

Excluded Citizenship: The Case of the Hidden Homeless Women

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Homeless women embody in themselves the phenomenon of excluded citizenship, since their Israeli citizenship does not grant them the socio-economic rights that would ensure them a dignified existence and as a result they are de facto deprived of their political citizenship. Statistics tend to present a partial and very limited description of the gender characteristics of the homelessness problem in its Israeli context and show that the great majority of "street dwellers" are men. This data confirms the repeated feminist claim that these findings reflect only specific aspects of the social problem and depict blindness concerning its gender aspects, insofar as women experience homelessness in a different manner that isn't always visibly manifested in the public space. This way, the statistics in this field do not succeed in giving expression to a large number of women who are negatively affected by the housing public policy. A policy which does not provide home-deprived women's socio-economic rights and abandons them to repeated violence in the hands of men, landlords, housing companies, the police, the bullying of the execution office, the threats of separation from their children by welfare workers, in practice it condemns them to homelessness.

The purpose of the article presented here is to examine the question of how, from the point of view of the "home deprived" women who were interviewed, are the experience of homelessness and the action roads accessible to them for the changing of their condition conceived by them.

For this purpose I illustrate the gender aspect of the social problem through interviews with home-deprived single mothers with political awareness who were among the leaders of the social housing protest in the summer of 2011. I discuss the way these women, who are forced to rent apartments in the open market with minimal financial help from the Ministry of Construction and Housing, see in retrospective their own history as home-deprived single women working to obtain a house and the change that occurred in their consciousness and their consequent activities as a result of their participation in the protest.

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