

## ABSTRACT

### Homelessness in Port-of-Spain: An Analysis of Self-Esteem and Social Support in Relation to Perceptions of Reintegration

Leevun Ancil Russel Solomon

This study applies a psychosocial analysis to the issue of homelessness in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. To achieve this, the study employed a mixed methods approach that surveyed homeless people about their self-esteem and perceptions of social support (N=96). Additionally, a sub-sample of eighteen (18) people participated in in-depth interviews that explored their thoughts on reintegration. Recognizing the heterogeneity of urban spaces in relation to the lived experiences of homeless people, participants were recruited from three different sites: (i) open public spaces, (ii) a drop-in centre and, (iii) a live-in centre. The complexities of homelessness in the capital city emerged through the study's findings, which included the impact of income earning strategies and number of homeless episodes on self-esteem and perceptions of social support ( $p=0.05$  statistical significance). Similarly, a thematic analysis of the narratives elicited from the in-depth interviews demonstrated differences in perceptions of reintegration according to factors such as the participant's age, previous failed attempts at rehousing, and length of time homeless. By combining key quantitative and qualitative results, the study uses joint inferences to discuss demographics, chronic and episodic homelessness, material survival strategies, and sources of emotional support. Ultimately, this research provides an empirical foundation to inform reintegrative and assistance strategies that consider the social and emotional well-being of homeless people in addition to their material needs. This study contributes to the geographical literature on urban homelessness by exploring the relationship between social psychology, time, and space.

Keywords: Homelessness; Self-Esteem; Perception of Social Support; Psychosocial Well-Being; Reintegration; Emotional Support; Joint Inferences; Mixed Methods; Port-of-Spain.