reviewed several studies which found that between two-thirds and three-quarters of runaway girls in shelters or juvenile detention facilities had been sexually abused. In addition, the percentage of girls who had been physically abused was high. The authors concluded that there was a strong positive correlation between the girls' victimisation and their runaway behaviours. Hence, it should not surprise us that homeless girls and young women frequently report physical and sexual abuse in their families of origin. Nor should it surprise us that these young women believe that fleeing from the abusive situation is the only viable option available to them. Consequently, due to the lack of resources to assist young women running from violent homes, these young people often find themselves living on the street.

## Hitting the Streets

A major hurdle in coping with street life is gaining an understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Being tough, being independent, minding your own business, never reporting crime or violence to the police, keeping your personal belongings with you at all times, being loyal to mates, and above all being ever-vigilant are standard approaches to the challenges of the streets. The adoption of this disposition is essential to the survival of those youth who find themselves on the streets. One young woman told us:

*You should always be on the alert to things happening around you. Be cool when the police come around. Just keep your mouth shut. Like if you know something's illegal you don't go to the police or nothing.*

Often behavioural norms become obvious to the newcomer only when they are violated. Sanctions usually follow an infraction such as turning someone in to the police, stealing dope, crossing a 'streetie' in any way. Punishment of a novice may be unexpected, swift, and, occasionally, lethal. Two Sydney girls stated:

*Don't lag, don't tell anyone nothing. Don't spread around who's selling drugs, who's doing business. Don't tell police kids' nick-names. Just keep your mouth shut and your eyes open.*

*The less you know the safer you are. Watch your own back, and never tell anyone anything.*

For homeless girls living 'on the street' the breaking of these codes of conduct means an end to the 'adventure' of street life, and an increased awareness of the imminence of violence. This homeless girl spoke out about what happens to those who transgress:

*They get punched out. They're not around for long, they just leave the streets or move to somewhere else. They can't handle it. Sometimes they're hurt real bad.*

Recourse to violence and other criminal behaviour may become essential elements of street survival (Crago 1991). Thus, routine violence may be viewed as part of the experience of youth who are living on the street, and may involve peers, acquaintances, police and strangers (Alder & Sandor 1990; Alder 1991; Davis 1993). Young people may escape violent homes only to encounter further violence on the streets (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1989). Ian O'Connor (1989) reported to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Committee that his research findings 'were replete with descriptions of being attacked in all manner of situations and of the ever present danger of violence.'

The World Health Organization (WHO) argues that the street lifestyle not only exposes street children and adolescents to multiple forms of victimisation, but that street behaviours involving drug abuse, prostitution and property crime may jeopardise the youth's return to mainstream society. The intensive interviews with 51 homeless youth under the age of 18 conducted by Christine Alder (1991) in Melbourne revealed that almost two-thirds had been physically assaulted and half had been sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months. Distinct gender differences in victimisation were uncovered: violence between the males generally involved fights, whilst the girls' experience of violence often involved sexual assault (*see also* Hagen 1987). Perpetrators of this violence were overwhelmingly male, including the police attackers reported by 47 per cent of the females and 58 per cent of the males (Alder & Sandor 1990; Alder 1991). One of the most disturbing findings of Alder's research was the extent to which these young people suffered their violent victimisation in silence without seeking assistance or reporting the episodes to authorities.

Life on the streets is a hazardous experience for young homeless people. Perhaps the *most* significant danger is the constant exposure to and involvement in violence. Only 23 per cent of our sample had not witnessed violence; over half had witnessed 10 or more violent acts. These were shootings, knifings, fights, beatings, rapes, muggings, death by overdose, and even a homicide. This street violence can come from numerous sources. Other homeless youth may prey on newcomers, clients may harass and assault young sex workers on the street, and drug dealers and others who operate within public space may intimidate and harass young people. The following comments from the young women in inner-Sydney indicate the extent of the problem:

*I was crashing in a house and these guys broke in. The girl that said I could stay was dealing. The guys were raiding the joint for drugs.*

*The most dangerous situation for me? Going to sleep at night, and not knowing if I'll wake up the next morning.*

*It's dangerous on the streets. I don't care about anyone on the street—you worry about food, showers, clothes, everything.*

Our interviews with homeless girls in Sydney showed that the most pervasive threat posed by living on the street is violence. As noted above, the young women described witnessing hundreds of violent episodes 'from street gang fights to fights between prostitutes to police beating kids to get them to

break off fights'. Brawls were commonplace and could erupt when one homeless youth took something from another, or when a young person was known to be associated with a perpetrator.

*A girl came up to me and punched me in the face. Then a friend did the same thing. Another time my boyfriend ripped someone off, and we both got bashed up.*

Echoing the pattern of repeated violence, one young woman said:

*Yes, I was forced to have sex. Heaps of times. Before the streets it was violent sex and bondage with my father.*

Although many of these young women were more likely to be victims than to be offenders, contact with police, court, and detention were fairly common occurrences. Seventy-eight per cent of the young women we interviewed had been involved with the police, for a variety of reasons, for example, arrests for status offences or criminal acts, and for welfare/protection reasons. A significant number of girls (34 per cent) experienced police violence (bashings), a few on repeated occasions, especially if they were Aboriginal or members of other minority groups, or if they failed to behave in conventionally feminine ways (eg be polite, deferential, softly spoken, and so on). Forty-two per cent had been held in custody or detention. Most of the girls reported that they had avoided contact with the police because the police response could be unpredictable. The young women were as likely to be arrested as helped, especially since many of them had been involved in episodes of street crime and violence.

Police harassment and brutality were frequently cited as major reasons why 'you can never trust the police'. A 16-year-old who reported having 30-40 police contacts talked about her experience of police violence, including the 'phone book' technique, which reveals no external signs of injury, but can be extremely painful.

*The police bashed me heaps of times. Once they flushed my head down the toilet. They've kicked me in the stomach and threatened me with the phone book until I gave them what they wanted.*

Another young woman said:

*Police bashed me four or five times. They bash the shit out of you. Keep you in cells. They put telephone books on you and then bash you so it doesn't leave bruises.*

Young people may be at risk of police intervention simply because they spend significant periods of time in public places. Young people who occupy the streets, parks and commercial areas such as shopping malls, may be targets for police intervention. These public places may be construed within law enforcement discourse as sites of danger requiring strict surveillance to prevent crime and violence. The police mandate of maintaining public order, and the popular stereotype of young people in groups as potential or active criminals, converge to produce police practices which often violate the civil rights of these young people. Police may engage in random 'name checking', or officers may

question and detain young people without legal justification. Watkins et al. (1992, p. 31) describe such an incident:

*[Police] take them out to the car park, split them up, ask them to stay there, and walk around and interview each one without arresting them, without giving them a reason.*

Such techniques of harassment and intimidation can lead to confrontational challenges to the authority of the police. Once a young person demonstrates an apparently disrespectful attitude, the police are more likely to move beyond a simple caution. In a recent survey of the relationship between young people and the police in Australia, it was found that police decision-making was affected by these extra-legal factors. Almost all police officers interviewed (89 per cent) claimed that a young person's 'attitude' was an important determinant of the decision to arrest (Alder, O'Connor, Warner & White 1992). Consequently, structural factors such as homelessness, poverty, or membership of a youth subculture or a youth gang, may predispose a young person to police intervention, and to stigmatising modes of informal or formal social control.

## **Living on the Edge**

Taking up illegal or deviant activities appears to be an integral part of a 'street lifestyle'. Deviance and crime may be directly related to survival mechanisms learned on the street. Alternatively, the young person may have a prior history of conflict with the law. Indeed, there are two possible interpretations of the relationship between crime, violence and street life: deviance and illegal behaviour may be an outcome of running away and subsequent homelessness; or on the contrary, homelessness may be an outcome of previous deviant and illegal involvement. We can examine our data for an understanding of these two alternatives.

First, most of the young women we interviewed had experienced some deviant involvement prior to leaving home and living on the streets. For instance, before their movement into street life, over half had engaged in shoplifting, 15 per cent had sold drugs, 35 per cent had stolen property worth \$50 or more, and 19 per cent had committed forgery. This pattern of crime and deviance was especially pronounced among the older homeless girls, and those girls sampled while in the detention centre.

Second, after moving to the streets, this pattern of illegal behaviour was exacerbated for many of the young women. Sixty-eight per cent admitted to shoplifting, 37 per cent to regularly selling drugs, 56 per cent to being involved in theft, almost 27 per cent to having committed forgery, 70 per cent to fighting, and most notably, almost 40 per cent claimed to have used weapons. Whilst only a small proportion of the young women we interviewed stated that they were currently involved in sex work, about one out of three girls indicated that they had been involved in prostitution for money while on the streets, and nearly the same number had exchanged sex for drugs. This pattern contrasts with less street-wise girls who exchanged sex for food or shelter. Regardless of the specific motivation for selling sex, homeless young women involved in

prostitution obviously constitute a high-risk group for health problems, especially HIV and the effects of drug abuse. As street prostitution is one of the most dangerous occupations (Hatty 1989), this activity places these young women at serious risk of physical and psychological injury, and even death.

Clearly, it is possible that there are two distinct modes of street adaptation. On the one hand, some young women may become involved in crime and deviance, but never or rarely in prostitution. These young women may seek protection from an older male, and become part of a crime-dependent street culture. On the other hand, there are some young women who have rarely been involved in serious crime, but instead use their bodies as 'capital' to negotiate street life. Although only 2 per cent of the sample identified themselves as 'sex workers', girls who worked on a regular basis were apt to, first, not draw on the Homeless Youth Allowance; second, live primarily on their prostitution earnings; and, third, have chronic problems with illicit drugs.

Indeed, national statistics on drug abuse in Australia show that homeless youth are particularly susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse, especially such illicit drugs as marijuana, barbiturates, cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin, inhalants, and ecstasy. Additionally, widespread use of tranquillisers (78 per cent for 'street kids' versus 9 per cent for other youth) has been reported, as well as a very high incidence of self-injected drugs. The National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NCADA 1992) survey on 'street kids' emphasised that:

- Acceptance of drug use was much greater among 'street kids'; for example the average number of drugs accepted by 'street kids' was 6.9 compared with 2.7 for the 'teenage' group and 2.1 for the total random sample;
- A majority of the young people interviewed had also tried many other drugs; for instance 'street kids' had tried an average of 9.8 different drugs compared with 2.9 for 'teenage' and 3.4 for the total random samples;
- Sixty-two per cent of the 'street kids' had self-injected drugs; and
- The preferred drug among the 'street kids' was heroin (54 per cent) followed by alcohol (17 per cent) and amphetamines (11 per cent).

This interconnection between 'street kids', illicit drugs and street crime has been borne out by research conducted by Inciardi, Horowitz and Pottieger (1993) in Miami, Florida. The authors found that the greater the involvement in dealing in crack cocaine, the greater the involvement in violent crime. In terms of absolute numbers, the 254 youths (of a total of 611 sampled) were responsible for a total of 223 439 criminal offences during the 12 months prior to the interview, including drug sales (61.1 per cent), property offences (23.3 per cent), and major felonies (robberies, assaults, burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts) (4.2 per cent) (Inciardi, Horowitz & Pottieger 1993). The Miami crack trade and its intimate link with serious crime may be an exceptional case; our research shows the young female street population in Sydney to be less affected by deep

involvement in a criminal lifestyle. Instead, most engage in episodic crimes, especially drug sales, prostitution and property crimes that sustain their life, as well as their lifestyle (*see also* Hirst 1989; Robertson 1991; Davis 1992; Neil & Fopp 1992).

This is not to negate the structural and situational features of homelessness that contribute to high criminality among youth. McCarthy and Hagan's (1991) self-report study of 390 homeless youth in Toronto, Canada, found that although a sizeable proportion of those surveyed participated in a number of illegal activities (most of them minor delinquencies) before leaving home, a significantly higher proportion of adolescents were involved in more serious criminal activities since leaving home. Levels of crime showed fairly serious increases for older street youth (16 years and up) and for those whose homelessness lasted more than a year. McCarthy and Hagan believe that street life is inherently 'criminogenic' in that it provides both opportunities for criminal offending as well as the necessity to commit criminal acts in order to survive. McCarthy and Hagan (1991, p. 408) conclude that 'there is compelling evidence of an interactive relationship between illegal activity and the length of the current homeless episode'. Hence, in general, the longer the time on the street, the greater the involvement in crime.

The escalation in crime after a certain period of time on the street supports the assertion that crime may be adopted as a 'conditional survival strategy' for coping with the economic and social strains which characterise homelessness (Cohen & Machalek 1988; *see also* Stelf 1987; and Wright 1989). We need to bear in mind, however, that an overemphasis on criminality and drug abuse among these youth tends to draw attention away from the violent, exploitative and neglectful family and social conditions that precede and surround the criminal behaviour.

## **Gender and Risk**

The street can be a harsh and unrelenting place. Street youth often suffer from serious health problems due to a poor diet, lack of regular hygiene and unsafe sexual and drug using practices. As we have seen, homeless young people may be exposed to harassment and violence from a number of sources. Young women on the street are particularly vulnerable in the face of these risks. Young homeless women in inner-Sydney referred to the gender-related risks attached to street life. Some of the responses included:

*It's much worse being a girl on the street. People on the streets have a problem with girls. Guys are more dominant and can take care of themselves. Everyone thinks you're a bloody nothing or a slut.*

*It's much worse being a girl on the street. Guys think we can be used. A friend of mine was raped last night.*

*It's much worse for girls. Everyone thinks we're easy to beat up or rape. People think we're shit.*

The case of Jasmin Lodge, a homeless young runaway of 17 years, who was killed in February 1993 whilst working as a prostitute on the streets of inner-Sydney, testifies to the risks of the street. Jasmin was a former state ward (until she reached 16 years) who had been placed in more than twelve refuges and foster homes stretching from the Central Coast to Sydney. Jasmin had also been placed in two detention centres for short periods after convictions for petty crimes.

Psychological reports prepared for the New South Wales Department of Community Services in 1989 indicated that Jasmin was suffering severe psychological trauma as a result of family problems. The reports stated that she was very anxious, impulsive and unable to protect herself.

At the time of her death, Jasmin had been working the street corners of Darlinghurst in inner-Sydney for about two and a half years. She had invented a new identity for herself, adopting the street-name of Cindi. Typically, she worked from 9.30 in the evening until morning, earning the \$200 a day she needed to support her heroin habit. Jasmin was also supplying money for her boyfriend to purchase heroin. This boyfriend was often violent toward Jasmin, leaving her injured and distressed.

Jasmin's working practices became more high-risk over time. She began to steal client's wallets, and always carried a weapon. Her killer was convicted of manslaughter in March 1994, after alleging that Jasmin had threatened him with a knife, and admitting that he had strangled her.

It is clear that Jasmin Lodge had been subjected to a variety of controlling practices—ranging from violence to neglect—all of her life. Her life, and death, exemplify the extreme point on the scale of gender-related risks attending homelessness. Running from a family torn by conflict and disruption, Jasmin encountered the culture of public and private violence. Battered by her drug-dependent boyfriend, and exposed daily to the serious hazards of street prostitution, Jasmin disappeared from the life of her family and from the records of the state.

In reinventing herself as Cindi, the sex worker, Jasmin created a fresh identity. However, this identity was too fragile to endure the grave risks of the male-dominated streets. For Jasmin Lodge, her presence on the street was precarious; subjected to a routine of structured violence, Jasmin was literally 'out of place'. But lacking the protection of family, and of the state, what space could Jasmine occupy with safety?

## Conclusion

Why are so many children living on the streets of the world's cities? Why are so many children suffering assault, injury and even death on the streets of the world's cities? What is the relationship between these two questions?

For answers to these questions, we need to refer to the hierarchical organisation of society in which power and authority are unevenly distributed. The effect of this disparity in resources is that the more powerful are granted a licence to engage in conduct which will secure and confirm their positional advantage. Those who are disadvantaged, by virtue of their lack of material or

social assets, are vulnerable to the intrusion of sanctioning behaviours. Women and children are particularly at risk of exposure to behaviours intended to influence and sometimes constrain their belief systems, their self-perceptions, and their ability to exercise freedom of choice.

This gendered system restricts young women whilst it gives to most young men their freedom. Whilst young males strive to move beyond the domestic space and to traverse the great, wide world, this experience is generally denied to young women. As Thurmer-Rohr (1991, pp. xvi-xxvi) notes, this journey leads women into:

*mirrorless space, not to experiences of self-discovery, scarcely to places of memory. For in this freedom—we do not find ourselves . . . 'outside' for women is neither the symbolic road . . . nor the landscape of adventure . . . that on the whole still seem[s] to offer a 'home' and 'family' for men.*

For young women, there are few places of belonging or of safety. Permitted only conditional access to public space, and subjected to strategies of violence and control, young women's dreams of a territory to call their own (a 'home') continue to be elusive.

## References

- Alder, C. 1991, 'Victims of violence: The case of homeless youth', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, March, vol. 24, pp. 1-14.
- Alder, C. & Sandor, D. 1990 (unpub.), 'Homeless youth as victims of violence', Report available from Criminology Department, University of Melbourne.
- Alder, C., O'Connor, I., Warner, K. & White, R. 1992, *Perceptions of the Treatment of Juveniles in the Legal System*, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, Canberra.
- Baggett, G. & Donough, B. 1988, *Oregon Runaway and Homeless Youth Project*, Tri-Country Youth Services Corporation, Portland, Oregon.
- Campbell, A. 1993, *Men, Women and Aggression*, Basic Books, New York.
- Campbell, A. & Muncer, S. 1987, 'Models of anger and aggression in the social talk of women and men', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, vol. 17, pp. 489-512.
- 1994, 'Men and the meaning of violence', in *Male Violence*, ed. J. Archer, Routledge, London.
- Chesney-Lind, M. & Shelden, R.G. 1992, *Girls, Delinquency, and Juvenile Justice*, Pacific Grove, Brooks/Cole, California.
- Coffey, M. & Waderton, D. 1991, *Shelter and the streets: A statistical survey of homeless youth in New South Wales*, Youth Accommodation Association, NSW.
- Coglan, P. 1987, 'Assessment of boundary inadequacy in chemically dependent individuals and families', *Journal Of Chemical Dependency Treatment*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 75-88.
- Cohen, L. & Machalek, R. 1988, 'A general theory of expropriative crime: An evolutionary ecological approach', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, pp. 465-99.
- Crago, H. 1991, 'Homeless youth: How the solution becomes part of the problem', *Quadrant*, vol. 35, no. 9, pp. 26-32.
- Davis, N. J. 1992, 'Offender as victim: The case of homeless female youth', Public Lecture, Institute of Criminology, University of Sydney, 5 May.

- 1993, 'Systemic gender control and victimization among homeless female youth', *Socio-Legal Bulletin*, no. 8, Summer.
- Davis, N.J. & Hatty, S.E. 1990, 'Violence against prostitute women: A paradigmatic case of sexism', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Davis, N.J., Hatty, S.E. & Burke, S. 1995, 'Rough justice: Social control and resistance amongst homeless youth', in *Ways of Resistance: Social Control and Young People in Australia*, eds C. Simpson & R. Hil, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney.
- Evans, S. & Schaefer, S. 1987, 'Incest and chemically dependent women: Treatment implications', *Journal of Chemical Dependency Treatment*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 141-65.
- Golden, S. 1992, *The Women Outside*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Ca.
- Graycar, R. & Morgan, J. 1989, *The Hidden Gender of Law*, Federation Press, Annandale.
- Hagen, J.L. 1987, 'Gender and homelessness', *Social Work*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 312-16.
- Hatty, S.E. 1989, 'Violence against prostitute women: Social and legal dilemmas', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 235-51.
- 1992a, 'The continuum of unsafety: Violence against women', *Proceedings of the Local Domestic Violence Committees Conference*, Women's Co-ordination Unit, NSW Ministry for Education, Youth and Women's Affairs, Sydney.
- 1992b, 'The social structural context of violence', in *Four Dimensional Social Space: Class, Gender, Ethnicity and Nature*, eds T. Jagenberg & P.D'Alton, Harper Educational, Sydney.
- 1993, 'Invisible lives: Women, dependence and the law', in *Women and the Law*, eds P.W. Eastaer & S. McKillop, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Hatty, S.E., Davis, N.J. & Burke, S. in press, 'Victimization of homeless youth: Public and private regimes of control', in *The Intersection of Race, Gender and Class in Criminology*, eds M.D. Schwartz & D. Milovanovic, Garland Publishing Company, New York.
- Hirst, C. 1989, *Forced Exit: A Profile of the Young and Homeless in Inner Urban Melbourne*, Report of the Salvation Army Youth Homelessness Policy Development Project, Melbourne.
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1989, *Report of the National Inquiry into Homeless Children*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Inciardi, J.A., Horowitz, R. & Pottieger, A.E. 1993, *Street Kids, Street Drugs, Street Crime*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, Ca.
- Janus, M.D. et al. 1987, *Adolescent Runaways: Causes and Consequences*, Heath, Lexington, Ma.
- King, I. 1991, *Disadvantaged Youth Project: Final Report*, Commonwealth AIDS Prevention and Education & Kings Cross Youth Resources, Sydney, NSW.
- Labor Party of NSW 1993, 'Youth homelessness, a discussion paper', prepared by the NSW Opposition.
- McCarthy, B. & Hagan, J. 1991, 'Homelessness: A criminogenic situation?', *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 393-410.
- National Campaign Against Drug Abuse 1992, 'Street kids' survey findings', *Statistics on Drug Abuse in Australia*, Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Neil, C. & Fopp, R. 1992, *Homeless in Australia: Causes and Consequences*, CSIRO Division of Building, Construction and Engineering, Victoria.

- O'Connor, I. 1989, *Our Homeless Children: Their Experiences*, Report to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney.
- Radford, J.L., King, A. & Warren, W.K. 1990, *Street Youth and AIDS*, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.
- Regoli, R. & Hewitt, J. 1991, *Delinquency in Society: A Child-Centered Approach*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Robertson, M.J. 1991, 'Homeless youth: An overview of recent literature', in *Homeless Children and Youth: A New American Dilemma*, eds J.H. Kryder-Coe, L.M. Salamon & J.M. Molnar, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Sereny, G. 1985, *The Invisible Children: Child Prostitution in America, West Germany and Great Britain*, Knopf, NY.
- Stelf, M. 1987, 'The new homeless: A national perspective' in *The Homeless in Contemporary Society*, eds R.D. Bingham, R.E. Green & S.B. White, Sage, Newbury Park, Ca.
- Thurmer-Rohr, C. 1991, *Vagabonding, Feminist Thinking Cut Loose*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Watkins, J. et al. 1992, *Youth and the Law*, Discussion Paper No. 3, Select Committee into Youth Affairs, Western Australian Government Printer, Perth.
- White, J.L. 1989, *The Troubled Adolescent*, Pergamon Press, NY.
- World Health Organization 1993, 'A one way street?', *A Report on Phase 1 of the Street Children Project. Programme on Substance Abuse, WHO*, Geneva 26 March, Issued by Regional Office for the Western Pacific, PO Box 2932, Manila.
- Wright, J.D. 1989, *Address Unknown: The Homeless in America*, Aldine, NY.
- Youth Accomodation Association 1994, *Annual Report*, Youth Accomodation Association, Sydney.