

Topic : Poverty

## **The Pathways To Homelessness In The Post Soviet Context**

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Homelessness is a complex problem, resulting from a combination of housing and social exclusion processes (Edgar, 2012). This paper discusses the major factors contributing to homelessness in the post soviet countries based on the Georgian example. Though there is no consensus on understanding conceptual typology, the causes and complexity of homelessness, there are currently three categories of homeless people identified as homeless in Georgia. Among them so called "Roofless" people are the most vulnerable group who need special attention while there is no homelessness national strategy in place.

Mixed methods were used to study homeless people living in a special shelter in Tbilisi. In total, 70 homeless (Mean Age =48, Male ? 64%, Female ? 36%) were interviewed by a trained interviewer using a special questionnaire including 92 questions regarding demographics, pathways to homelessness, substance abuse, health and mental status, social competence and other issues. Substance abuse questions were adopted from Tarter and Hegedu's "The Drug Use Screening Inventory" (1991). Respondents were selected by the Convenient Sampling Method, signed informed consents and were informed about all risks and benefits of participation, right to refuse participation with no penalty or interruption of services, and the protection of anonymity and confidentiality.

The results showed that a structural factor - unemployment (90%) is the major cause of homelessness. The other factors include: lack of support system (69%), relationship problems or family breakdown (66%), health problems (64%), mental problems (44%), internal migration (39%), leaving prison (26%), substance abuse (16%). The profile of homeless persons in Georgia is still a middle-aged single man in contrast to Europe; however, the numbers of homeless women, elderly and younger people as well as families with children are growing.

Furthermore the paper suggests that understanding the local contexts of poverty can assist government for building the proper national strategy.

*Keywords : Homelessness, Rooflessness, Poverty, Unemployment, National strategy, the Post Soviet countries*

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