

## Seminar 16: Measuring Perceptions (Room: 00.12)

Chair: Eoin O'Sullivan, IE

### Hiroshi Goto, Soshiro Yamada, Yusuke Kakita, Kanako Nakano, Dennis Culhane, JP: Japanese Public Perceptions of Homelessness



**Hiroshi Goto, Japan** is a professor at Rikkyo University in the college of community and human services. He started his career as a social worker for a homeless support non-profit organisation (San-Yu-Kai) in Japan. He is currently interested in both local-level and global-level research on the homelessness. The former is an analysis of case records of homeless self-reliance support centres (Transitional housing) in Japan, and the latter is a comparative study of public assistance in the US and Japan.



**Soshiro Yamada, Japan** is a professor at Nihon Fukushi University in the department of social welfare. He is looking at public assistance for homeless people in Japan. He is also interested in the life condition of people who were transferred from homelessness to permanent housing using public assistance.



**Kanako Nakano, Japan** is an associate professor at Otani University in the faculty of sociology. She started her career as a social worker at an emergency hospital and shelter for homeless people. The research fields are social work theory, supporting homeless people (especially, assistance to the homeless with intellectual disabilities), and social work at shelters in Japan.

**Yusuke Kakita, Japan** is a professor at Osaka Metropolitan University in the school of human life and ecology. He is researching poverty, homelessness and social policy. The fields of his research are streets in urban areas, temporary accommodation for homeless people, NPOs delivering support, local and central government.



**Dennis Culhane, USA** is a professor of Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a social science researcher with primary expertise in the area of homelessness and assisted housing policy. Most recently, Culhane's research has focused on the ageing of the adult homeless population in the US.

This study deals with public perceptions of homelessness in Japan. The purpose of this research is to clarify the characteristics of Japanese public perception, attitude, and practices toward homelessness by comparing the study results with that of similar surveys conducted in other countries. This study considered the "not in my backyard" (Nimby) syndrome as a representation of the difficulties involved in assisting the homeless to examine what kind of people are likely (or not likely) to adopt a Nimby mindset. To achieve this purpose, from March 11–14, 2022, we surveyed 4,500 monitors (male and female/aged 20–69 years/assigned to census demographics in 5-year increments) from all over Japan that were registered with an Internet research company. First, the findings of this study were

compared with similar surveys to identify the characteristics of Japan. Next, Binomial logistic regression analysis was conducted by considering the presence or absence of a Nimby mindset as the dependent variable with attitude, knowledge of homelessness, and practices as independent variables.

The analysis revealed that the percentage of positive responses regarding attitudes toward the homeless was lower in Japan in comparison with other countries. In addition, there was a high percentage of "DK/R" (don't know/refused) responses. These results suggest Japanese citizens' "indifference" toward the homeless and that they are less likely to provide support to the homeless, either individually or through organisations. Furthermore, the findings indicated that there was no correlation between the Nimby mindset and knowledge and that participants were less likely to have a Nimby mindset if they or someone close to them had experienced a housing crisis or were involved in supporting the homeless. These results suggest that imparting knowledge alone is not sufficient to increase support for homelessness assistance and that providing simulated experiences of homelessness and setting up opportunities for direct interaction with homeless people are more effective measures.

## **Tom George and Jim Rogers, UK: Perceptions of Participants and Stakeholders of a 'Sleep Out' Event Held to Raise Money for, and Awareness, of Homelessness Charity Work**



**Mr Thomas George (Research Assistant) and Dr Jim Rogers (Senior Lecturer) in the School of Health and Social Care, College of Social Science at the University of Lincoln, UK, have been working with vulnerable adults in the field of homelessness and rough sleeping and have been involved in numerous research projects and service evaluations of homeless services/charities across England.**



Fundraising events have become a dominant platform and flagship activity for charities in raising money and awareness to deliver services and support for vulnerable population groups. In the UK the large housing and homelessness charities employ fundraising teams and rely on donations and legacies for over half of their income.

One type of charity fundraising event unique in its approach is the 'sleepout' events where participants spend a night in a sleeping bag or constructed cardboard box shelter seeking to raise awareness of homelessness and money for homelessness charities. Such events have become increasingly popular, particularly being conducted throughout most westernised countries (UK, US, Canada, Australia).

This paper presents evidence from what we believe is the first study to explore the perceptions of participants and other stakeholders regarding these events. We took part in one sleep out event on a winter night in the East of England. We interviewed participants on the night and encouraged them to keep audio diaries. We also interviewed a range of staff from housing and homelessness services after the event. Participants included those with lived experience of sleeping rough.

Whilst most participants had a favourable view of the events, there was a degree of ambivalence about the activity of sleeping out for a night as the vehicle for this. Many recognised that a single safely organised night outdoors does not replicate the experience of being forced to sleep rough. Because of this some staff in support services expressed a very strong and visceral dislike of these events and thought them misleading and distasteful.

Recognising that these events are unlikely to stop, a strong recommendation was made that much more thought and attention is given to education and awareness raising during the events, to ensure that participants understand more of the issues behind homelessness.