
A. Study subject

This project identifies adolescent and adult risk factors for deprivation using structural equation modelling and collected empirical data. For a long time, the term of deprivation had been used for the state of not having the survival basics of food and shelter. The subject of this study are homeless people who personify lack of economic goods.

To answer research questions, a questionnaire study was conducted in the winter period in all shelters, night shelters, and warming centres of Warsaw and surrounding areas on the sample of $n_1 > 900$ homeless adults. Within the funding by the Poland's National Science Centre, it was also conducted a survey on a control group of $n_2 > 900$ housed adults living in Warsaw of the same age and educational distribution as in Warsaw's homeless population. More than 90 variables were measured within the study.

Adolescent adversities tended to differentiate 'pathways into homelessness'. Four groupings of the homeless were found based on the expectation-maximisation algorithm used for latent class modelling: adult children of incomplete, dysfunctional families (10%), adult children of incomplete, unstable families (10%), adult children of complete, dysfunctional families (29%), and adult children of committed families (51%). Their reports were compared with the housed control group. It was shown that parent-child relationship had no isolated effect on life-course trajectories in the homeless. It was accompanied by adolescent economic hardship, conflict situations, alcohol use, and experiencing humiliation, among other things. Despite high disparities in social exclusion at school, no significant differences in perceptions of the first job were found both across latent classes of homeless individuals and between homeless and housed individuals. Consistently with family of origin theory, homelessness in adult children of incomplete or dysfunctional families was more frequently preceded by problems to a larger extent attributable to wrong life choices, such as *criminal activity, alcohol misuse, and violence*, than by problems less related to own decisions, including *disability, health difficulties, and unemployment*. The latter ones were significantly more prevalent in adult children of committed (functional) families.

Based on a structural equation model, a hypothesis of the relationship between adult homelessness and adolescent adversities was tested, including non-positive relationship with the parents or guardians prior to age 18 years, growing up in an incomplete family, adverse financial situation prior to age 18 years, and exclusion at primary school. Adolescent risk factors were found to impact the occurrence of adult homelessness. This relationship was mainly indirect and largely mediated by addictive behaviours, divorce, conviction, and unemployment. First job experience did not differentiate the homeless and housed groups from each other. However, homeless individuals were more likely to currently prefer self-employment over wage employment. Low perceived importance of family life and preference for self-employment over wage employment were hypothesised to be related to the severity of homelessness. Minor changes were introduced to the initial model.

The analysis was extended to the identification of personality risk factors for addiction grounded in social identity theory. According to the path model, adolescent character strength, rebellion against unjustified prohibitions and rules, ease in making decisions, willingness to differ from others, and interest in the opposite gender had a significant direct effect on tobacco smoking in adolescence and a significant indirect effect on tobacco smoking in adulthood. The variables representing adolescent character strength, rebellion against unjustified prohibitions and rules, ease in making decisions, and interest in the opposite gender also showed a significant direct effect on alcohol use in adolescence.

Before quantitative analysis, $n_3 > 2 \times 15$ individual in-depth interviews were carried out among homeless men aged 18–35 and 50+. According to their retrospective reports, family dysfunctions were likely to affect spending time after and at school. Among other things, non-positive relationship with the parents could lead to early removal from one's family residence.

B. Relevance of the study

The aim of the project was to influence the perception of homelessness in the society, including understanding of methods for the primary prevention related to revealed adolescent risk factors; also considering that a personal choice was most frequently considered the main cause of homelessness in the control group. The low perceived importance of family life and preference for self-employment over wage employment in homeless individuals might have implications for the secondary prevention.