

A hand is holding a white rectangular sign in the foreground. The sign features a black transgender symbol, which is a circle with a cross at the top, a horizontal bar at the bottom, and two diagonal arrows on the left and right. In the center of the circle is a black equals sign (=). The background is a blurred image of a crowded city street with many people walking, suggesting a public demonstration or protest.

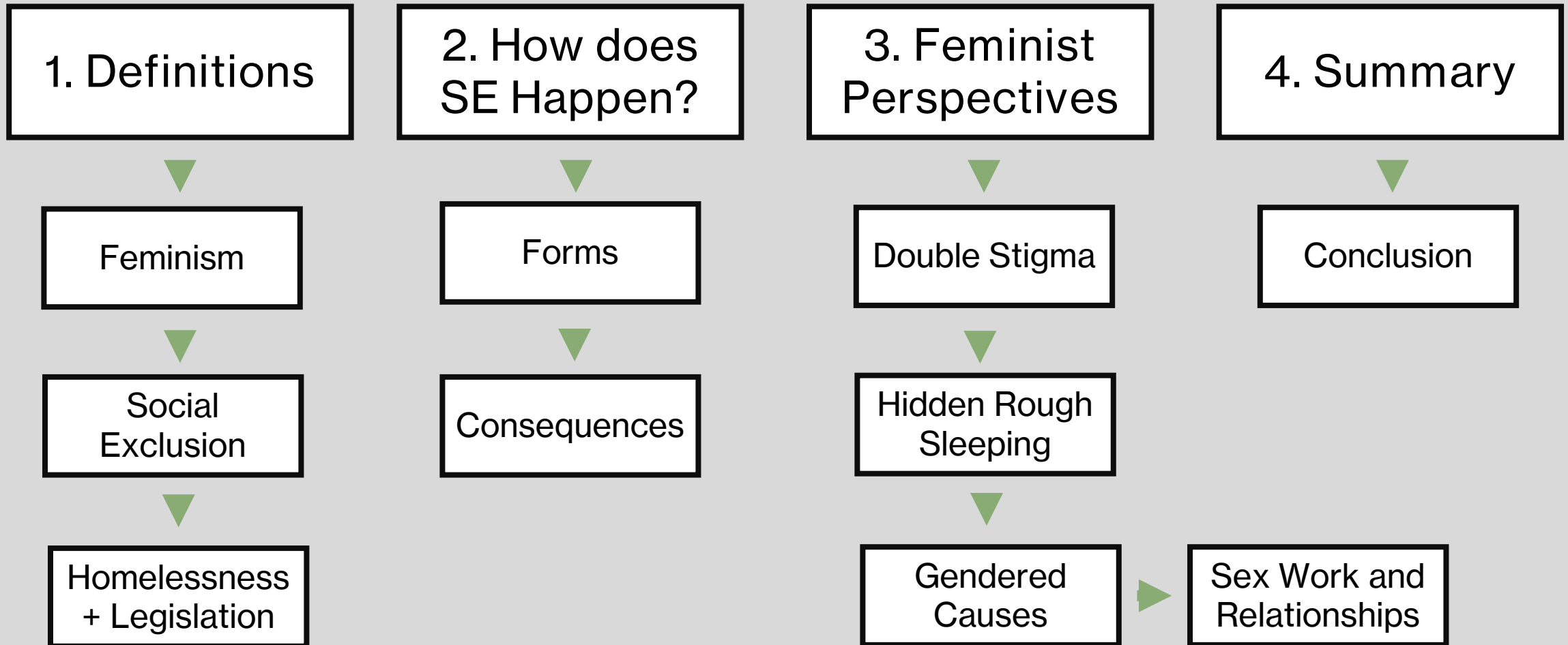
The Social Exclusion of Homeless Women: A Feminist Perspective

By Emily Baker

Introduction

- Homeless women = up to a 1/3 of homeless population (Mayock and Sheridan, 2020)
- 'Hidden homelessness' = less likely to appear in literature (Mayock and Sheridan, 2020; Savage, 2016; O'Brien, 2023)
- This essay will:
 1. Define feminism, the patriarchy and the waves of feminism
 2. Define social exclusion, homelessness and key legislation
 3. Talk about the forms and impact of social exclusion
 4. Look at feminist perspectives of homelessness
 5. Conclude

Presentation Map



What is Feminism?

1. Definitions

Feminism

Social
Exclusion

Homelessness
+ Legislation

- Women oppressed by men + society serves men (Bonney, Cleasby, Keeley-Holden, Lakin, Simpson, and Tate, 2020, p. 4)
- Liberal feminists argue for adaptation, radical feminists want total change (Bonney *et al*, 2020, p. 4)
- Less privilege and discriminated against (Vukoičić, 2013)
- These inequalities must be acknowledged and challenged, for change and advocacy to occur (Arinder, nd)
- Society functions under the patriarchy (Bonney *et al*, 2020, p. 4)

What is the Patriarchy?

1. Definitions

Feminism

Social
Exclusion

Homelessness
+ Legislation

- First use = Max Weber (1978) – household dominated by oldest man (Best 2003)
- Patriarchy has evolved to talk about society in general (Vukoičić, 2013)
- Men's interests and priorities dominate society (Vukoičić, 2013)
- Women are marginalised and discriminated against (Vukoičić, 2013)
- E.g. unpaid housework, gender pay gap (Best, 2003)
- Radical feminists believe the patriarchy can be overthrown by:
 1. Rejecting traditional roles assigned to women
 2. Reimagining female sexuality (inc. banning pornography)
 3. Achieving reproductive equality(Vukoičić, 2013)

What is Social Exclusion?

1. Definitions

Feminism

Social
Exclusion

Homelessness
+ Legislation

- When an individual or social group is unable to participate fully in life (Peace, 2001, p. 26).
- Exclusion rights and exchanges in society (Commission of the European Communities, 1993, p. 1)
- May lack social relations, legal rights, the ability to consume products and ability to access jobs (Peace, 2001, p. 28)
- The effects of the causes of social exclusion can then snowball into further social exclusion (Scottish Office, 1999, pp. 1–2)

What is Homelessness?

1. Definitions

Feminism

Social
Exclusion

Homelessness
+ Legislation

- When an individual or family does not have safe/permanent housing (Crisis, 2023)
- Includes rough sleeping – sleeping in open air or in buildings not fit for human habitation (e.g. public toilets, derelict boats) (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018)
- Also includes people in inadequate or insecure accommodation (Busch-Geertsema, 2010)
- ‘Homeless at home’ (Watson and Austerberry, 1986 cited in Mayock and Sheridan, 2020)

Homelessness Legislation

1. Definitions

Feminism

Social
Exclusion

Homelessness
+ Legislation

- Housing [Homeless Person's] Act 1977 - first piece of legislation about homelessness (Reeve, 2018)
- LAs must find housing for families (local connection & not intentionally homeless) (Reeve, 2018)
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – LAs must now properly assess the causes of homelessness for that household and develop a personalised plan of steps to relieve or prevent homelessness of the household (Homelessness Reduction Act, 2017)

Forms of Social Exclusion Faced by Homeless Women

2. How does SE Happen?

Forms

Consequences

- May struggle to access services such as banks and institutes of education (Watson and Cuervo, 2017 cited in Timson and Phuti, 2021)
- May not be able to participate in work (Soulet, 1999 cited in Walsh, 2016)
- Lack the same rights as others (e.g. protection from discrimination and high standard of health) (Goldie, 1999, cited in Walsh, 2016)
- May not be able to vote due to their lack of fixed address (Walsh, 2016)
- Due to their appearance may not be able to physically access buildings (Timson and Phuti, 2021)

Consequences of Homelessness and Social Exclusion

2. How does SE Happen?

Forms

Consequences

- Self-harm (McDonagh, 2011)
- Die at 43 on average and risk of suicide is 9x higher (Crisis, 2023)
- Children may struggle to access school places (Shelter, 2023, p.1)
- May lose access to their children and this may make them more likely to remain homeless (Savage, 2016)
- Ashma, skin conditions and pneumonia and mental illness (Kermode *et al*, 1998) which further compound social exclusion (Shelter, 2023; Timson and Phuti, 2021)
- Social exclusion = issues such as dementia, heart disease, depression and anxiety (NIA, 2019)
- Street homelessness increases risk of violence by almost 17 times (Crisis, 2023)
- Lack of water and showering facilities (Timson and Phuti, 2021)

3. Feminist Perspectives

Double Stigma

Hidden Rough
Sleeping

Gendered
Causes

Sex Work and
Relationships

Double Stigma Associated with Homeless Women

- Homelessness itself is stigmatised (Blecher and DeForge, 2012)
- Homeless women are likely to experience further stigma due to their gender status (Reeve, 2018; Timson and Phuti, 2021; Savage, 2016)
- Women are seen as belonging in the home and caring for children (Savage, 2016)
- Viewed as abnormal, eccentric or failures (Savage, 2016) and as deviant (Reeve, 2018)
- May be seen as drug addicts and mad or criminal (Timson and Phuti, 2021)
- Homeless women without their children may feel like they are judged and feel powerless in their parenting (Savage, 2016; Reeve, 2018)

3. Feminist Perspectives

Double Stigma

Hidden Rough Sleeping

Gendered Causes

Sex Work and Relationships

Differences in Rough Sleeping

- Slept rough = 66 per cent of women (and 79 per cent of men) (Reeve and Batty, 2011).
- Women are more likely to experience violence on the street (Savage, 2016)
- Therefore, practice concealment not required by men (O'Brien, 2023)
- These places include public toilets, garages, bin bays (Reeve, 2018)
- Therefore, less likely to be seen by a rough sleeper team so less likely to receive their support (Reeve, 2006)
- 62 % = slept rough, but only 12 % = rough sleeper team (Reeve, 2006)

3. Feminist Perspectives

Double Stigma

Hidden Rough Sleeping

Gendered Causes

Sex Work and Relationships

Gendered Causes of Homelessness – Child Sexual Abuse

- 30-50% of homeless people report experiencing child sexual abuse as a child (Cote et al, 2022)
- CSA/SV motivated by desire for control and superiority over women (World Health Organization, 2017)
- Some women turned to drugs after not being believed by their families or during CSA which led them to homelessness (Cote et al, 2022)
- Some women leave the home to protect themselves from the abuse (Cote et al, 2022)
- More likely to get into a DV relationship as adults and so then experience homelessness (Cote et al, 2022)

3. Feminist Perspectives

Double Stigma

Hidden Rough Sleeping

Gendered Causes

Sex Work and Relationships

Gendered Causes of Homelessness – Economic Reasons and Domestic Violence

- Women are more likely to be dependent on men as breadwinners and therefore are more likely to become homeless when if they leave the household (Reeve, 2018)
- Women are more likely to claim benefits meaning it is harder for them to get private rentals (Smolen, 2021)
- Zufferey (2016, p. 239) states that the main cause of homelessness in women is gender-based violence page
- Sometimes women have to choose between staying with their abusive partner or becoming homeless (Smolen, 2021)

3. Feminist Perspectives

Double Stigma

Hidden Rough Sleeping

Gendered Causes

Sex Work and Relationships

Sex Work and Survival Relationships

- Lack of social support led to survival strategies e.g. sex work (Chen et al., 2004)
- Women are more likely to operate under a pimp however men are more likely to engage in sex work independently (Reeve, 2018)
- May develop relationships with housed men primarily to have a place to sleep (Cote *et al* (2022)

Activity	% of Women	% of Men
SW to pay for a hotel	20	3
Slept with someone specifically for accommodation	28	14
SW to spend a night indoors	19	3

Reeve and Batty (2011)

Conclusion

4. Summary



Conclusion

- Feminism = women are oppressed under the patriarchy
- Social exclusion is where people are shut out of everyday life and has a number of negative consequences
- Women may become homeless due to CSA, DV or economic disadvantages
- Sex work and concealment – leading to further social exclusion
- More stigma because of traditional gender roles

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