



Article

'People Don't Live There, on the Streets—They Are Surviving': Gender Specifics of Homelessness Coping Strategies in St. Petersburg, Russia

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Abstract: Homelessness is a significant and increasing problem in modern Russia, which is admitted mostly by NGOs. In addition, in academic, media and state discourses, homelessness is traditionally viewed as a male phenomenon, and there is a lack of research focused on the gender aspects of homelessness in Russia. Therefore, the underrepresentation of homeless women's experiences and their comparison to homeless men's experiences, in academic and policy research in Russia, influence the diversity and quality of services provided to homeless people. Based on an analysis of 60 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with homeless men and women in Saint Petersburg, this article compares men's and women's coping strategies in the situation of homelessness. Research shows that the homeless experience is gender-specific. When lacking resources, women use a special gendered form of capital—'feminine' capital—while men utilise more masculine coping strategies. The patriarchal traditions and values of Russian society also play a significant role in the paths of people experiencing homelessness.

Keywords: homelessness; women's homelessness; gender; coping strategies; Saint Petersburg



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1. Introduction

The official data from the recent Russian national population census of 2021 show that there are only 11,285 homeless 'households' in Russia. Thirty-two homeless people live in Saint Petersburg, the second largest city. During the previous census 10 years ago, the number of homeless people was six times higher (64,077 homeless people in Russia and 2902 homeless in Saint Petersburg). The census of 2021 does not include people who live in shelters or abandoned buildings. In both censuses, officials use the term 'household' without specifying the number, gender or age of its members¹. 'State Saint Petersburg Centre for counting and providing social services to citizens of the Russian Federation without a certain place of the living' gives the information about approximately 3352 people in Saint Petersburg officially registered as homeless (to have the official status of homeless person is to not own any dwelling and to come to the centre)². Therefore, the oldest Russian NGO helping people experiencing homelessness, 'Nochlezhka' (based in Saint Petersburg and Moscow), states that there are approximately 64,000 homeless people in Saint Petersburg³ and 2.1 million overall in Russia (the experts expect a dramatic increase in these numbers due to the pandemic and the war)⁴.

This discrepancy could be explained by differences in the definitions of homelessness in official documents and those that NGOs use. The official discourse of homelessness in the Russian Federation considers homeless people as people who officially do not have housing and live on the street ('bomzh'—a person without a certain place of living). In this context, men and women who are homeless are understood in terms of their administrative status—people without permanent registration and documents. The state discourse of homelessness also does not take into account the 'hidden' form of homelessness—people

living in temporary housing (shelters, friends' apartments, etc.). In this case, the understanding of the causes of homelessness is of an operational, functional nature, clearly defining the group of people to whom state support should be addressed—people literally living without a home. Proponents of this approach to defining homelessness propose an “institutional” approach to cope with the problem of homelessness, which is to provide free housing to people who are homeless, to people living on the street and to people with mental disabilities.

Russian NGOs prefer to use the ETHOS definition model⁵. The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion is the standard classification that was developed by the European Federation of Organisations Working with Homeless People (FEANTSA) and the European Observatory on Homelessness. The ETHOS model includes both a definition and typology of homelessness and is commonly used in European countries. This is one of the first homelessness classifications that has a conceptual framework useful for both practitioners and scholars. The main focus of this model is different living situations, where living without an ‘adequate home’ is considered as homelessness. The concept of ‘home’ is defined by the three ‘domains’—physical (physical adequacy), legal (exclusive possession, legal right to live in a dwelling) and social (privacy, safety, emotional comfort). Four living situations are identified—rooflessness, houselessness, insecure living and inadequate housing. Homelessness in the first two forms (street homelessness and ‘life without a home’) can be understood in the classical sense—as the absence of a permanent home. The authors of this typology think that homelessness and the ‘absence of home’ are deeply linked. Homelessness from this point of view is a process, not a static state that could happen to everyone at some different period of his or her life. Within the framework of this classification, the two main types of housing situation (homelessness and housing exclusion) were divided into four conceptual categories (roofless, houseless, insecure and inadequate). Inside these categories, 13 subcategories describing specific housing situations were distinguished. The typology was first proposed in 2005. It was simplified (ETHOSLight) in 2007 for statistical purposes⁶. The benefit of this model is that it includes different situations of homelessness, which can make all the housing situations visible for state social policy. In the Russian social and housing state policy, only one conceptual category is used to define homelessness. This is roofless (living rough). This makes several forms of homelessness invisible for society (including women's homelessness).

However, some European scholars criticise the ETHOS classification. Amore and Holden-Chapman, in their research, write that it does not take into account the reasons and circumstances under which people are forced to live in temporary housing or with friends. For example, students who temporarily live in a hostel or migrants temporarily staying with their relatives before they find their own housing cannot be considered homeless. The scholars propose reducing the circumstances of homelessness to two cases: living in minimally habitable rooms and not having a safe place to live. Despite these criticisms (Amore et al. 2011), this model is more flexible, includes different housing situations and mentions women's homelessness as the result of domestic violence. In this case, women live in special crisis centres or refuges, and it could explain why women who are homeless are invisible in Russian academic research and social policymaking.

In the official Russian academic discourse, most women and men experiencing homelessness are not seen as homeless. Furthermore, in some academic research, homelessness is defined as living on the street (Alekseeva 2003), which is equal to the official state definition that people experiencing homelessness are also considered as a social problem that needs to be solved by the state (Meteleva and Bogdanova 2022). Some experts claim that there is a need to create a detailed classification of homelessness in Russia, to count and to plan social work with people of different homeless situations and that European scholars pay a lot of attention to theoretical homelessness conceptualisation instead of searching for solutions (Volkov 2010). In this academic tradition, people experiencing homelessness are dependable subjects that need to be reintegrated into society.

In the Russian academic debate, researchers also tend to focus on the street homeless to define homelessness and its causes. This category is most visible to society and to the system of statistical accounting and is considered as a social problem that must be solved by the state and social policy. Kovalenko and Strokova define homelessness as the right to own and use a 'house', as a person's social status associated with the lack of a place suitable for living (this does not include state and non-state shelters). This definition also includes people who have registration but for some reason cannot use their right to live at the place of registration. Researchers distinguish the next categories of homeless people: actual homeless, i.e., homeless, registered, but living on the street; homeless people without registration living on the street; groups at high risk of homelessness; and hidden homeless people living in an unstable housing situation. Kovalenko and Strokova also introduce a new concept—"bottom layer"; by this term, they mark people who have lived on the street for a long time (Kovalenko and Strokova 2010).

The official figures of the homeless population influence the visibility of the problem and state financial support for the services for people who are homeless. Gender specifics are not mentioned, neither in official nor in NGO statistics. However, numerous worldwide studies on homelessness show that men and women experience their living situations differently (Bretherton 2017). Sociological surveys show that there is an 80%/20% division of men and women experiencing homelessness in Russia,⁷ which is similar to the results of European studies.

At the same time, many researchers studying homelessness in Russia use quantitative methods, i.e., collecting statistics, which are mainly related to surveys of local communities about their attitudes towards homelessness, or they analyse secondary data-legislation policies, i.e., social support programmes for homelessness; most of the qualitative research is based on expert interviews (Kovalenko and Strokova 2010). Some research works picture the "average image of homeless" as a male of working age who has served in the army⁸.

Most papers on homelessness in Russia are focused on studies of 'other's' voices and attitudes towards homelessness. There are several recent academic works on analysing general social attitudes towards homelessness in Russia. In the first one⁹, researchers used an online questionnaire where people from Saint Petersburg and Moscow were asked what they thought about homeless people in their city, the causes of homelessness and the reasons for helping homeless people. The analysis of the results of this questionnaire shows that, despite the general, rather empathic attitude, a significant proportion of respondents (46%) consider people experiencing homelessness to be dangerous and admit that their appearance is unpleasant (also 46%). The majority of respondents both in Moscow (75%) and St. Petersburg (78%) think that the government should pay more attention to the problem of homelessness. It is also mentioned in this study that respondents consider the main causes of homelessness to be alcohol/substance addiction (76%) and fraudulent real estate deals (69%)¹⁰, while the statistics from the NGO "Nochlezhka" show that the main homeless cause is labour migration (the situation when people come to the city from the regions to find better jobs but are defrauded by their employer). This study also has an interesting result in that more than half of the respondents recognise only one form of the homelessness, which is living on the street. Thus, other types of homelessness remain invisible for society.

Another quantitative study on attitudes toward homelessness was conducted in 2022 by VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Centre). The main conclusion of the research is that more than half (65%) of citizens think that it is necessary to help people experiencing homelessness, but it is the responsibility of the state¹¹. The main source that constructs negative stereotypes towards homelessness is the media. The study "Homelessness and the hate speech in mass media" (Koltsova 2009) demonstrates that the Russian media mostly constructs negative images of people experiencing homelessness as dirty, unhappy and dangerous people.

There is little research on Russian homelessness using a qualitative methodology. In a study on homeless people conducted in 1999 in Saint Petersburg by Tova Højdestrand, an

ethnographic methodology was used. The researcher does not identify homelessness as a social problem and homeless people as stigmatised objects and uses the narratives and definitions of her informants as co-actors, not as passive objects of the study (Höjdestrand 2005). Svetlana Stephenson, in her study, using the mechanisms of social exclusion and explains the reasons why people end up on the streets but does not compare female and male homelessness, nor does she highlight the specifics of gender homelessness (Stephenson 2006).

However, a qualitative methodology could be helpful in analysing the special needs of different categories of people experiencing homelessness and in providing information, both to the state and to NGOs, to improve the quality of their services to them. For example, my research on homeless women's coping strategies conducted in 2019–2020 (Kuziner 2020) made the NGO 'Nochlezhka' and some regional organisations think about special female-only services to organise a safe environment for women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless but are afraid to come to mixed-gender spaces (Nekrasova 2021). The aim of this paper is to compare women's and men's coping strategies of homelessness.

The gender aspects of homelessness in the Russian context are almost invisible to scholars. Some studies mention that one of the main reasons for female homelessness is domestic violence (Kovalenko and Strokova 2010), and scholars analysing coping strategies write about sex work among women (Höjdestrand 2005). Academic papers on homelessness in Russia are mostly focused on the analysis of the definitions (Taliev and Khvoyn 2021) and typologies of homelessness (Volkov 2010). The majority of research papers are focused on analyzing the causes of homelessness, identifying strategies for reintegrating homeless individuals and finding effective solutions for their recovery (Kovalenko and Strokova 2010; Meteleva and Bogdanova 2022; Vitko and Lebedeva 2021). Thus, people experiencing homelessness are also most often considered by scholars as a deviant, marginalised group and a social problem or social illness (Osinskiy et al. 2003; Vinogradova 2021). Homelessness is defined as an institutional problem, a situation where the government cannot cope with its responsibilities (a violation of the right to housing, a lack of affordable housing, a system of obligatory registration in the region of living) (Alekseeva 2003; Taliev and Khvoyn 2021).

This paper begins with background information on the specifics of the Russian housing policy and an overview of the social services for the homeless in Saint Petersburg. This is followed by a review on the theoretical concepts of homelessness causes and its gender aspects. The latter part of this paper focuses on an analysis of the ethnographic study of the gender-specific coping strategies of homeless people in Russia.

Background

Unlike Europe, in Russia, it is common to buy apartments instead of renting¹². For Russian residents, it is obligatory to have a registration ("propiska"), which you can obtain by owning a house or by renting (which is usually more difficult to achieve)¹³.

It is important to explain this registration system. An official registration helps a person to find a job and obtain free medical service, but it limits the range of help provided to people experiencing homelessness. If a man/woman has a "propiska", even in another city, he/she cannot live in state shelters. Officially, a person has all the rights without registration, but if he or she does not have temporal or permanent registration, a fine should be paid¹⁴. In addition, formal registration may be required when individuals employ and enroll their children in kindergarten and school¹⁵. One of the participants, instead of carrying out her sentence at home (as she was arrested for petty/minor theft), had to spend this time in prison due to the fact that she had no registration. There is also a state system granting dwellings to special categories of people, for example, to orphans¹⁶. The flats are given by law, but in practice, it can sometimes take a lot of time to acquire this dwelling, and the quality of it could be inadequate for living.

Saint Petersburg is considered as one of the few Russian cities where the social services to homeless people are the most developed and effective. There are state and not-for-profit organisations providing help to the homeless: shelters (Nochlezhka (for 52 people), the

Maltese Relief Service (for 50 people), the shelter of the Pokrov commune (for 43 people), medical help (Charity hospital), food (Nochlezhka, Diakonia and some grass-roots initiatives), psychological help (community centre for women who are homeless). There are separate bedrooms for women and men in the shelters, but there is no female-only shelter. When I started my research, in 2018, there were no specialised gendered services for homeless people. The local state also provides social services for people experiencing homelessness. There are 13 state shelters for 283 people in total. The same system works in other cities of Russia (the smaller the city, the smaller the number of NGOs). In contrast, there are more than 14 services for women in crisis situations. Crisis centres for women are usually focused on providing help to single mothers, minor mothers, women with prison experience, victims of domestic abuse, victims of trafficking and those that do not have enough resources to provide quality help to other categories, including women experiencing homelessness.

Some of the research participants had a Soviet passport, and it is important to explain why this could be a problem. A Soviet passport is a relic of the past but can be a real problem for people in the situation of homelessness. After the Soviet Union broke down, some people did not change their passports for some reasons. Practically, they were living in the newly defined country for many years but without a valid passport of that country. It is impossible to obtain an official job, to have a pension, etc., without this. It is very difficult for people to subsequently obtain Russian citizenship after such a long time since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 because they have not officially existed in the state since the establishment of said state. While a person is healthy enough to work and earn a living for himself or herself, a Soviet passport is not a problem. When it is time for them to retire and receive their pension and other social state payments, the person meets the great wall of the Russian bureaucratic system. Nowadays, the number of homeless people with the problem of having an old Soviet passport is decreasing, particularly with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The proportion has changed and is now populated more by people made homeless as a result of the pandemic and the recent military operation, but this is a topic of another discussion.

2. The Theoretical Concepts of the Causes of Homelessness

When we discuss the pathways into homelessness, we must admit that homelessness is a complex phenomenon, and there is not one single reason that leads to it. Homelessness is a dynamic process that could have different forms and happens periodically. In this study, homelessness is understood as a life situation when men/women lack resources: social, economic and cultural. The risk of becoming homeless is higher if you lose some of these. Men/women might formally have a house but cannot live there due to various reasons. Coping strategies in the situation of homelessness also depend on the resources a person has and how they use them.

There are two main groups of homelessness causes (Snow and Anderson 1993). The first group refers to the macro-level and is associated with structural conditions that affect the state socio-economic situation and the risks. The second group is connected with biographical, individual contexts that lead people to homelessness. Homelessness is viewed as a long-term dynamic process, the causes of which are both structural and individual (Toro et al. 1995). The “trajectories” of homeless people depend not only on external conditions (social, economic situation of the country) but also on individual situations (Anderson 2001).

The structural causes of homelessness are related to social, economic and cultural conditions that can affect people’s life courses (Abelson 1999). Structural reasons can be different in different societies (Watson 2000). There are two types of structural causes of homelessness: the first is related to housing infrastructure, and the second is related to socio-economic conditions.

The structural causes of homelessness include the socio-economic situation, namely economic crises, unemployment and social inequality. For example, Højdestrand, in her

study, explains the problem of homelessness in Russia with the collapse of the Soviet Union and, as a result, the inability of the 'Soviet' people to adapt to the new economic realities (Höjdestrand 2005). However, in this research paper, this factor is not the reason for homelessness in most cases. It could be said that nowadays, in the new socio-economic conditions, a new generation of homeless people has come—those who find themselves in a situation of homelessness because of other individual and socio-economic reasons.

Despite the dominant position of the structural/individual debate, there have been attempts to critique and offer other explanations on the causes of homelessness. Drawing on a critical realist explanatory framework, the study of Bramley and Fitzpatrick emphasises the crucial role of poverty in the emergence of homelessness. Furthermore, scholars highlight the influence of wider labour and housing market conditions as well as specific demographic, personal and social support factors (Bramley and Fitzpatrick 2018).

Some scholars think that the definition of homelessness, as well as the definition of its causes, is unclear because government agencies and society do not see the real problem of homelessness adequately. This could be explained by the existing repressive system of control over the migration of citizens, which was inherited from the old Soviet regime.

Other researchers define the causes of homelessness as a lack of social and economic resources, and, as a result, the homeless are dependent on the social policy of the state (Padgett 2007). The state decides to which groups of citizens the programmes of social policy will be addressed and how the problem of housing will be solved. Even when the state develops programmes to help the homeless, not all groups of people without housing are taken into account.

Homelessness and its causes are also defined in terms of the concept of social exclusion. From the point of view of this concept, people become homeless because of social exclusion: exclusion from the official labour market; exclusion from the legal field (lack of civil rights); exclusion from the real estate market (lack of housing). Somerville defines the causes of homelessness as the result of poverty and social and housing policies (Somerville 2013). He criticises Weber's "underclass" theory and the "culture of poverty" theory, explaining that homelessness is not a static condition and does not define social classes. Within the framework of this concept, homelessness causes are explained by a high level of social inequality and poverty as a result of an unstable economic situation (Mayock and Bretherton 2016; Ruzova and Kalinina 2016).

Svetlana Stephenson uses Bourdieu's theory of social space and the concept of "exclusion" to define the causes of homelessness. According to Stephenson, a homeless person is an individual who has been excluded by society. Conceptualising the social position of the homeless, Stephenson refers to Bauman and uses the category of 'garbage' (Stephenson 2006). These are people who did not "fit" into the generally accepted norms constructed by society, and therefore society excludes them. According to this approach, the reason for homelessness is an asocial lifestyle and/or inability to integrate into the existing social system and rules. This conceptualisation of homelessness comes into conflict with the scholars who classify the homeless as people who find themselves in a situation of homelessness for reasons beyond their control (for example, disability or a loss of housing).

Despite the fact that the structural causes of homelessness are explained at the macro-level, and these are guided by the state and NGOs, it is necessary to take into account the individual trajectories that lead people to this situation. This could help to create a useful social system for helping the homeless. Snow and Anderson distinguish the following categories of biographical reasons for homelessness: it is a voluntary choice; mental problems and addiction(s); a lack of family support; an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances (Snow and Anderson 1993).

Mackenzie and Chamberlain use the concept of a 'homeless career' to analyse the causes of homelessness as a process (Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2006). Researchers believe that there is no definite point when people become homeless. Before identifying himself/herself as 'homeless', a person goes through different stages or experiences different life events. The authors identify three main causes of homelessness: homelessness

resulting from housing problems; homelessness as a result of family problems; homelessness as an unsuccessful transition into adulthood.

3. Gender Aspects of Homelessness

European and American scholars have researched gender, as one of the important determinants of homelessness, since the 1980s (Austerberry and Watson 1983). Although the homelessness experience of men and women have some commonalities, the existing research analyses the importance of gender and its influence on the paths of homelessness (Savage 2016). In most research, homeless people are considered as a heterogeneous group whose experience and coping strategies could be different, not just because of gender but also even within different groups of the same gender (Mayock and Bretherton 2016).

Scholars have concluded that women experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable and stigmatised than men (Finfgeld-Connett 2010) and face unique challenges such as gender-based violence, family breakdown, poverty, lack of affordable housing and increased risks of sexual exploitation and abuse (Bretherton and Mayock 2021). The patriarchal social relations, labour inequality and the dominance of the traditional family models explain this. Women in such societies play traditional roles of mothers and housewives, and they have a direct connection to the home. Losing the home and becoming homeless leads to social (and often, self-) stigma, even within the homeless population (Edgar and Doherty 2001). Modern academic research on homelessness acknowledges the importance of the analysis of the gender dimensions of homelessness and gender-specific needs of homeless people (Williams 2003).

Recent research also criticises the existing classification of homelessness, stating the importance of understanding the diverse experiences of homeless women across different age groups, ethnicities and migration statuses (Bretherton and Mayock 2021). The systematic analyses of the different gender aspects of homelessness, especially in countries with high levels of gender inequality, domestic abuse and violence against women, can make the needs and problems of homeless women and men more visible.

Women's homelessness is also analysed by using an intersectional approach. In this methodological perspective, homelessness and, especially, gendered homelessness is caused by class, race and ethnic inequalities and is determined as a form of poverty (ibid: 20). Research also shows that homeless mothers and families with children are prioritised in state and NGO provisions of help. Moreover, their life situation is often not recognised as 'homelessness'. Nowadays, this leads us to the popular concept of the invisibility of some groups of women experiencing homelessness (Lippert and Lee 2015). Some scholars classify this situation as being 'at risk' of homelessness (Amore et al. 2011).

There is a significant body of research focused on the concept of the home and its understanding in the narratives of homeless women. While traditionally, the home is considered as a safe, comfortable place with privacy and emotional security, the home could be unsafe for women who experience domestic abuse (Tessler et al. 2001; Bretherton and Mayock 2021). However, in this case, it could be interesting to compare the understanding of the home by men who have experienced homelessness.

Scholars whose research focuses on the coping strategies of people who are homeless identify several gender differences. Women often seek the help of relatives, friends and partners to avoid homelessness. To cope with the situation of homelessness, they use their feminine capital (Watson 2016). They most likely find a partner that provides not only a roof but also feelings of safety and emotional comfort. To create a sense of security and avoid victimisation on the street, homeless women engage in various forms of gender performance, such as conforming to traditional feminine norms ('femininity simulacrum'), adopting masculine attributes ('masculinity simulacrum') or hiding gender-constructing elements ('genderlessness'). By adhering to societal expectations of femininity or masculinity, homeless women aim to deter potential threats and gain a sense of control over their environment. However, the authors also highlight the limitations of this strategy, as it can reinforce gender inequalities and restrict women's agency (Huey and Berndt 2008).

Some research findings show that even the career paths of people experiencing homelessness are clearly gendered (O'Grady and Gaetz 2004). Other research, however, has shown that in situations of street survival, the behaviour of men and women become the same (Evans and Forsyth 2004).

In most articles on the gender specifics of homelessness, scholars pay more attention to the experiences of homeless women. This is reasonable because women's homelessness usually has different forms, including hidden ones. Statistically, women are likely to be victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse; they are more vulnerable and unsafe while experiencing homelessness. However, men's experiences are important too, and this can help to see not only the gender difference but also differences among other homelessness people's groups (young and old homeless people, disabled homeless, LGBT homeless) and to create services that are more flexible. There is no research focused on the gender aspects of homelessness in Russia or any other groups of homeless (including LGBT).

There is little research on gender regimes in the situation of homelessness. Erin Dej explores how homeless men demonstrate masculinity within the homeless community. She concluded that in the situation of a lack of resources, homeless men perform compensatory masculinity as a way to cope with the situation. This coping mechanism influences the way they use supporting services (Dej 2018).

This research can continue the discussion on gender regimes and the performativity of homeless men and women. This research adds scholarship on hyper masculinity and femininity among men and women who do not fit into traditional patriarchal standards of the concrete society. This article contributes to the existing discussion by exploring the homelessness coping strategies and their gender aspects with the example of a new case in the Russian field where strong gender inequality and a strong patriarchy exists. It also describes a new coping strategy as living in 'labour houses' that could be considered as one of the trafficking forms and that is more common for males.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Aims and Design

This article is based on an ongoing doctoral research project exploring the gender specifics of homeless people's coping strategies. This research uses ethnography methodologies, including unstructured and semi-structured interviews and participant observation to analyse the life history narratives of homeless men and women and to explore their everyday experiences. This approach is very suitable for studying vulnerable social groups. It enables researchers to gain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the experiences, perspectives and lived realities of research participants (Hoolachan 2016). In this project, ethnography helped to provide immersion into the daily lives and social contexts of homeless women and men, providing rich and detailed data. This research methodology also amplified the voices of homeless women, made them visible to Russian society and promoted their agency, challenging the dominant narratives and power structures that perpetuate their vulnerability.

The primary research questions were: How do men and women who are homeless cope with their life situation? What are the differences? What narrative repertoires are available to homeless men and women? These questions were explored through interview questions that asked about the experiences and expectations of intimate relationships, the causes and impacts of homelessness, the utilisation of survival sex and the conceptualisation of identity.

4.2. Data Collection

Fieldwork was carried out from November 2018 to August 2021 in Saint Petersburg. The data that are presented in this article came from participant observations during the author's volunteering at NGO projects and from 60 in-depth (by 30 men and women, respectively), biographical interviews with women and men who had experienced homelessness and were living in Saint Petersburg, Russia, at the time of the research. At the initial stages

of the research, a purposive sample was used to recruit female participants who identified themselves as homeless and lived in temporary dwellings (shelters, abandoned buildings) or on the street. As the research progressed, theoretical sampling was employed to select additional participants and cases. When it was decided to use theory of social capital, both women and men with different experience of homelessness and living situations were invited to participate.

A mix of different housing situations allowed for a sample that represented different variations in terms of homelessness representation and personal experiences.

As a 'participant-as-observer', the researcher volunteered in different projects helping homeless people where they communicated with homeless people and other volunteers and documented conversations, activities and reactions to different events. This work also helped to correct the research design project and to recruit more participants.

Most of the research participants were recruited with the help of the NGOs 'Nochlezhka', Maltese Relief Service and the Shelter of Pokrov Commune. All the people who agreed to participate in interviews did so voluntarily. Recruitment continued until data saturation occurred, with no new themes being identified. Interviews ranged from fifty minutes to two hours. With the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim for further analysis and then coded. Data were thematically grouped in the qualitative data management software programme, QDAminer.

4.3. Setting and Participants

Participants were between 31 and 72 years old and came from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Most of them had experienced different forms of homelessness (street homelessness, sleeping in house basements or abandoned buildings, living at friends' or partners' places and living in shelters). Forty-five participants moved to Saint Petersburg from other regions, including ten who had other citizenships. Three people had Soviet passports.

During the interview, participants were asked about their lives: basic demographic information, family, childhood, education, career, marriage experience, housing and homelessness story and current official housing situation. The informants were asked about coping in the situation of homelessness and their plans. Additionally, they were asked about their self-identification (if the person considered him-/herself as homeless and why or why not) and how they determined the notion of a 'house'.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

The ethics board of the university approved the design of this research. Each participant had the research questions and research goals explained to them and gave verbal consent to conduct an interview. To protect the anonymity of the informants, pseudonyms were used. There is a question for discussion as to whether researchers should pay participants. During this research, the author tried different schemes of reward for the interview. Paying cash negatively influenced the quality of the interview. People considered it as a 'salary' and tried to do the job 'well' by giving an expected 'right answer'. The most suitable model of reward was buying some "necessary" items (food, cigarettes and sanitary napkins) after the interview.

4.5. Limitations

Some of the research participants were subsequently excluded because of inappropriate behaviour after initial or later contact. The acquisition of the data was, in and of itself, an evolving process. Given the fact that the researcher was a young, slightly built female, there was an obvious threat to her safety and security when entering potentially hostile buildings. She experienced several situations where the participants appeared to have ulterior motives for participation. Examples of these include flirting and night calls with an invitation to continue relations in more intimate way. As such, she determined that the safest approach was to enter the buildings only when accompanied by a fellow male anthropologist.

Several limitations may have affected the transferability of this study. The participants of this research lived in unstable housing situations. Sometimes it was almost impossible to find a private place to talk because of the lack of facilities of the shelters. It was also difficult to arrange the meetings on other days because most of the research participants did not have mobile phones and did not have 'regular' life schedules to arrange meetings. Because of this, connection with some of research participants was lost, and the interviews were not developed.

4.6. Data Analysis

This research used a qualitative approach to analyse the life history narratives of men and women who experienced homelessness in order to investigate the coping strategies they used in their life situation. To code and analyse the data collected, a thematic analysis was used. For the analysis of the interviews, a constructivist model of analysis, within the framework of a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2002), was used. The analysis stages consisted of open and axial coding. Phrases and meanings were looked at line by line and categorised. After the analysis, the next categories in the biographies of the informants were identified, which culminated in their homelessness, together with their coping strategies: past and present housing situation, family relations in childhood, relations with partners (marriage and parenting story), addictions, losing home due to fraud, health situation and experience, if any, of imprisonment. Based on these categories, the life timelines were constructed. In this study, any specific gendered reasons, aspects and differences of homelessness were also analysed.

4.7. Rigour

To address the credibility of the research, the following techniques were used. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged fieldwork using different methodologies (interviews with homeless people, expert interviews with social workers, observations). Each participant was informed about the research design in detail.

The preliminary results of the research were presented and discussed at a professional conference on homelessness held in Saint Petersburg with social workers and psychologists who had experience working with homeless people.

5. Results

5.1. Losing One's Home: Gendered Paths into Homelessness

To understand the differences in coping strategies between men and women, it was important to analyse the life "paths" of the research participants and their life experiences before becoming homeless as well as to investigate and identify the general and specific causes.

Both men and women, the participants of this research, had Russian citizenship and had dwellings that they had lost at some point. The reasons for losing their homes included fraudulent real estate deals, including trafficking (cases when a person changes his/her flat to a 'place' somewhere in a small town where they are provided with a 'propiska' and made to work for free). The absence of dwelling cannot always be considered as a main factor of homelessness. There are cases where a "house" is a resource that can be used in difficult life situations. For example, if a person loses his/her job but owns a dwelling, he/she can live there without paying rent. However, if a person rents their dwelling and does not own it, if they lose their job, they risk becoming homeless.

Olga, 35, was raised in an orphanage; she did not receive a flat from the state because she had a registration at the place where her biological mother lived. According to the Russian policy of giving flats to orphans, they receive this right only in cases if they do not have any dwelling before moving into an orphanage or a foster family. Orphanages house children up to the age of 18. When Olga reached this age, she left, found a job and rented an apartment in Moscow. After an accident, she lost her ability to work and could not pay her rent, and without any family to help or support her, she became homeless.

Alexander, 65, had previously served a long prison sentence and no longer communicated with his own family, nor did he have his own house, but he lived at his partner's apartment. After the partner's death, her relatives asked him to leave the flat.

Both Olga and Alexander noted that if they owned their own houses, it would be easier for them to cope with difficult life situations.

However, owning a house and having an official registration does not mean that you will not become homeless. Some of the research participants moved to Saint Petersburg from other Russian regions. Each of them initially owned a dwelling in their hometown. According to legislation, they were not homeless, because they owned a dwelling and had a registration. However, they did not want to or could not return to their hometown. In most cases, one of the main reasons was not having or losing family connections.

Most of the research participants (both men and women) came from single parent or dysfunctional families and experienced neglect, abuse or abandonment in childhood and adolescence. Some said that their parents' divorce and the subsequent re-marriage of their mothers led to a feeling of worthlessness and alienation from their parental family.

'Q: Did your parents divorce and your mother got married again?

A: Yes, again, yes. They have a child together, and it turned out that I am like a relic of the past' (male, 42 y.o., 5 years of homelessness, was three times in prison, divorced).

Some experienced living at an orphanage or with relatives while their parents were in prison or were deprived of parental rights. In these circumstances, losing family relations with parents could be the "beginning" of a future homelessness situation. The participants did not receive support from close relatives when they became at risk of homelessness.

Well, firstly, I would like to say that. . . from the beginning, I was born as an unwanted child. . . So, I didn't know this. . . I was already an adult, I was 30 when my father told me this, he didn't think that I was his (male, 51 y.o., 10 years of homelessness).

'My parents divorced. Mom had her own life, she married again. And she did not care about me. Neither did father' (female, 31 y.o., 5 years of homelessness).

Among the common causes of homelessness, such as addiction, losing a home due to an accident or health problems, this article identified the gender specifics of homelessness, which are supported by research in other countries.

Hegemonic masculinity and the stereotypical image of the "real man" could be one of the causes of men's homelessness. Some respondents voluntarily left their houses to their ex-wives and children, and after different life circumstances (failure to find a well-paid job to rent an apartment, illness, lack of social support), they became homeless.

'I got divorced. Left my flat to my ex-wife, we have two kids. I rented, somewhere, somehow. Then, I had problems with my job and moved to Moscow. I did not like it there. And it is 5 years in August since I have been here (in the shelter)' (male, 54).

There were several stories when men came to the big cities to earn money, failed due to some circumstances (got robbed, lost documents, were injured, were tricked by their employer) and could not ask their families to help and support because it is shameful for an adult man to fail and to ask for help.

*'When I got into this situation, yes, I am afraid to tell her (his wife), that I am here (in the shelter), that I have a sh*tty situation. I know that she can help me, but I don't want her to know about my current situation. To be honest, I feel ashamed. [. . .] They don't know about my situation, so I don't want them to know. I am on a work trip for everybody just to work, that's all. This is not important for them to know that I am ill. Why should I upset my relatives, for what? I don't have to. I don't need their pity on the phone, why?' (male, 56 y.o.).*

'Even my kids do not know that I am homeless, nobody knows. Even my daughters, both of them. I don't want them to think about this. I know, it will pass, and it will pass tomorrow, maybe the day after tomorrow. But I will not continue living like that' (male, 63).

Women named domestic violence (including sexual abuse) and family conflicts with parents as one of the causes of their subsequent homelessness. Only one male respondent said he could live at his parents' place but did not want to because of his mother's addiction.

'Our parents are alcoholics. They have beaten us. And it was easier for us to leave, it was safer on the street, it was easier to find basements, to find attics, so...' (female, 35 y.o., more than 20 years of episodic homelessness).

'I did not want to go there. My mother made this house into trash. That is, it is sad to live in that house, it is impossible. There is no hearth. Nest of vipers. Just trash. And that's all. I haven't had a house since that time' (male, 41).

On the other hand, if women have well-established relations with relatives, friends and other social connections, it is not shameful to ask for help and for a place to live. For women, it is more shameful to be homeless than to ask for help. This may explain why women in homelessness situations stay more invisible to others. By using social networks and other people's places, they are formally not homeless. They do not live on the streets, and they do not come to social services and shelters until they can use their social resources.

'No, I did not live on the street. I was living at my friend's. She is a good woman. So, I did not live on the street' (female, 64).

Some of the women respondents experienced domestic violence, not only in childhood but also in adult life with their partners or children, but this was not the only reason that led them to homelessness. This could explain why victims of domestic abuse ask for help at special crisis centres for victims of domestic violence and are not considered homeless. Partners can be a key reason for women's homelessness. In this case, a partner is not the person from whom the woman runs away but the person for whom she runs for. In some cases, women said that they could find a place to live (for example, at a relative's home or at a shelter), but they were not accepted there with a partner, and they chose to become homeless instead of living without the partner. In the interviews, men did not face this problem of choice.

'A.: I did not talk with my mom at all.'

Q: Why?

A.: Well, because she did not want to let me in with V. Actually, my brother did not want. They did not know him at that time. Well, you know, not everyone will let an unknown man in. We got offended and... Well, we did not talk until we got to the shelter' (female, 35 y.o.).

This woman could live at her relatives' place, but she decided to live on the street so that she would not abandon her partner. Another woman met her partner at a shelter and had to leave it with him because he was outed due to alcohol addiction. In these situations, the partner, the traditional role of woman as a "wife", could be more important than a roof over the head.

Women more often become homeless due to male domestic violence but are more likely to use their social networks to not live on the street and visit social services only in cases when other support is not possible. Men are less likely to seek the help of relatives because of the perception that they have failed in their traditional masculine role of the family head, 'the breadwinner'. Men can also become homeless because of family conflicts, but it is more common for them to leave the house to their ex-partner if there are children. For example, 12 out of the 30 of male participants had experience of divorce and, as a result, left the house for their ex-spouse and their children.

5.2. Coping with Homelessness: 'Feminine' Capital and Using the Power of Patriarchy

We find that both men and women are more likely to rely on traditional gendered coping strategies in the situation of homelessness. Women are more likely to rely on their social networks to be accommodated, while men are more likely to depend on themselves.

Hyper masculinity plays one of the significant roles in the construction of homeless men's coping strategies. In their narratives, some men noted their dominant and privileged position over homeless women. To be homeless is bad, but to be a homeless woman is worse. In these cases, men usually divide women into two groups. First are the stereotypical homeless women (like other homeless)—addicted, dirty, marginalised. They do not need protection, and any relationship with them is shameful. However, there is another group, so-called "random" homeless women, who became homeless (according to men) accidentally. Usually, they keep looking like normative traditional feminine women. With these kinds of women, men use traditional 'real man' protective patriarchal scenarios.

'Usually they (homeless women who are homeless) are professional street bums. All they need is to give them a bottle of vodka. Of course, there are some women who accidentally become. . . I see a woman, she is very shy, scared of everything, looking around. Well, we befriended one man, when we lived in the shelter. And I told her: 'Girl! Come to us, we will protect you if something happens'. And one man approaches her like: 'Hey! Yo!', he is a real pig. He sees she is not like the others. And we are like: 'Girl, come to us, we will not touch you, we will chase them away' (male, 61).

Physical conflicts with other people were common in the homeless men's interviews. If you have power, you can not only protect yourself but also protect your belongings and your temporary home.

'You know, I don't like fighting, but here, I have to. I have to prove that I am right. If you don't touch me, I will go my way. But if you do—I will stand up for myself' (male, 41).

Most male participants, when talking about homeless partnerships, also said that women should play traditional roles while men have to collect all that is necessary to survive.

'A woman cannot get things to survive. It is not in her nature. She is. . . well. . . (pauses) We had a woman, she only cooked for us (smirks). We make money somewhere somehow, well. . . by selling metal, having some occasional job, collecting jars. . . So, we share, we buy alcohol, some food and bring it (to the temporary house). So, she cooks, that is all her duty. Other things are not for her, these are not women's things. This is hard for them. They are not men' (male, 44).

Women who are at risk of street homelessness are likely to use partners with apartments or, in the situation of street homelessness, prefer to have a partner to feel safe and protected. Some scholars call it "feminine" capital. In this research, the women also spoke about romantic partnerships with men as one of their main coping strategies.

'It is hard for a girl to survive alone. We need to be protected, supported, cared for' (female, 42).

Here, women mean not only physical safety but also emotional security. Women who were engaged in sexual romantic relations with men with apartments usually spoke in a passive voice about this experience: "I was taken", "he grabbed me into his house".

'It was one time when I was taken by one guy to live at his place. . . [. . .] I had fallen asleep at the railway station, woke up, and wanted to go. There is a man. And he sees that I am not a drunk chick. He said: Let's go. And I said, what the hell? I don't know you, you don't know me. Well, we got acquainted later. And I was taken by him to his flat, so. He liked to drink a lot, to be honest, molested me but without beating me. I left him several times but then. . . (he said) 'Please, come back' (female, 52).

For homeless women experiencing homelessness, it is important to stay a "normative woman", to be into romantic relations, to have a "husband". Even when a couple lives in an abandoned building, the woman usually carries out all the domestic chores, cleans the temporary home and cooks. This normalises her life as a homeless person, makes her "normal".

We lived with S. as a wife and husband. Yes, we lived so, he was my civil husband. I cooked for him, cleaned his clothes. That's how it is (female, 42).

Sex and physiology (for example, conversations about periods) are something that the participants did not want to talk about. Sex as an exchange for safety or something else was mentioned in the narratives of the women but only in cases of harassment and not as a voluntary chosen strategy.

Thus, we find that both men and women are more likely to rely on traditional gendered coping strategies in the situation of homelessness. In the stressful situation of homelessness, these traditional models of behaviour are exaggerated in order to save their 'normative' status.

5.3. Coping with Homelessness: Looking for a Job

To avoid being on the street, both men and women talk about searching for a job that provides accommodation, such as a hostel administrator, janitor, security officer or housekeeper. Usually, these jobs are gender-specific; women look for jobs like housekeeper, nurse, cleaner or hostel administrator, while men search for vacancies as a janitor, security officer or construction worker. This choice is determined by traditional gender roles in a patriarchal society, which was admitted by research participants. For women, it is easier to find a house cleaner vacancy than to be employed as a security officer, and vice versa.

'They didn't employ me (as hostel administrator). They were not interested in me. The owner was a woman. She said she needed a woman' (male, 57).

Usually, this job is illegal; people work without any officially signed agreement documents and for a lower salary (sometimes even for free) in order to be accommodated. On the one hand, both the employee and employer do not have to pay official wages and usually there is no need for education, high qualifications or experience. On the other hand, a person who works without any official agreement is at risk of not receiving a salary or having medical insurance in case of some incident. The work schedule is also not regulated and often includes more hours than is allowed by labour legislation.

Despite the fact that women have more job opportunities, some of the female informants said that they had experienced harassment and had to leave or were forced to leave the workplace.

'I have worked at the restaurant for several days. Firstly, it was okay, but in a few days my boss became very aggressive and fired me. I think this is because I refused to be in more intimate relations with him' (female, 36).

During the fieldwork, another job option was noted mostly in the men's narratives. These are so-called 'labour houses' or 'rehabilitation centres' that provide people with accommodation and work. Rehabilitation centres are private organisations, and their official aim is to resocialise people with addiction through labour. Usually, labour houses are rented flats where mostly men live (17–18 people). Few women can be accepted, and they carry out mostly domestic duties in these houses. Men are rented out to some companies and usually work in construction or renovation; they work almost only for food and a roof. Most NGOs consider these organisations a form of human trafficking¹⁷. Labour house owners can take people's passports and not pay them for their work. There are no data on whether it possible to leave these houses freely. This is question for discussion and further research. Most of the participants of the present research noted that they came to labour houses because they wanted to survive the cold winter, and some wanted to get a job. Some people talked about the negative experiences of working and living in these places. Most of them said that labour houses could be used as temporary accommodation to survive the cold winter but, still, you have to work hard for a small amount of money (about RUB 350–500 a day for 8–10 h of hard work (equivalent to EUR 5–10)), and it is hard to leave in most cases.

And then, I told them: 'Nah, guys, I think. . . I don't feel comfortable here. I think I will go'. And they're like: 'No, you will not go anywhere'. I said: 'Whaaat?' But when I came there, I gave them my passport. And they told me: 'We will not return your passport.'

How will you live without documents?' [. . .] And I almost gave them a fight. I said that I would start a fire and burn everything. So, they gave me my passport back' (male, 54).

Only a few women spoke about living and working at labour houses with mostly neutral, but also some negative, experiences. The reason is that women are used mostly as service workers.

Q: You said you were at a labour house. Can you tell me about it?

A.: It was my decision to come there. I needed to sleep, to wash myself and to have a rest. It was necessary to feel well to find a job. Who will hire you if you are dirty and stink? But it was harsh there. I escaped through the window, it was on the 2nd floor (female, 34).

6. Discussion

This is one of the first studies to investigate the gender aspects of homelessness in Russia. Homelessness is a complex dynamic process that can be determined as a process of losing and gaining resources and transforming them into capital—social, physical and cultural ones. The more resources a person has, the less chance for him or her to become homeless. In the situation of homelessness, women use 'feminine' capital (care, intimate relations) (Watson 2016), while men use a 'masculine' form of it (protection, using power) to survive.

Previous academic papers have explained homelessness as a consequence of social inequality and poverty (Mayock and Bretherton 2016; Ruzova and Kalinina 2016). Thus, women's homelessness can be explained as a result of gender inequality and a lack of women's rights (especially in Russia). Talking about homelessness, the men in this study spoke about cases of losing and getting jobs more often, while there were more narratives about losing and finding homes in the women's interviews.

The attitudes of homeless men towards homeless women are ambivalent. On the one hand, a woman with a long history of homelessness who does not conform to the traditional female model of a patriarchal society (femininity, self-care, caring for a man) is marginalised and perceived negatively. On the other hand, a homeless woman who conforms to the traditional ideas of femininity needs care and support.

In a society with strong patriarchal traditions, both the men and women in this study in the situation of a lack of resources exaggerated their masculinity and femininity, respectively. This can be seen as a protective mechanism. Male masculinity was more articulated in the narratives of the male research participants than femininity in the women's interviews. Hegemonic masculinity played one of the main roles in the males' paths towards homelessness; traditionally, men should be strong and independent. Not wanting to ask for family help in difficult situations or leaving the home for the ex-wife and children were named as the reasons for homelessness by some of the participants. This finding supports previous research examining men's tendencies to seek assistance (Amato and MacDonald 2011). However, our analysis of homeless men's masculinity did not meet the findings of the study by Erin Dej on compensatory masculinity (Dej 2018). She states that homeless men perform compensatory masculinity not only towards homeless women but also towards helping female professionals. In this research, the homeless men performed hyper masculinity only in their own group or with partners.

Women who are at risk of being homeless use more of their social capital than men do. It can be transformed into 'feminine' capital. Using it, women form intimate relationships to feel safe and comfortable both physically and emotionally. These findings support the findings of J. Watson about 'feminine' capital as a mechanism for self-protection. However, it is important to note that these relationships may also expose women to various dangers and risks (e.g., physical violence, sexual assault). Being in a vulnerable position and scared of living on the street, women chose to be in a partnership to have protection or to have roof whilst living with abusive partner.

The women participating in this research did not reflect on their intimate relationships as involuntary or as a method of self-protection. The topics of sex and body were raised

during the interviews. While talking about their partners, the women preferred discussing romantic relations, emotions and the care that they gave to their partners. By caring for a partner, women play a traditional patriarchal role that could also be seen as one of the coping strategies. These findings add to the body of feminist analysis on the social construction of homelessness and the influence of the patriarchy and misogyny in defining homelessness (Bretherton 2017). In a society with strong patriarchal values, having a partner (especially in a vulnerable situation such as homelessness) is natural and not considered as a coping strategy.

7. Conclusions

Homelessness can be defined as a situation of a lack of resources that can be transformed into capital (social, physical, cultural), where social capital means family, friends and acquaintances, physical capital is money and accommodation and cultural capital means education, professional skills and experience. The fewer resources a person has, the more at risk they are of homelessness. However, women who are at risk of street homelessness are likely to use their 'feminine capital', which can be in the form of partnerships with men who have a dwelling. In the situation of street homelessness, women are also likely to engage in romantic and sexual partnerships with men to provide not only protection but also emotional comfort. In patriarchal societies (and Russia is a very bright example of one), playing normative traditional gender roles is important for people. If you are not a mother, wife or housekeeper, you have failed. If you are not the father of the family, the breadwinner, you have failed.

These traditional patriarchal gender roles influence the gender specifics of homelessness. Women's and men's paths to and experiences of being homeless are different. Women's experiences of homelessness are usually more invisible than men's and have different forms. Women are more likely to become homeless because of domestic abuse. Instead of using shelters and other social services for homeless women who are at risk of street homelessness, they prefer to use their social networks and/or be engaged in a partnership to be accommodated. This could be explained by the fact that women who are homeless are more stigmatised than homeless men, and women are more vulnerable and unsafe on the streets than men. Most of the female research participants in this study had experienced harassment while living on the street or using social services for the homeless. Several of the women talked about losing their jobs because of harassment from their employer.

Because of this, women who are at risk of street homelessness tend to use all their social networks or even enter into a romantic partnership to have a roof over their heads. These partnerships with men are also common for women who live on the street or in temporary houses such as abandoned buildings. These partnerships provide mostly emotional comfort for women, make them feel like normative traditional women of a patriarchal society and normalise their living situations.

In contrast, in a situation of street homelessness, men use their masculinity. This can be explained as a compensatory mechanism for coping with the homelessness situation. For men, it is important to remain a traditional patriarchal man just as it is for women to play the role of a traditional wife and be feminine, even in the homelessness situation.

For men, the most common reason to leave the house is because of divorce (especially if there are children). Men also try to accumulate their resources so as to not become street homeless. In this case, they are likely to use their labour resources. This can also explain why homeless men come to 'labour houses' instead of shelters or social services. On the one hand, this strategy prevents street homelessness; on the other, it involves trafficking.

To admit being homeless is shameful both for men and women, and one of the main coping strategies is to find a job with accommodation. The preferred job positions also have gender specifics. Women often look for domestic jobs such as being a housekeeper or nurse, while men try to find positions connected with physical work (it must be noted that these kinds of jobs usually require low qualifications and can be precarious).

The research into homelessness in Russia is still full of gaps and interesting topics for scholars. Homelessness in Russia is officially explained as a situation where a person physically does not own a dwelling; other forms of homelessness are almost invisible for the state, media and social services. However, homeless people are a heterogeneous group with different experiences and needs. This research shows that, as in other European countries, homelessness in Russia is affected by gender. Therefore, there should be services that meet the needs of specific groups of homeless people. The understanding of gender-specific coping strategies also can help social services and NGOs to build more effective homelessness prevention strategies. For example, these could involve the creation of special shelters or services for single homeless women and for homeless families, both before the homelessness situation or during it, and improving the educational and professional training programmes in shelters (in order to replace ‘labour houses’).

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Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Federal State Statistics Service, Population of private and collective households, households of the homeless in Russian Federation, 2010, p. 220, retrieved 10 June 2022, https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/vol11/pub-11-3-5.pdf (accessed on 10 February 2023); Federal State Statistics Service, Population of private and collective households, households of the homeless in Russian Federation, 2021, retrieved 10 February 2023, https://rosstat.gov.ru/itog_inspect (accessed on 10 February 2023).
- ² Official information of the Saint Petersburg Committee for social politics, retrieved 26 December 2022, <https://www.gov.spb.ru/gov/otrasl/trud/socialnye-voprosy/bomz/> (accessed on 26 December 2022).
- ³ Charity organisation ‘Nochlezhka’, The results of the study “Estimation of the number of homeless people based on data on their mortality”, conducted by Validata, retrieved 10 February 2023, https://homeless.ru/upload/iblock/a63/Itogi_raboty_po_modeli_HELP_VALIDATA.pdf (accessed on 10 February 2023).
- ⁴ I Shirmanova A Kokourova and N Shachnev, ‘The number of homeless people may multiply in Russia. We are telling you how many homeless people there are now and how to help them’ (in Rus.), To be precise. A platform with verified data on the scale of social problems in Russia and methods for their solution, 30 March 2022.
- ⁵ The European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, European typology of homelessness ethos and housing exclusion, p. 1, retrieved 10 June 2022, <https://www.feantsa.org/download/ethos2484215748748239888.pdf> (accessed on 10 June 2022).
- ⁶ The European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless. Access: URL: [feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion](https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2005/04/01/ethos-typology-on-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion) (accessed on 21 May 2020).
- ⁷ ‘Legal and social aspects of the problem of homelessness’, Homelessness in modern Russia: problems and ways to solve them, Bulletin of the Interregional Network ‘For Overcoming Social Exclusion’, vol. 1, 2008, p. 11.
- ⁸ ‘Social and Legal aspects of the homelessness problem in Russia. Materials of the regional research’, SPb, 2007, p. 72.
- ⁹ O-k research and Tiburon research group, ‘The attitudes towards homelessness and non-government organisation “Nochlezhka”, Research report, 2020, pp. 1–13, retrieved 11 December 2020, https://moscow.homeless.ru/upload/iblock/be2/Otchet_otnoshenie2020_sai_t.pdf (accessed on 11 December 2020).
- ¹⁰ Fraudulent real estate deals as a cause of homelessness are very typical in Russia. It also can be a reason of people trafficking (so-called “black realtors” find lonely, usually alcohol addicted people, make fraud estate deals and send this person to “labour houses”).
- ¹¹ VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center). ‘Person without home’, Research report, 2022, pp. 1–5.

- ¹² VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center). 'My house and how I rule it', Research review, 2020, retrieved 9 May 2023, <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/moj-dom-i-kak-ya-im-upravlyayu> (accessed on 9 May 2023).
- ¹³ Law of the Russian Federation N 5242-1 "On the right of citizens of the Russian Federation to freedom of movement, choice of place of stay and residence within the Russian Federation", articles 3, 5, 27.01.2023, retrieved 9 May 2023, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_2255/04639a757c2dbd693185a3bc7de296851abe76b8/ (accessed on 9 May 2023).
- ¹⁴ 19.15. Residence of a citizen of the Russian Federation without an identity document of a citizen (passport). Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses, N 195-FZ, 28.04.2023, retrieved 9 May 2023, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_34661/ (accessed on 9 May 2023).
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- ¹⁶ Federal Law 'On Additional Guarantees for Social Support for Orphans and Children Left without Parental Care', 4.12.1996, retrieved 10 May 2023, <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/9043973> (accessed on 10 May 2023).
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