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Ignorance is Bliss: The Construction of Homelessness in Online News Media in  
Aotearoa/New Zealand

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

Masters of Science (Thesis Only)

in

Psychology

at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

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2015

### **Abstract**

As an entity central to our society the news media provides us with narratives that we access as resources in order to construct our understanding of individual and global people, groups, organisations, and phenomenon (Silverstone, 2007). This thesis explores the news media's construction of homelessness in Aotearoa/New Zealand based on articles sourced from online news media provider stuff.co.nz. The dominant narrative presented through the analysed articles is one that promotes a construction of homelessness that identifies this phenomenon as an issue resulting from individual deficits and personal failings. The narrative of individual deficit is supported through the use of ignorant framings of homelessness that are filled with hegemonic silences. These silences allow for a notable absence of narrative regarding the structural causes of homelessness as a social problem. Through predominantly constructing homelessness as a phenomenon linked to individual deficit the narrative allows for a construction of homelessness that supports the neoliberal ideals of New Zealand's current right wing government and its use of a penal based welfare system.

### **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge the extensive assistance I have received from my two supervisors, Prof Darrin Hodgetts and Dr Clifford van Ommen. I thank you both for always being available to assist with my questions and understanding of this project. The knowledge you have imparted to me has added greatly to the quality of, and thinking behind, this thesis. Furthermore the time and guidance you have provided has been invaluable and has contributed greatly to the learning and experience I have taken from this project. The enthusiasm you both have for psychology and your given fields of interest is inspiring.

To my family, friends, and husband - Thank you for your unwavering, ever enthusiastic, and always supportive nature and attitude towards my study. The support I receive from you all, and the time I spend with you, has assisted me greatly over the years. Thank you for your continuous understanding and support of my needs in working towards meeting my goals.

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