HOMELESSNESS AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES IN SOUTH KOREA AS COMPARED WITH JAPAN*

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This paper is based on the analysis of data from two surveys (one is of 225 homeless people in Busan, South Korea and the other is of 582 citizens in Busan, South Korea and Fukuoka, Japan). This paper examines four issues regarding homelessness in South Korea: the characteristics of homeless people, the causes of the length of homeless careers, the process of homelessness, and community attitudes towards homelessness. In order to explore community attitudes towards homelessness, we conducted a comparative study between South Korea and Japan. Our major findings are as follows. First, the street homeless people have longer stretches of homelessness, have higher percentages of people coming from the working class in total, have more cases of unstable mental health, and better adapt to homelessness than sheltered homeless people. Second, the homeless people who have had more years of education and have a higher percentage of time worked after the first job have shorter lengths of homeless careers. Homeless people who better adapt to the street have longer lengths of homeless careers. Third, the period between job loss and leaving the home is very short. The high prevalence of 'never return to the home' is a characteristic of the residential trajectories of homeless people. Finally, South Koreans have more positive attitudes towards homelessness, considering structural conditions to be the main cause of homelessness. Japanese have more negative attitudes towards homelessness, assuming personal problems to be the main cause.

Key Words: *Homelessness, Community Attitudes, South Korea, Japan*

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with four issues regarding homelessness, analyzing data from two surveys (one is of 225 homeless people in Busan, South Korea and the other is of 582 citizens in Busan, South Korea and Fukuoka, Japan). First, comparing sheltered homeless people with homeless people living in the streets, we discuss characteristics of the

homeless in South Korea: homeless experiences, human capital, work attitudes, family relations, disease and disability, cultural identity, awareness of cause and responsibility for homelessness. Second, we analyze the causes of the length of homeless careers. Which factors affect the length of homeless careers? The knowledge of the factors will help us to make policies to reduce the length of homeless careers. Third, we trace time and space relations of the homelessness process, exploring the period between job loss and homelessness, and patterns of residential trajectories of homeless people. The knowledge of homelessness processes and residential trajectories will also help us to enhance our understanding of homeless people. Finally, the issue of community attitudes towards homelessness has been rarely discussed in the field of homelessness studies, although community attitudes are deeply related to homelessness policy. We compare community attitudes towards homelessness between South Koreans and the Japanese.

BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Length of Homeless Careers

The study on the length of homeless careers is just as important as the study on the causes of homelessness. What is the difference between long-term homelessness and short-term homelessness? What are reasons for long-term homelessness? What affects the length of homeless careers? It is not until recently that the length of homeless careers has been on research agendas (Sosin et al., 1990; Piliavin et al., 1993; Piliavin et al., 1996).

The factors which affect the length of homeless careers can be narrowed down into five categories: human capital, work attitudes, family relations, disease and disability, and cultural identity. I will discuss each category, listing empirical measures which I use as indicators of concepts. I also suggest hypotheses about relations between the measures and long-term homelessness.

The lack of human capital has been considered a causing factor that affects homelessness (Burt and Cohen, 1989). Poor education and lack of employment skills are often linked to homelessness. I believe that the lack of human capital is a catalyst for the onset of homelessness and affects the length of homelessness as well. I employ three variables to measure the concept of the lack of human capital. Education is the

first and the other two are related to employment situations: the percentage of time worked since the first job and class location before homelessness. The hypothesis related to human capital is as follows. Hypothesis 1: the homeless people who have had a lower level of education, lower percentage of time worked since the first job, and a lower class location will be homeless for a longer period of time.

Homelessness has also been attributed to individual personalities, and work attitudes in particular. Laziness, idleness, and lack of the will to work have been discussed as causes of homelessness (see Murray (1990) regarding moral values and behavior characteristics of the underclass, including the homeless). I argue that work deprivation and job searching are related to the length of homelessness. Hypothesis 2: homeless people who have higher levels of work deprivation and lower potential of searching for jobs after homelessness are more likely to be homeless for longer periods of time.

Bahr and Caplow (1973) are the first researchers who emphasized specific characteristics of family relations as causing factors of homelessness. According to them, homeless people were more likely to never have been married, grown up with childhood foster care, and are without family contact (Bahr and Caplow, 1973). The characteristics of family relations of homeless people have been consistently discussed since then (Rossi, 1989; Wright, 1989). Sosin et al (1990) also found that homeless people had more childhood foster care experience and less family and friend contact than non-homeless people. Piliavin et al (1993) suggest that childhood foster care placement affects long-term homelessness. In order to measure the concept of family relations, I propose four variables: family formation, family contact, living as an orphan, and childhood foster care experience. The hypothesis related to family relations is as follows. Hypothesis 3: the length of homelessness is longer among people who have not formed families, were orphans, have experienced childhood foster care placement, and have little or no current family contact.

Physical or mental diseases have also been considered as affecting homelessness (Farr et al., 1986; Rossi, 1989; Wright, 1989; Baum and Burnes, 1993). Alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness are emphasized as causing factors of homelessness. I propose that they affect not only the onset of homelessness, but also ensure long-term homelessness. I propose a hypothesis establishing four variables regarding this: disease, physical dysfunction, alcohol addiction, and mental health. Hypothesis 4: homeless people who have disease,

physical dysfunctions, current alcohol addiction, and/or unstable mental health will have longer periods of homelessness.

According to Piliavin et al. (1993; 1996), adaptation to homelessness also affects the length of homelessness. That is, homeless people who adapt well to their situation are likely to be homeless for longer. Considering two variables of homeless identity and street adaptation, a hypothesis can be made. Hypothesis 5: homeless people who have a strong homeless identity and adapt better to living in the streets have longer terms of homelessness.

Dynamics of Homelessness

One of the most important issues in recent studies of homelessness is the patterns of residential transition. The length, permanency, and recurrence of homelessness are discussed as major issues as well. The studies exploring these issues are concerned with dynamics of homelessness (Sosin et al., 1990; Rocha et al., 1995; Piliavin et al., 1996; Wong et al., 1997; Wong et al., 1998). Within these studies, it was found that a considerable number of homeless people experienced prior homeless spells.

Dealing with the dynamics of homelessness, I have focused on two major points: 1) the period of time from job loss to homelessness, and 2) the residential transitions after leaving the home. The hypothesis concerned with the relation between the period of time from job loss to homelessness and important factors such as class, age, and marriage status is as follows. Hypothesis 6: homeless people who were of the working class, younger individuals, and individuals who never had solid family formations are more likely to have shorter periods of time from job loss to homelessness. On the topic of residential transitions, I describe the facts found in research of homeless individuals instead of proposing a hypothesis.

Community Attitudes towards Homelessness

There have not been many discussions about community attitudes towards homelessness. Only a few researchers have been concerned with this issue (Kincaid, 1995; Shinn, 1992; Lee, Jones, and Lewis, 1990, 1992). Lee, Jones, and Lewis (1990, 1992) suggested that people's awareness of the causes of homelessness had an effect on their attitudes towards homeless policy issues. According to Lee, Jones, and Lewis, those who consider structuring conditions as the main cause of

homelessness pay more attention to homeless-related policy issues than those who consider personal problems as the main cause. Comparing South Korea and Japan, we deal with similarities and differences in people's consciousness and attitudes towards homelessness. What do people identify as causes of homelessness? What attitudes do they have towards homelessness? Are the attitudes towards homelessness related to the identification of causes of homelessness? Though these issues are very important, they are rarely discussed.

Samples and Data

The data results for this study were obtained from two surveys. The first survey is of homeless adult men, age 18 and over, who live in Busan, South Korea. The survey was conducted in October, 1999. It was estimated at that time that Busan had about 800 homeless people, with 620 of these homeless people living in one of ten homeless shelters while the rest slept in the streets. The total number of homeless people in South Korea was estimated to be 6,100 in 2000. It was also estimated that among them, 4,800 homeless people are in homeless shelters and 1,300 are in the streets. In Japan the number of rough sleepers was estimated to be about 17,000 in the five Japanese cities of Yokohama, Kawasaki, Nagoya, Tokyo and Osaka in 1999 (Kennett and Iwata, 2003). It is also said that the number of homeless people reached 20,000 in 2000 (Aoki, 2000). For my survey, I selected 225 individuals in two free-meal programs (85) and in nine homeless shelters (140) in Busan, South Korea. I considered a person to be homeless if he had slept for at least 30 consecutive days in either a homeless shelter or in the street.

The questionnaire consisted of several sections: causes of homelessness, residential and job mobility, marriage status and family relations, work attitudes, alcohol addiction, health status, and estimations of shelters.

The questions about residential and job mobility were made from a retrospective panel design. Looking back on the past 5 years, the respondents provided data on the timing and duration of their various jobs and residential locations. The categorized residential locations included 1) outdoor (unsheltered) homeless locations, 2) single rooms at motels or SROs (Single Room Occupancy), 3) homeless shelters, 4) relatives' or friends' housing units, 5) homeless camps and other specific locations including mental hospitals, prison, etc.

The second survey is of 582 citizens in Busan, South Korea and Fukuoka, Japan, for the purpose of examining people's attitudes towards homelessness. The survey of Busan citizens was conducted in April of 2000, and the survey taken of Fukuoka citizens was conducted in April and May of 2000. Professor Takeo Ogawa, a sociologist at the Kyushu National University, Japan, was of great help to us in conducting the survey.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Homeless Experience

Table 1 shows some important characteristics of homeless people. The mean total time of homelessness is 13.5 months. The time duration in which respondents lived in motels or SROs was not counted in the total time of homelessness. The mean total time of homelessness of homeless people living in the streets is longer than that of homeless people living under sheltered conditions (18.6 months and 10.4 months respectively). Dealing with the mean total time of homelessness, if we consider one year as a period of time to distinguish long-term homelessness from short-term homelessness, then 33.6% of the respondents experienced long-term homelessness.

If we cross-tabulate total time of homelessness and homeless locations (street homelessness and sheltered homelessness), we see that sheltered homeless people experience homelessness for a shorter period of time than street homeless people. Parallel to this finding, we see that homeless people living in the streets experience long-term homelessness more than those living under sheltered conditions. The mean of the ages that an individual first experienced homelessness is 42.3 years old; 12.4% of the homeless surveyed have had prior periods of homelessness. Comparing the results of this survey to data found in the U.S., we can observe that those who continuously experienced exits and returns to homelessness were fewer in South Korea than in the United States: the percentage of homeless individuals in the U.S. having prior homeless experiences is in the fifties (57.1% in Piliavin et al., 1993; 54.2% in Wong et al., 1998).

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN SOUTH KOREA

Variables	Sheltered homeless	Street homeless	Total Homeless
Homeless experience			
Total time of homelessness(months)			
Mean	10.4	18.6	13.5**
Median	6.0	11.0	8.0
Time since first becoming homeless(months)			
Mean	15.9	39.3	24.7**
Median	8.5	15.0	11.0
Age first homeless(mean)	42.6	41.7	42.3
Prior homeless spells(%)	11.4	14.1	12.4
Human capital			
Age(mean)	43.6	44.7	44.0
Education(mean years)	10.7	10.2	10.5
Percent time worked since first job(mean)	75.2	72.6	74.2
Coming from new middle class(%)	10.6	2.7	7.8*
Coming from old middle class(%)	14.4	6.8	11.7*
Coming from working class(%)	57.6	78.1	64.9*
Coming from lower class(%)	17.4	12.3	15.6*
Work attitudes			
Work deprivation(mean)	6.32	6.63	6.44
Job searching(%)	92.1	90.6	91.6
Family relations			
Never married(%)	40.0	35.3	38.2
No children(%)	19.3	13.0	16.8
Orphaned before 18(%)	22.9	9.4	17.8*
Childhood foster care experience(%)	18.6	11.8	16.0
No family contact in last two months(%)	45.0	50.6	47.1
No shelter from family in last two months(%)	73.6	81.2	76.4
No money from family in last two months(%)	88.6	80.0	85.3
Disease or disability			
Disease(%)	33.6	38.8	35.6
Physical disability(%)	7.1	14.1	9.8
Alcohol addiction(%)	26.4	34.1	29.3
Mental health (mean)	1.02	1.45	1.19**
Cultural identification			
Sense of community with other homeless people(%)	50.0	52.9	51.1
Consider homeless people as friends(%)	42.9	55.3	47.6
Know well where free meal programs are(%)	25.7	61.2	39.1**
Know well where homeless shelters are(%)	21.4	60.0	36.0**
Consider homelessness as not dangerous(%)	45.0	34.1	40.9
Recognition of the cause and responsibility of homelessness			
Cause Individual cause	36.3	48.2	40.8
Structural cause	63.7	51.8	59.2
Responsibility Individual responsibility	50.0	54.8	51.8
Social responsibility	50.0	45.2	48.2
Total	140	85	225

*: p<.05   **: p<.01

Other Characteristics of Homeless People

The current mean age of homeless people is 44 years. The mean age of homeless people in Japan seems to be 10 years higher than that in South Korea. The mean age of the homeless people in Japan ranges from 53 to 55 (Aoki, 2000; Ezawa, 2002; Kennett and Iwata, 2003). The mean years of education are 10.5 years. Homeless people seem to have had jobs for a considerable amount of time before first experiencing homelessness. The percentage of time worked since one's first job is 74.2%. This means that if 10 years had passed before one became homeless since the individual's first job, he had had jobs during three-fourths of that 10-year time span. This percentage is higher than in the U.S. (56% in Piliavin et al., 1993).

In order to know the class distribution of homeless people before their homelessness, we asked them about the most significant job they had before they became homeless. Based on the answers, we classified 12 categories which were also reclassified to middle class (new middle class and self-employed), working class and lower class. For the details of class classification in South Korea, see Yoon (1994). When we consider the class status of homeless people, noting the jobs which they had before homelessness, we see that the majority come from the working class (64.9%). The percentages of subgroups of the working class are 25.9% as production workers, 25.1% as construction workers, 12.7% as service workers, and 1.2% as sales workers. The percentage of the lower class is 15.6%. The middle class is 19.5%, which includes the new middle class at 7.8% and the self-employed at 11.7%. Social class and homeless location are statistically related. Homeless people coming from the working class make up a greater population in the streets than in shelters, and those coming from the middle class are more likely to be found in shelters than in the streets. It is interesting to note that about 25% of sheltered homeless people came from the middle class.

Thirty-eight and two-tenths percent of homeless people have never been married or formed families. Seventeen and eight-tenths percent have lost both parents before reaching age 18 and 16% have grown up either in foster care institutions or under the care of relatives. We find that Korean homeless people have less foster care experience than those in the U.S., considering that 38.6% of homeless individuals have experienced foster care in the United States (Piliavin et al., 1993).

Twenty-nine and three-tenths percent of homeless people are found

to have signs of alcoholism. In order to examine alcohol addiction, we asked a set of twelve questions which is generally used in South Korea. The homeless people in the streets are more unstable in their mental health than the sheltered homeless people.

Cause and Responsibility of Homelessness

About 60% of homeless people attribute their homelessness to structural causes such as job loss and economic recession. About 40% consider individual factors such as individual ability, family problems, health problems (including alcoholism), and free life-style as major causes of their homelessness.

I asked homeless individuals to measure the importance of each of six potential causes of homelessness. The scale for rating the causes is from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong) points. If we examine the means of each of the six causes, we can see that those surveyed thought that the most important cause of homelessness was job loss (4.04), the second, family problems (2.76), the third, individual ability (2.59) followed by drinking (2.06), disease and accidents (1.56), and finally, dislike of work (1.27).

Although many homeless people tend to consider structural factors as the main cause of their homelessness, more homeless people take responsibility for their homelessness. Fifty-one and eight-tenths percent took individual responsibility for it, while 48.2% think that society and the state are responsible for their homelessness.

CAUSES OF THE LENGTH OF HOMELESS CAREERS

Causes of the Length of Homeless Careers

The five hypotheses suggested above are tested in this section. To examine the variables affecting the length of homeless careers, I establish a regression model with the length of homeless careers as a dependent variable. Independent variables can be classified into two categories: the first, demographic characteristics that homeless people have had long before homelessness (X_1 to X_8), and the second, other characteristics that they have had shortly before or after homelessness (X_9 to X_{16}). The regression model is as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + b_8X_8 + b_9X_9 + b_{10}X_{10} + b_{11}X_{11} + b_{12}X_{12} + b_{13}X_{13} + b_{14}X_{14} + b_{15}X_{15} + b_{16}X_{16} + e$$

Y : total time homeless (months)
X_1: age
X_2: education (years)
X_3: class (1: working class 0: middle class)
X_4: time worked since first job (%)
X_5: marriage status (1: not married 0: married)
X_6: orphan (1: yes 0: no)
X_7: foster care experience (1: yes 0: no)
X_8: physical disease (1: yes 0: no)
X_9: family contact (0-3)
X_{10}: job search (1: yes 0: no)
X_{11}: alcohol addiction (1: yes 0: no)
X_{12}: disease (1: yes 0: no)
X_{13}: mental health (0-5)
X_{14}: work deprivation (-14 to 14)
X_{15}: homeless identity (0-2)
X_{16}: street adaptation (0-3)

Table 2 shows regression coefficients of the variables which seem to affect the length of homeless careers. Among all of the 16 independent

TABLE 2. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF 16 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES WITH THE LENGTH OF HOMELESS CAREERS IN SOUTH KOREA

Independent variable	Non-standardized coefficient (b)	Standardized coefficient (beta)
(Constant)	36.174	
Age	.131	.063
Education	-1.208**	-.218**
Working class	1.750	.036
Time worked since first job	-.229**	-.254**
Never married	4.207	.001
Orphan	2.709	.055
Foster care experience	2.776	.053
Physical disease	2.399	.038
Family contact	-.490	-.026
Job search	-6.339	-.085
Alcohol addiction	-1.792	-.043
Disease	1.654	.042
Mental health	1.444	.063
Work deprivation	-6.712	-.015
Homeless identity	-.394	-.018
Street adaptation	3.977**	.208**
R_2 = .222		

*: $p<.05$ **: $p<.01$

variables, three are statistically significant in affecting the length of homeless careers. The three are education, time worked since first job, and street adaptation. Observing the regression coefficients of these three variables, we find that homeless people who have had more years of education and a higher percentage of time worked after their first job have shorter lengths of time living as homeless individuals. We also find that the homeless people who adapt better to living in the streets have longer periods of homelessness. These results are what we expected. Illustrating the meaning of non-standardized regression coefficients (b) of these three variables, there are patterns that show when education increases by one year, the length of homeless careers decreases by about 1.2 months. When the percent of time worked after the first job increases by 10%, the length of homeless careers decreases about 2 months. When street adaptation increases by one step, the length of homeless careers increases by about 4 months.

We can come up with some policy implications from observing that it is not in fact alcoholism, disease, or mental health status that affects the length of homeless careers, but education and time worked since the first job instead. Recently, several policy programs have been developing for homeless people in South Korea, on the condition that the main policy axis turns from emergency care to revitalization. For revitalizing homeless people living in shelters, policy programs such as psychic treatment, alcohol abuse treatment, and job training have been introduced (Seoul Development Institute, 1999; Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1999). Although each program can help homeless people, when we consider that education and time worked since the first job are the most important factors affecting the length of homeless careers, job training programs should be developed as major and intensive programs for revitalizing homeless people. The provision of jobs and increased chances of finding work, as well as job training, have the most important effect on lessening the length of homeless careers in South Korea.

THE PROCESS OF HOMELESSNESS

From Job Loss to Homelessness

About 60% of homeless people attributed their homelessness to job loss. When did they leave the home after job loss? As soon as they lost their jobs? After one month? After a year? In order to examine

these questions, we selected 144 homeless people from among our 225 respondents, who had stayed in their relatives' or friends' housing units when they lost their jobs from October, 1997. They make up 64% of the total respondents. The mean duration of time a homeless individual stayed in the housing unit after job loss (the mean survival time) is 3.5 months.

According to a survival analysis of the period of staying in a stable housing unit after job loss, we see that more than half of the total (79 out of 144 respondents, 54.9%) left their home no more than one month after job loss. Nineteen and four-tenths percent remained in their homes after 6 months, and only 11.8% stayed after one year. That is, after one year since job loss, 89.2% had left their homes. They may have stayed in the streets, in homeless shelters, in motels, or SROs. The median survival time is counted as 0.9 month.

The fact that more than half of the homeless people who stayed in stable housing units and had jobs left their homes in only one month's time after job loss provides some policy implications for us. In order to limit those who lost their jobs from leaving home, we need to intervene as soon as they become unemployed. Rapid policy intervention in unemployment may be one way of preventing the unemployed from becoming homeless.

We tried to make clear differences of the survival functions between the working class and the middle class, between age groups (twenties, thirties, forties, fifties), and between the married and the unmarried. Our hypothesis was as follows: the homeless people who were from the working class, who are younger, and who have never had family formation are more likely to have shorter periods of time from job loss to homelessness. Contrary to our hypothesis, these three factors (class, age, family formation) do not make any statistically significant difference in the survival function.

Residential Transitions

Examining the residential transitions of 225 homeless people, we observed 17 types of residential trajectories which were experienced after leaving the home. Figure 1 shows the three most common residential trajectories. This figure illustrates transitions made between homelessness, motel or SRO exits, and relatives' or friends' housing units exits. It also shows the median duration of stay in each residential state.
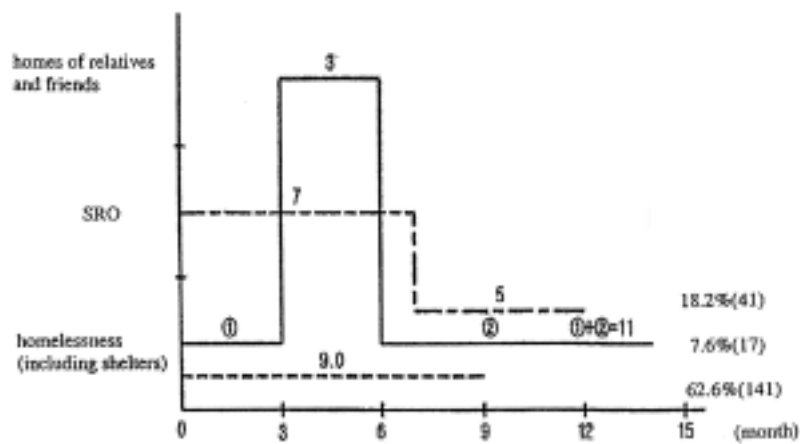
FIGURE 1. RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION AND DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

As Figure 1 indicates, the most common residential trajectory is 'chronic homelessness,' in which homeless people have not experienced residential transition after losing their homes and being homeless. This situation is true for 62.6% of the homeless respondents (141 among 225). The second most common type of residential trajectory is 'delayed homelessness,' in which people became homeless after staying in motels or SROs for a certain period of time after leaving the home. Eighteen and two-tenths percent of homeless people experienced this sequence of transition. The third most common residential trajectory is 'homelessness, an exit from homelessness, and then a return to homelessness'. In this case, homeless people have gone from being homeless to staying in the homes of relatives or friends, or maintaining residence in motels and SROs. They then became homeless again. Seven and six-tenths percent of homeless people experienced this situation.

The median duration of stay in 'chronic homelessness,' never return to the home, is 9 months. As far as 'delayed homelessness' concerned, is the median duration of stay in motels or SROs is 7 months and that of homelessness is 9 months. Finally, as for 'homelessness, an exit from homelessness, and a return to homelessness,' the median time duration of an exit from homelessness is 3 months and the median time duration of homelessness is 11 months.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS AS
COMPARED WITH JAPAN

Recognition of the Causes of Homelessness

We found that people's ideas of the causes of homelessness differ
between South Koreans and the Japanese. Table 3 shows that among
five categories of answers, 37.7% of South Koreans consider
unemployment to be the main cause of homelessness, while nearly half
of the Japanese attribute the main cause of homelessness to personal
ability. If we classify the categories such as personal ability, family
problems, mental illness and alcoholism into 'personal problems,' and
two categories such as unemployment and insufficient social policy
into 'structural conditions,' we find that more than half of South
Koreans consider structural conditions to be the main cause of
homelessness (59.8%). On the contrary, in Japan's case, more than half
consider personal problems to be the main cause (58.4%).

Two factors may have affected this difference in people's
identification of causes of homelessness between South Koreans and
the Japanese. First of all, South Korea has a relatively short history of
homelessness compared with Japan. Just after the IMF economic crisis
in 1997, many South Koreans experienced or observed homelessness
which occurred concurrently with massive unemployment. Evaluating
this circumstance, they may see an obvious relation between
homelessness and unemployment. Secondly, South Korea has an
insufficient social policy system compared with Japan. South Koreans
may think that the inadequate social policy system has expanded the
problem of homelessness.

In order to examine the difference in people's identification of causes

TABLE 3. IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS: COMPARISON BETWEEN
SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN

Causes of homelessness	South Korea	Japan
Personal ability	79 (25.6%)	115 (47.3%)
Family problems	34 (11.0%)	21 (8.6%)
Mental illness or alcohol addiction	11 (3.6%)	6 (2.5%)
Unemployment	116 (37.7%)	71 (29.3%)
Insufficient social policy	68 (22.1%)	30 (12.3%)
Total	308 (100.0%)	243 (100.0%)

TABLE 4. THE IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS BETWEEN GENDERS, BETWEEN CLASSES, AND BETWEEN HOUSING TENURES: THE CASE OF SOUTH KOREA

	South Korea					
	Men	Women	Middle class	Working class	Home-owners	Tenant
Cause of homelessness						
Personal problems	51(35.2)	73(45.1)	53(46.1)	39(37.5)	76(38.0)	39(47.0)
Structural conditions	94(64.8)	89(54.9)	62(53.9)	65(62.5)	124(62.0)	44(53.0)
	X_2=3.11	p>.05	X_2=1.65	p>.05	X_2=1.96	p>.05

TABLE 5. THE IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS BETWEEN GENDERS, BETWEEN CLASSES, AND BETWEEN HOUSING OCCUPATIONS: THE CASE OF JAPAN

	Japan					
	Men	Women	Middle class	Working class	Home-owners	Tenant
Cause of homelessness						
Personal problems	70(61.4)	72(55.8)	53(74.6)	26(38.8)	88(59.5)	49(57.0)
Structural conditions	44(38.6)	57(44.2)	18(25.4)	41(61.2)	60(40.5)	37(43.0)
	X_2=.78	p>.05	X_2=18.10	p<.05	X_2=.14	p>.05

of homelessness between men and women, the middle class and the working class, and homeowners and tenants, some tables of cross-tabulations were developed. As Table 4 illustrates, it is difficult to say that in South Korea there is a difference in the identification of causes of homelessness between men and women, the middle class and the working class, and homeowners and tenants. Both men and women, the middle class and working class, and homeowners and tenants consider structural conditions to be the main cause of homelessness.

Japanese ideas about homelessness are different from those of South Koreans (see Table 5). Although both men and women, and homeowners and tenants consider personal problems to be the main reasons for homelessness, there is no significant statistical relationship between gender and causes of homelessness, or between homeownership and causes of homelessness. However, it is notable that there is a difference in causes of homelessness in terms of classes. While the middle class views personal problems as the main cause of homelessness, the working class blames homelessness on structural conditions. The relation between class and causes of homelessness is

statistically significant.

Attitudes towards Homelessness

In order to examine people's attitudes towards homelessness, eight questions were asked. The questions are as follows: ① Do you agree with the government's proposals for building shelters for homeless people? ② Do you mind if homeless shelters are built in your neighborhood? ③ What do you think of people's donations to homeless shelters? ④ Do you have sympathy for the homeless sleeping in the streets? ⑤ Will you walk away if a homeless person approaches you? ⑥ Will you reply if a homeless person talks to you? ⑦ If homeless people wander around your house, will you force them away? ⑧ Will you give money to homeless people if they ask? The scale for answers to these questions is composed of 4 points from -2, very negative attitude towards homelessness, to +2, very positive attitude towards homelessness.

Table 6 shows the means of the answers to these eight questions. With this table we can compare people's attitudes towards homelessness between South Koreans and the Japanese. At first glance, we see that South Koreans have more positive attitudes towards homelessness, while the Japanese seem to have negative attitudes. South Koreans answered positively to all but one question: do you mind if homeless shelters are built in your neighborhood? The Japanese answered negatively to all but one question: will you reply if a homeless person talks to you? South Koreans answered the most positively to the question about government policies for building homeless shelters. The Japanese answered the most negatively to the

TABLE 6. ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS (EIGHT QUESTIONS) BETWEEN SOUTH KOREANS AND THE JAPANESE

	South Korea	Japan
Do you agree with the governmen's proposals for building shelters for homeless people?	0.81	-0.02
Do you mind if homeless shelters are built in your neighborhood?	-0.47	-0.93
What do you think of people's donations to homeless shelters?	0.17	-0.83
Do you have sympathy for the homeless sleeping in the streets?	0.49	-0.43
Will you walk away if a homeless person approaches you?	0.20	-0.47
Will you reply if a homeless person talks to you?	0.48	0.43
If homeless people wander around your house, will you force them away?	0.31	-0.02
Will you give money to homeless people if they ask?	0.03	-1.26

TABLE 7. ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS BETWEEN SOUTH KOREANS AND THE JAPANESE

Country	Sample case	Mean	Standard deviati
South Korea	306	2.04	5.35
Japan	236	-3.77	5.63

TABLE 8. ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS BETWEEN GENDERS, BETWEEN CLASSES, AND BETWEEN HOUSING TENURES: THE CASE OF SOUTH KOREA

	South Korea					
	Men	Women	Middle class	Working class	Home-owners	Tenants
Attitudes towards homelessness (mean)	3.18	0.95	2.58	1.78	2.05	1.91
	t = 3.74	p<.001	t = 1.13	p>.05	t = 1.83	p>.05

question about giving money to homeless people.

We created another variable entitled 'attitudes towards homelessness,' which links the eight questions together. The Pearson's correlation coefficients between the new variable and the eight questions are more than 0.4 both in South Korea and Japan. Therefore the new variable, 'attitudes towards homelessness,' is a reasonable scale to test. The values of this scale ranges from -16 to +16. The + values mean positive attitudes, while the - values mean negative attitudes.

Table 7 shows the means of people's attitudes towards homelessness both in South Korea and Japan. It is found that people's attitudes towards homelessness in South Korea are very different from those in Japan. While the Japanese who were surveyed responded with negative attitudes towards homelessness (-3.77), the South Koreans who were questioned reflected positive attitudes through their answers (2.04).

If we view Table 8 and Table 9 together, we can compare attitudes towards homelessness between men and women, middle class and working class, homeowners and tenants, and South Korea and Japan. If we look at the South Korean case, we find that men have more positive attitudes than women. This difference is statistically significant. Though middle class individuals and homeowners seem to have more positive attitudes than people of the working class and tenants, these differences are not statistically significant. If we observe

TABLE 9. ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS BETWEEN GENDERS, BETWEEN CLASSES, AND BETWEEN HOUSING TENURES: THE CASE OF JAPAN

	Japan					
	Men	Women	Middle class	Working class	Home-owners	Tenants
Attitudes towards homelessness (mean)	-3.64	-4.71	-4.07	-3.24	-4.10	-3.18
	t = .97	p>.05	t = -.88	p>.05	t = -1.19	p>.05

TABLE 10. IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS: COMPARISON BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN

	South Korea		Japan	
	Personal problems	Structural conditions	Personal problems	Structural conditions
Attitudes towards homelessness (mean)	0.18	3.21	-5.20	-1.57
	t = -4.77	p<.05	t = -4.65	p<.05

the Japanese case, we find no differences in attitudes towards homelessness between men and women, the middle class and the working class, or between homeowners and tenants in the 95% significance level.

Table 10 illustrates that the identification of causes of homelessness is related to the attitudes towards homelessness both in South Korea and Japan. The differences in the attitudes towards homelessness between the two groups which identify the main cause of homelessness differently are statistically significant both in South Korea and Japan. In South Korea, those who consider structural conditions as the main cause of homelessness have more positive attitudes than those who see personal problems as the main cause (figures in the table are 3.21 and 0.18). In Japan, those who consider personal problems as the main cause of homelessness have much more negative attitudes towards homelessness than those who see structural conditions as the main cause (figures in the table are -5.20 and -1.5).

In order to examine the variables affecting attitudes towards homelessness, we set up a regression model using the attitudes towards homelessness as a dependent variable. There are nine independent variables: age, household income, education, consciousness of class belonging, gender, marital status, housing tenure, class, and

TABLE 11. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF NINE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES WITH ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS

Independent variables	South Korea		Japan	
	Non-stand-ardized coefficient (b)	Standardized coefficient (beta)	Non-standard-ized coefficient (b)	Standardized coefficient (beta)
(Constant)	1.718		-6.898	
Age	-.030	-.017	.661	.160
Household income	.288	.059	.020	.105
Education	.020	.023	.424	.053
Consciousness of class belonging	-.020	-.009	.339	.051
Gender (Men)	1.459	.142	.571	.052
Marriage status (Married)	-.512	-.044	.791	.112
Housing tenure (Homeowners)	.123	.011	-1.308	-.114
Class (Middle class)	.804	.078	-.040	-.003
Cause of homelessness (personal problems)	-2.936**	-.282**	-4.193**	-.370**
	R^2 = .125		R^2 = .174	

*: $p<.05$ **: $p<.01$

identification of causes of homelessness. Dealing with gender, marital status, housing tenure, class, and identification of causes of homelessness as dummy variables, we mark '1' for men, marital status, homeowners, middle class, and personal problems and mark '0' for women, single status, tenants, working class, and structural conditions. Table 11 shows regression coefficients of the variables which seem to have effects on the attitudes towards homelessness. In South Korea, only one in nine variables has a significant statistical effect on the attitudes towards homelessness. It is the identification of causes of homelessness as personal problems. Looking at the regression coefficients of this variable, we find that considering personal problems as the main cause of homelessness directly instigates negative attitudes towards homelessness. The non-standardized coefficient (b = -2.936) of this variable shows that the identification of personal problems as the main cause of homelessness affects the attitudes by about 3 negative points on a scale ranging from -16 to +16.

In Japan, only one variable affects the attitudes towards homelessness, as is the same circumstance in South Korea. It is the identification of causes of homelessness as personal problems. In Japan, the identification of personal problems as the main cause of homelessness negatively affects the attitudes towards homelessness. The non-standardized coefficient of this variable is -4.193, which shows

that the identification of personal problems as the main cause of homelessness more strongly influences negative attitudes in Japan than in South Korea.

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

We examined four subjects within this study: the characteristics of homeless people, the causes of the length of homeless careers, the process of homelessness, and community attitudes towards homelessness. Our major findings in this study are as follows.

First, when comparing sheltered homeless people and homeless people living in the streets, we found the individuals to have a few varying characteristics, though many characteristics were shared between the two groups. The street homeless people have longer stretches of homelessness, have higher percentages of people coming from the working class in total, have more cases of unstable mental health, and better adapt to homelessness than sheltered homeless people.

Secondly, the variables affecting the length of homeless careers are education, time worked since the first job, and street adaptation. The homeless people who have had more years of education and have a higher percentage of time worked after the first job have shorter lengths of homeless careers. Homeless people who better adapt to the street have longer lengths of homeless careers. Variables including age, class, family formation, disease, physical disability, foster care, family contact, alcoholism, mental health, and work deprivation have no effect on the length of homeless careers.

Third, as for homeless people, the period between job loss and leaving the home is very short. More than half of the homeless people questioned left their homes no more than one month after losing their jobs. Class, age, and family formation do not make any difference in the speed of leaving the home after job loss.

Fourth, the three most common residential trajectories are 'chronic homelessness,' 'delayed homelessness,' and 'homelessness, an exit from homelessness, and then a return to homelessness,' in that order.

Lastly, South Koreans and Japanese have different opinions about the causes of homelessness, as well as varying attitudes towards homelessness. South Koreans have more positive attitudes towards homelessness, considering structural conditions to be the main cause of homelessness. The Japanese have more negative attitudes towards

homelessness, assuming personal problems to be the main cause. Among several other variables, the identification of causes of homelessness has the greatest effect on the attitudes towards homelessness in both countries.

The policy implications of this study are as follows. First, a rapid policy intervention in unemployment may be one way of preventing the unemployed from becoming homeless. Secondly, we need to include those who stay in motels or SROs within the homelessness policy target group, considering them as latent homeless people. Third, to lessen the length of homelessness, we should work towards providing homeless people with stable jobs, more chances for work, and diverse job training programs.

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