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**COMBINED RESEARCH ON EXTERNAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL HOMELESSNESS**

PHD THESIS BOOKLET

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2019

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of the empirical and theoretical work constituting this study was to outline "psychological homelessness", the concept that grasps the experiential level of being homeless. A further goal was the examination of possible connections between psychological homelessness (the subjective experience of being homeless), the much more conspicuous phenomenon of external homelessness (what is usually meant by the word homelessness), and factors that previous research has shown to be related to being homeless (such as place attachment, loneliness, hopelessness, dissatisfaction, stress).

Terminology

The study centers around the concepts of "psychological home" and "psychological homelessness", which are both derived from the word "home" in English. Meanwhile, in Hungarian the common expression is "hajléktalanság", which places the focus on the aspect of homelessness that comes from the lack of a physical home (as if instead of "homeless", the term "roofless" or "houseless" was used in English). For that reason, in the Hungarian version of this study the word "otthontalanság" was applied instead (the literal Hungarian counterpart of the English expression "homelessness"). "Hajléktalanság" and "otthontalanság" are more or less considered synonymous, but while the former stresses the physical lack of a home, the latter incorporates social and psychological aspects as well (Kántor & Dúll, 2018). According to the definition of Béneyi et al (2000), "otthontalan" can be viewed as a category that encompasses a broad variety of people, from those "without a roof" to the ones that retain some form of housing, but whose dwelling is not suitable (as in for example, too congested or low-quality) for starting a family or building a home. Therefore, the term "otthontalanság" appears to be fitting to describe the phenomenon in the center of this study, which concerns most homeless people, but extends beyond the physical characteristics of homelessness.

External and Psychological Homelessness

In connection with homelessness there are both external and psychological aspects to be considered. External homelessness consists of observable characteristics that are possible to describe without the understanding of the homeless persons' subjective experience, for instance: objective features of dwelling (size, condition, type, etc.), objective features of social relations (e.g., marital status, number of friends, time spent with others, etc.), title to property and way of life. Psychological homelessness, on the other hand, refers to the

subjective aspects of being homeless, such as identity, typical attitudes, and other characteristics based on the person's experience, who considers him- or herself homeless. (Kántor & Dúll, 2018).

The Theory of External and Psychological At-homeness – Homelessness Continuum

Theoretical framework to this research was provided by the Theory of External and Psychological At-homeness - Homelessness Continuum (KLOK¹), a model developed by Kántor & Dúll (2018). The KLOK theory draws on the concept of psychological home. Psychological home is a self-structure that is an essential component of mental health and, like the possession of a physical home, can be considered a basic human need (Melamed et al., 2004; Kennedy, 2014). The internal structure of psychological home derives from sympathetic, caring and supportive parental behavior that proves good enough and lasts as long as necessary. The quality of one's psychological home can define their identity for a lifetime, as well as how comfortably they feel in the world and how well they are able to manage their relationships with other people, their physical environment, the universe in a broader sense, or themselves. In the event of severe psychological or physical neglect or parental rejection, psychological home may not develop sufficiently or at all. In that case, or alternately, if it is later impaired by some sort of trauma, a person can become psychologically homeless (Hoksbergen, 1999). It is an important notion that psychological home is not equivalent to psychological at-homeness. Whereas psychological home is a mental structure that contributes to mental health and coping in life, psychological at-homeness refers to the experiential facet of at-homeness, that is to say that a person is feeling at home. Psychological homelessness might imply two different conditions. One originates from a deficit on the level of personality, i. e., when due to early deprivation one is unable to "construct" their psychological home adequately. In this case, the psychological home becomes hardly habitable or completely uninhabitable, because it is only partially or not at all fit to function as a protective structure that reflects the self and provides a sense of security. The other state of psychological homelessness occurs when the person has been able to develop a psychological home during early childhood, but following some sort of life event, it came to be "broken". When that happens, our belief in our home being safe and invulnerable can be damaged severely. In this case, the original, secure internal pattern of the psychological home is ruined by the experience that it can be

¹ KLOK is an acronym derived from the Hungarian title (Külső és Lelki Otthonosság-otthonatlanság Kontinuum elmélete) of the Theory of External and Psychological At-homeness - Homelessness Continuum (Kántor & Dúll, 2018).

a place of serious trauma as well. This involves the sense of losing one's place in the world; the experience of expulsion from the secure "Paradise" that they believed to be theirs by subjective right. People with a partially or completely uninhabitable psychological home struggle to find their place in the outside world as well. Due to their conflicting sense of internal home they find it difficult to feel at home in the world, in society, or in their relationships. In addition, they have trouble feeling attached to a place so that could provide for a physical home for them. When either state of psychological homelessness occurs, the person's psychological home is in need of "restoration". In the former case, restoration means construction from the basics, so that the psychological home becomes inhabitable. In the latter, the person has to recover from the trauma that damaged their psychological home. In other words, their faith in a secure home needs to be restored for them to be able to "move back into" their internal home, so they can find their way back home in the outside world as well. The above mentioned dualistic approach can be juxtaposed with Arce and Vergare's (1984) classification applied to the externally homeless, according to which, homelessness can take three forms: that of a chronic, situational or episodic condition, depending on whether it is profoundly incorporated in a person's lifestyle, is a result of a specific, temporary situation, or a tendency that occurs from time to time. Additionally, the KLOK theory highlights the following three theses (for more details see: Kántor & Dúll 2018): 1) Not every externally homeless (effectually homeless) person is psychologically homeless, and not all who are psychologically homeless become externally homeless. The feeling of at-homeness is an intrapsychic feature that is more in relation with the person's former experience concerning their sense of being at home, than it is with the parameters of their current residence or dwelling. External and psychological homelessness constitute two dimensions that often, but not always coincide. 2) Both external and psychological aspects can be viewed on an at-homeness - homelessness continuum, where complete at-homeness and complete homelessness comprise the two endpoints with an infinite number of intermediate states between them (pl. Watson & Austerberry, 1986). It is possible, as well as advisable to establish discrete categories along the continuum, which helps experts in the field of social care, law and administration handle the phenomenon more effectively. 3) Finally, according to the KLOK theory, there are four facets to a person's at-homeness: physical (at-homeness in the physical world), social (at-homeness in one's relationships and in the social world), transpersonal (at-homeness in the universe), and intrapersonal (at-homeness

in one's own body, psyche and self). The following research was conducted on the basis of this theory.

THE HAOT² RESEARCH

As mentioned in the introduction, the main goal of the current analysis³ was to explore the relation between psychological and external homelessness, as well as several psychological concepts that are connected to the phenomenon (see column 3. of table 1.).

Questions and hypotheses

Joint consideration of external and psychological homelessness

First, we were trying to answer the following questions (Kántor, Brózik & Dúll, under publication):

- Is it possible to distinguish between external and psychological aspects by variables that reflect on external and psychological homelessness directly?
- Are at-homeness and homelessness two separate, dichotomous phenomena, or are they rather the endpoints of the same continuum with multiple diverse states between them?
- What groups can be constructed with the joint consideration of the experiential level and observable aspects of homelessness, and according to previous results, how do constructs in relation with external and psychological homelessness (see Table 1.) differentiate between these groups?

Participants' personal accounts

Our basic question here was: to which qualities do the participants connect at-homeness and homelessness in their personal accounts? Our expectation was that participants, regardless of which group they belonged to, would emphasize the same constructs that previous studies have already defined to be in relation with psychological homelessness.

Concerning relationship patterns the following questions were posed:

- To which extent can the experience of at-homeness and homelessness be connected to physical, social, transpersonal and intrapersonal qualities?
- What are the most frequent patterns of the above mentioned connections to qualities?

² HAOT is an acronym derived from the Hungarian name of our homelessness research (Kántor, Brózik & Dúll, under publication).

³ The research design was approved by ELTE PPK KEB. Permission number: 2013/40.

- What is the relationship between physical and psychological homelessness and their connection to the given qualities, and between the impairment of those connections?
- What pattern can be observed in the impairment of that connection and relationships in people involved in psychological and external at-homeness and homelessness to a different extent?

Connection between external and psychological homelessness and the related constructs

Our expectation was that constructs that according to previous results are in relation with external and psychological homelessness will coincide with both aspects of homelessness in the current research as well. Another interesting question was whether constructs that according to former studies were connected to external homelessness were in fact in connection with the external aspects, or some of them were rather related to psychological homelessness.

Description of the sample

7 trained interviewers conducted the questionnaire survey with a total of 181 participants. 36 of these people were sleeping rough, 43 at night shelters, 37 were living at temporary hostels, 29 in rented accommodation and 36 in their own apartment. Participants at the time of the research resided in Budapest. Their age spanned from 28 to 68 (average age = 45,30, SD = 9,541), and the ratio of female participants was around 20% in each group. Compared to the other three groups, those living in rented accommodation or in their own apartment turned out to be more educated and about 6 years younger on average than the other three groups.

Methods: The HAOT questionnaire

Though the HAOT questionnaire is composed of extensive and complex material, in this research only variables that measure basic socio-demographical characteristics (gender, age, level of education) were used, along with 6 variables that aim to grasp the extent of at-homeness - homelessness (current housing, homeless status, homeless identity, proper housing, satisfaction with housing, degree of at-homeness). Additionally, personal records concerning at-homeness and homelessness and data from 14 further measurement instruments were involved. The considerations behind the selection of these 14 instruments and the constructs they aim to measure are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Examined constructs and measurement instruments

Characterizes external homelessness	Characterizes psychological homelessness	Construct	Measurement instruments
No place attachment, rootlessness, feeling of detachment, “feeling of placelessness”” lack of a secure space, poverty	Difficulty with attachment to physical places	Home attachment	OKK – Home Attachment Questionnaire (Dúll, 1998, Hordós, 2007): place attachment and objects factor
		Place attachment	ÉTT – Living Space Test(Schmiedek, 1973; Vass, 2005): Place and object markers
Poor attachment, Loss of trust, intensive emotional withdrawal, sense of being threatened, emotional coldness, feeling of being rejected, sense of not being loved, social isolation, segregation, sense of being alien or invisible	Loss of trust in others, feeling of rejection, separation, loneliness, sense of being an outsider, lack of belonging, difficulty to connect with people	Human attachment	Shortened Hostility Scale (Cook & Medley, 1954; Kopp & Skrabski, 1992)
		Hostility	OKK: Neighborhood factor
		Loneliness	ÉTT: Person indices
		Desire to connect	RSQ – Relationship Scale Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horovitz, 1991; Csóka, Szabó, Sáfrány, Rochlitz, & Bódizs, 2007)
Turning towards the past, seclusion from present reality, refusal to cope with current situation and complete lack of future visions, loss of control over one’s own life	Uncertainty about the meaning in life	Meaning in life	UCLA – Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996; Csóka et al., 2007)
		Anomia	MLQ – Meaning in Life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006; Martos & Konkoly Thege, 2012)
		Hopelessness	Anomia Scale (Andorka, 1996; Kopp, Skrabski, & Szedmák, 1999)
		Spirituality	Hopelessness Scale (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974; Perczel-Forintos, Sallai, & Rózsa, 2001)
ruined confidence and self-esteem, sense of losing self-efficacy, feeling of helplessness, intense stress, loss of identifying oneself “as a person”	loss of confidence, damaged self-efficacy, severe stress accompanying an identity crisis, sense of internal deficit, unhappiness	Self-efficacy	TCI (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993; Rózsa et al., 2003): Transcendence Scale
		Perceived Stress	Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, 1993; Rózsa et al., 2003)
		Happiness	Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Stauder & Konkoly-Thege, 2006)
		Satisfaction	Happiness Scale (Kopp&Skrabski, 1995)
		Subjective Health	Satisfaction Scale (Kopp & Skrabski, 1995)
		Attachment-Separation	Subjective Health Scale (Kopp & Skrabski, 1995)
			ÉTT: Attachment index, Separation index

In the first two columns of the table the author listed characteristics of the externally and psychologically homeless, which are based on data from previous, predominately non-empiric research. In the third column, a selection of constructs is presented that were used for the operationalization of the qualities listed in the previous two columns. And lastly, in the fourth column, measurement instruments are listed that were used to measure the above mentioned constructs.

PROCESSING AND RESULTS

Both the continuum approach and the establishment of discrete categories along the continuum proved to be useful throughout the investigation of external and psychological homelessness. Due to the limits of the applicable statistical analyses (SPSS 22) for the given variables, as well as the fact that the author aimed to grasp the main characteristics of the observed phenomena, discrete classifications of at-homeness - homelessness were used at several points throughout the analysis. Nonetheless, it was taken into consideration during the interpretation process and in favor of the author's better understanding of psychological at-homeness - homelessness, that on a phenomenological level, there is a continuity between the two endpoints of the at-homeness - homelessness continuum.

Personal accounts concerning external and psychological homelessness

For the examination of the qualitative components of the questionnaire the author applied Szokolszky's (2004) guidelines for qualitative data analysis, as detailed below. In the case of personal accounts concerning at-homeness - homelessness, coding categories were established on the basis of the KLOK theory. The author collected those qualities from the participants' accounts that were mentioned in connection with the experience of at-homeness - homelessness. Then, based on incidence, constructs that most frequently occurred in the personal accounts were defined. To avoid self-justification and create valid coding categories, the final version of these categories were established with the help of two independent coders. Following the conversion of subcategories of the physical, social, transpersonal and intrapersonal main categories, quantitative data resulting from the coding process were interpreted in association with four variables connected to "rootedness" and four to "rootlessness". "Rootedness" variables implied whether the qualities mentioned in relation with at-homeness were linked to the physical, social, transpersonal or intrapersonal aspect. Likewise, "rootlessness" variables implied relation to the physical, social, transpersonal and intrapersonal aspects in the case of qualities mentioned in association with homelessness.

Four clusters

Cluster analysis of items that aimed to grasp at-homeness - homelessness in a direct manner (current housing, homeless status, homeless identity, proper housing, satisfaction with housing, degree of homelessness) resulted in the following four clusters, presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Matrix of the four clusters

	Psychologically at-home (high levels of psychological at-homeness)	Psychologically homeless (low levels of psychological at-homeness)
Externally at-home (high levels of external at-homeness)	Cluster 1.: both psychologically and externally at -home	Cluster 3.: externally at-home, but psychologically homeless
Externally homeless (low levels of external at-homeness)	Cluster 2.: externally homeless, but psychologically at-home	Cluster 4: both externally and psychologically homeless

Summary of the most important results implied by the examination of the possible relations between the four clusters, and the 14 constructs defined in connection with external and psychological homelessness are as follows:

1. Besides having an external home, psychological at-homeness can be considered an important protective factor as well, for if any of the above two is missing, the person may experience a serious psychological sensation of loss.
2. Within the population of the externally homeless, those who are psychologically homeless as well are at a greater risk; they are more unhappy, less satisfied, exhibit higher levels of perceived stress, have a lower degree of general attachment and are less connected to the surrounding people than those who are psychologically at-home.
3. Among the externally at-home, those who are psychologically homeless are in a much worse psychological state than the psychologically at-home people. In the group of those who are externally at-home, the subgroup of the psychologically homeless are at a greater risk, for they are more unhappy, less satisfied, more hopeless, have higher levels of perceived stress and anomia, feel less healthy and efficient, have a higher ratio of damaged relationships, and are less attached to places and objects than the psychologically at-home.
4. In cases when psychological and external at-homeness do not coincide, participants appeared to be in a very similar psychological state regardless of whether they were psychologically or externally homeless. This might be a result of some form of identity

crisis, caused by the fact that what they experience (whether they feel at-home or not) is not in harmony with the external reality (whether they have an external home).

Participants' personal accounts

Although in different words, interviewees described a very similar experience in connection with at-homeness and homelessness to what previous research showed. Feelings that were most frequently associated with at-homeness were: a sense of belonging, calmness, safety, warmth, love, sense of arriving, "home-feeling", happiness, satisfaction and care. On the other hand, in the case of homelessness, common sensations involved hopelessness, solitude, "placelessness", defenselessness, a sense of pressure, insecurity, unhappiness, difficulty, fear and poverty.

Patterns of rootedness

Results show that regarding both at-homeness (rootedness) and homelessness (rootlessness), in the case of most participants a combination of physical and social factors were associated with the experience. To the vast majority of participants, the feeling of at-homeness developed at least partially due to social factors (family time, presence of friends, spending time together). Most interviewees also mentioned some sort of physical element (place, objects, financial welfare) as one of the most significant factors contributing to their sense of at-homeness. Transpersonal (e.g., feeling of being a part of the universe) and intrapersonal (e.g., feeling healthy or well in one's own body) aspects were not mentioned as frequently, (only in case of one third of the participants) but are notable as well. The results regarding homelessness were quite similar.

Rootlessness, the cause behind the experience of homelessness was in most cases associated with physical (e.g., loss of housing, loss of job, indebtedness) and social (e.g., conflict with a close relative, divorce) factors. Intrapersonal (e.g., starting to "think differently", feeling alien in one's own body, getting sick) and transpersonal (e.g., feeling detached from the universe at Christmas) aspects were less frequently mentioned, just like with at-homeness.

The examination of rootedness-patterns showed that for most people, the feeling of at-homeness is a result of a combination of physical and social factors, and reversely, a combined physical and social trauma is the most frequent cause behind the experience of homelessness. This adds another layer to one of the environmental psychology constructs, namely, the sociophysical environment. On the other hand, the sample exhibits high levels of variability; there were experiences of homelessness and at-homeness associated with

every combination of physical, social, transpersonal and intrapersonal factors. This result indicates that the pattern that leads to a person's sense of at-homeness/homelessness is quite individual. Trauma on any level can be responsible for the feeling of homelessness, and similarly, positive experience on any level can cause someone to feel at-home.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, FURTHER RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS: COMBINED RESEARCH ON EXTERNAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HOMELESSNESS

The theoretical framework for this research was provided by the KLOK theory (Kántor & Dúll, 2018), which incorporates both external and psychological aspects of homelessness, and based on the results of the current study was assumed to be convenient for further research. The results of this exploratory research contribute to a more detailed description of the complex relation between external and psychological homelessness, as well as to the detection of qualities that are in connection with certain combinations of the two.

Both external and psychological at-homeness proved to be important protective factors, as each of the two coincides with several psychological qualities that contribute to a balanced and healthy mental functioning. However, while both are necessary, none on their own are sufficient prerequisites to mental health. Based on the results, two groups of people were identified as being in a greater risk: 1) externally homeless (effectually homeless) people who are psychologically homeless as well; 2) those people that have an external home but are psychologically homeless. The diagnosis and treatment of psychological homelessness would be important in both cases, for the basic abilities of these people that would allow them to build a home, develop attachment to that home, and really feel at home – within adequate external circumstances – have been damaged. Those effectually lacking a home who are also psychologically homeless appeared to be in an even worse psychological state than their fellow externally homeless, who are psychologically at-home. They are more unhappy, less satisfied, have higher levels of perceived stress, are less capable of attachment, and are less connected to those around them than those psychologically at-home. When it comes to providing care and support for these people, it would be important to not only strengthen their external at-homeness and aid them to acquire proper housing, but also to work on how they experience at-homeness and help them to recover from possible trauma that damaged their faith in a secure home. That is, since on their own, without proper therapy they are in an even greater struggle to use those financial and human resources that would help them escape from effectual homelessness. Those who are externally at-home but psychologically homeless represent an “invisible” sort of

homelessness, so to say, for while they have an external home, they do not feel at home in their lives and the outside world. The fact that they feel homeless in spite of their external housing circumstances seems to cause a sort of identity crisis in their case. Presumably the cause behind their condition is also related to some kind of trauma concerning their home, or some early deficit, which has impaired their “internal home” and their ability to feel at home in the world and in their dwelling. It would be important in their case as well, to detect and understand it, and help them recover from the state of psychological homelessness, especially since previous research showed that this condition causes these people to tend towards external homelessness (Riggs & Coyle, 2002; Melamed et al., 2004; Bernstein & Foster, 2008).

As highlighted in the description of the sample above, there was a significant difference between groups in terms of age and level of education, which might affect the given results and thus should be taken into consideration during the interpretation. Consequently, it might prove fruitful to apply the research design to further groups that are more homogeneous in terms of age and level of education. Another possible further goal could be the development of measurement instruments that are able to grasp the at-homeness - homelessness continuum in a more precise and detailed manner. Also, additional efforts in the conceptualization of psychological homelessness should be made, in favor of a more detailed description of the concept, as well as of the list of qualities that appear to characterize it. Furthermore, it should be convenient to explore the differences between psychological homelessness caused by accidental, and by personality-level trauma. Finally, it might be useful to explore the phenomenological aspects of possible subtypes of psychological homelessness, as well as the nature of their emergence, the characteristics of life events behind them, and potential methods of treatment.

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