

SUMMARY

A. Study subject

This project identifies risk factors for economic deprivation using structural equation modelling (SEM) and collected empirical data. Deprivation is lack of desired goods. For a long time, this term was used for the state of not having the survival basics of food and shelter. The subject of the study are homeless people, as they personify lack of economic goods. Specific attention in the project was paid to verify the hypothesis of impact of adverse childhood experience on the occurrence of adult homelessness, including limited contact with parents prior to age 18 years.

In Poland, more than 33,000 individuals are homeless. In order to carry out the project, a questionnaire study was conducted in the winter period in all shelters, night shelters, and warming centres of Warsaw on the sample of $n_1=900$ homeless individuals. Within the funding of the Poland's National Science Centre, one conducted a study on a sample of $n_2=900$ housed inhabitants of Warsaw of the same age and education structure as in the Warsaw's homeless population (sampling frame of the National Census). App. 90 variables were measured in the questionnaire. Based on the structural equation model estimated on the combined sample data on housed and homeless men (n_1+n_2), a hypothesis of the relationship between adverse childhood experience and economic deprivation in adulthood was verified, including childhood risk factors of non-positive relationships with parents or guardians prior to the age of 18, growing up in incomplete family, adverse financial situation prior to age 18 years, and exclusion in primary school. Control variables were included in the model, including poor adult life choices prior homelessness.

Childhood risk factors were found to have statistically significant impact on the occurrence of adult homelessness ($p<0.001$), however, the relationship is mainly indirect. First job experience does not differentiate both populations. However, the current attitude towards employment does. Alcohol abuse, conviction, and decay in family life can be perceived as the main preceding factor of homelessness and a series of coinciding events.

B. Methods

Direct and indirect factors for homelessness were investigated using structural equation modelling based on empirical data from a sample of homeless individuals and a reference group. Specified latent variables were analysed by reliability analysis, distinguishing between formative and reflective measurement models. The model was fitted by weighted least squares with means and variances adjusted (WLSMV) estimator, which makes no distributional assumptions about the observed variables, known from maximum likelihood estimation (ML).

In addition, $n_3>2\times 15$ individual in-depth interviews were carried out in the group of men aged 18–35 and 50+. Sentiment analysis of natural language was conducted within six thematic blocks. In these interviews, childhood experience, first and recent (or current) professional experience, and relationships with a partner were discussed. Interest in participating in professional training courses offered free of charge in Warsaw was assessed.

C. Added value of the study

The aim of the study was to influence understanding of homelessness in the society, including academic society. On the international scale, it is probably the first example of the study of risk factors for homelessness, which includes a reference group of a stratified random sample. The project puts forward the possibility to present the statistical technique of structural equation modelling, which has never been used previously for the identification of risk factors for homelessness.