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Healthful Housing

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

in Sociology

at

Massey University

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January 1999

Abstract

This study researched the housing needs of incipiently homeless low-income households in Auckland. In particular it examined how the compromises and sacrifices low-income households must make to procure housing jeopardises their ability to promote and maintain health. Health within this study was defined holistically including physical, mental, spiritual and family aspects as well as the dimension of ontological security.

The participants were comprised of three groups: housing workers, community health workers, and most importantly the households in housing need. All participants were or had been connected with Monte Cecilia Emergency House.

The role of the state, past and present, in assisting low-income households to obtain accommodation was examined. Particular consideration was given to changes which have occurred in the lost-cost rental sector through the move to market-level rents for state housing, and the introduction of a targeted, abatable accommodation allowance.

The participants' stories demonstrated an increasing and serious level of unaffordability of rental housing. This had brought about both immediate and long-term detriments to health due to living in over-crowded accommodation and / or a residual post-rent income insufficient to maintain an adequate standard of living. Tangata Whenua and Tagata Pasifika were disproportionately affected by unaffordable housing. The need for a return to income-related state housing was high-lighted. Recommendation was also made regarding the urgent need of a comprehensive survey of housing need, both urban and rural.

Acknowledgments

I wish to offer heart-felt thanks to the participants who gave of their time within the interview process of this study. I would like to thank the health workers, and the housing workers. I am especially grateful to Rose Lythe for her support and guidance.

I thank particularly the individuals and couples who shared their experiences of housing distress with me. I found your courage and resilience inspiring and humbling. I hope that I have done your stories justice.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisors, Dr Paul Spoonley and Dr Ann Dupuis, whose guidance, patience and humour were invaluable.

My thanks go to Mike, Nikki and Allan for sharing their computer skills and resources with me, and to Myriam for her proof-reading assistance. My thanks also to Vivien and Dianna at the Sociology Department, Massey University, Albany, for their support and assistance. I would also like to acknowledge Dr Robin Kearns, Geography Department, Auckland University, for his interest and advice.

I am also appreciative of my friends, family and members of my religious congregation, the Sisters of Mercy, who supported me in this research, and whose interest assisted me to complete the study.

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