

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Homeless People: The Role of Discrimination and Family Rejection

Silvia Giménez-Rodríguez , Juan Daniel Ugalde Galera , José Gabriel Rodríguez Pérez , and Almudena Gómez Jiménez 

Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain

Correspondence: Almudena Gómez Jiménez (almudena.gomez@urjc.es)

Submitted: 12 February 2025 **Accepted:** 7 April 2025 **Published:** 10 July 2025

Issue: This article is part of the issue “The Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in the Era of Polycrisis” edited by Francisco Simões (ISCTE-IUL), Renato do Carmo (ISCTE-IUL), and Bráulio Alturas (ISCTE-IUL), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.i472>

Abstract

The objective of this article is to compare the causal factors in the loss of housing between the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ populations. One hundred and twelve questionnaires were collected from LGBTQ people and 93 cases from the non-LGBTQ population in the region of Madrid, Spain. Using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), the variable of sexual orientation and gender identity predicted significant differences in the causal factors related to the loss of housing. The findings refer to maintaining housing ($p < .005$), family problems and/or break up of the couple ($p < .010$), change of place of residence ($p < 0.010$), and expulsion from the home directly related to gender orientation and identity ($p < .005$ and $p < 0.01$). Except for expulsion from the home due to discrimination in the LGBTQ group, gender orientation and identity do not generate, but do intensify, the situation of losing housing.

Keywords

gender identity; homelessness; LGBTQ; sexual orientation

1. Introduction

Among the homeless, minorities according to orientation and gender identity are more frequently exposed to greater oppression and violence (Shelton & Bond, 2017). Some differential features of this minority compared to other homeless people are the greater health risks, the greater degree of difficulty in accessing assistance services, the higher levels of discrimination, and the greater adversity in their life stories (Dias et al., 2025; Gattis, 2013; Rew et al., 2005). Regarding diversity according to gender orientation and identity, some studies identify the most vulnerable populations as those with the highest visibility and the lowest capacity to comply with gender standards (Begun & Kattari, 2016; Rew et al., 2005).

Several studies have highlighted the lack of quantification and the overrepresentation of this minority in research on homelessness (Begun & Kattari, 2016; Gattis, 2009; Hughes, 2009; Nakamura et al., 2017; Shelton & Bond, 2017). Although there is a lack of data on the prevalence of this population, studies indicate that the LGBTQ group among the youth constitutes an overrepresented quantity, standing at between 20% and 40% in the United States (Gattis, 2013; Shelton, 2015). Studies focusing on young people show greater overrepresentation and greater adversity in their life trajectories. The coincidence between the beginning of the construction of gender identity at an early age and the occurrence of expulsion and discrimination has been highlighted (Ecker, 2016; Gattis, 2009, 2013; Shelton & Bond, 2017). Ecker (2016) points out that the data on abuse is three times higher compared to the heterosexual population. On the contrary, the needs of the elderly population have been linked to the greater severity of health problems and discrimination in relation to age.

Following the proposal of the European Federation of National Organizations Working With the Homeless (FEANTSA), studies of homeless people distinguish three aspects of interest: entry or causes related to the housing loss and habitual residence, duration or length of time spent without housing, and exit or alternatives to their current situation (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Edgar et al., 2007). This study focuses on the entry phase. This section is relevant because it serves to investigate relevant aspects linked to the prevention and adaptation of intervention policies aimed at homeless people in the early stages.

Based on the literature review, four types of causes that generate the loss of main housing can be differentiated: structural and discrimination reasons, socio-relational reasons, institutional causes, and personal problems. Within Europe, Spain is the country with the second highest unemployment rate (15.3%), and the indicator “at risk of poverty and/or exclusion” (AROPE) related to poverty and social exclusion is higher than the European average, at 26.6% (Eurostat, 2020a, 2020b). Furthermore, Spain has higher rates of home ownership (77.1%), exceeding the EU-19 average (66.1%). Similarly, among the population living in rented accommodation, 42.1% have difficulties in meeting housing costs, while in the EA-19 this figure stands at 24.9% (Eurostat, 2020a).

The loss of housing due to sexual orientation and gender identity has been explained by virtue of its multiple and intersectional nature. Explanations motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity interact with other explanations that address educational level or age (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2014). The effect that gender orientation and identity have on explaining discrimination and family conflicts is highlighted (Fraser et al., 2019; Rosario et al., 2012). The interaction with other factors, such as ethnicity, is also highlighted. Specifically, there is an interrelationship between the multiple systems of oppression, explained by issues that are connected to racism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia.

Structural problems encompass various reasons associated with a lack of income and employment problems. Unemployment or lack of qualifications can lead to housing instability and homelessness (Edgar et al., 2007).

Institutional problems refer to the lack of housing after leaving institutions (prisons, juvenile centers, women’s centers, or institutions linked to health care). Other aspects include the lack of suitable housing on offer to individuals, the lack of available resources, and the lack of coordination between the different services responsible for providing accommodation (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Edgar et al., 2007). Mental health and addiction problems, as well as long-term illnesses or disability, act as triggers, along with

the economic and social resources available to individuals and the support received from the social protection system. A higher risk of anxiety and depression (Misedah-Robinson et al., 2024) has been identified, as well as in substance use and addiction, in minorities based on gender orientation and identity (Fraser et al., 2019). The greatest risks to physical and mental health are caused by sexual practices and the greater difficulty in accessing healthcare resources (Rew et al., 2005). Furthermore, housing resources are not adapted for LGBT people (Rew et al., 2005). In addition to these barriers, there are problems of discrimination motivated by disapproval of their behavior (Gattis, 2013).

Problems of discrimination in society include different areas, such as employment, medical care, or perception in the community. In relation to housing loss, problems of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity have been related to family rejection. In this respect, the family is the area in which these people experience the highest levels of discrimination and rejection. Numerous studies highlight childhood abuse and high levels of stigma, based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Fraser et al., 2019; Shelton & Bond, 2017).

Socio-relational problems help explain the loss of housing due to the breakdown of family relationships and social isolation. These cases include aspects such as abuse from parents or partners, separations, problems of gender violence, parental abandonment, or the death of parents (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Edgar et al., 2007). Family breakdown and discrimination within the family have been linked to the disclosure of gender identity (Fraser et al., 2019). Some studies have pointed to the effects of discrimination and violence experienced within the family of belonging (Shelton & Bond, 2017). In addition, other studies have pointed to a higher probability of being expelled from the home for these reasons (Rew et al., 2005). In other examples, forced abandonment of the home leads to greater instability in housing and greater exposure to problems of physical and sexual abuse.

Given that there may be differences between different countries and sociocultural environments, the objective of our study has been to determine whether the sexual orientation and gender identity of homeless people living in the region of Madrid, Spain, determine differences in the different types of causal factors that contribute to homelessness: structural factors, health and lifestyle, relational factors, and discrimination. Studying these aspects may be useful for proposing specific intervention measures adapted to this population.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Sample

The study population was the homeless population of the region of Madrid, Spain. First, a multi-stage quota sampling was chosen for the region of Madrid. Most of the previous representative studies on homeless people have been carried out in the region of Madrid, Barcelona, or the Basque Country, and are assumed to be representative of the case of Spain (Cabrera Cabrera & Rubio Martín, 2009; Roca et al., 2019; Sales i Campo, 2016; SIIS, 2019). The data provided by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) indicate that the sociodemographic characteristics of the study population are very similar in the Community of Madrid and in Spain as a whole (INE, 2005, 2012). A stratified sample was then considered, proportional to the number of places by the type of housing in which the people had spent the previous night. Given that

some accommodation only admitted LGBTQ people, the result was a higher number of respondents from this group. Despite this, the sample size was sufficient to establish the comparison according to sexual orientation and identity. This decision is justified by the underrepresentation of this population in sources of information. In addition, it is necessary to point out that the study was planned to have enough cases to carry out a statistical analysis of the LGBTQ collective, which presents greater difficulty in obtaining information.

All subjects were over 18 years of age. In addition, the ETHOS definition (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Edgar et al., 2007) has been used to address the issue of homelessness: (a) living in a public space (homeless); (b) sleeping in a shelter and/or being forced to spend the rest of the day in a public space; (c) staying in service centers or shelters (hostels for homeless people that allow different models of stay); (d) living in women's shelters; (e) living in temporary housing reserved for immigrants; and (f) living in supported housing offered by institutions that do not require a lease.

Table 1 describes the characteristics of the research sample. For the elaboration of the conglomerates, the sample was stratified by place of housing. The number of homeless people estimated by the INE (2018) in the region of Madrid was taken as a reference. Taking as a reference the figure of 3532—the latest official figure at the time of the study design—the sampling error was calculated for the finite population (less than 100,000 people).

Table 1. Description of the sample.

Universe	Homeless people in the region of Madrid
Geographical scope	Spain
Information gathering procedure	Structured face-to-face survey
Sampling	Quota sampling
Sample size	205 valid surveys; 112 LGBTQ and 93 non-LGBTQ
Level of confidence	95% $K = 1.96$; $p = q = 0.5$
Sampling error	Total: 6.6% assuming it was a probability sample LGBTQ = 9% Non-LTBI = 9%
Gathering period	September 2018, November 2018
Analysis software	SPSS version 23

2.2. Data Collection

Prior to the collection of the information, a pretest evaluation was carried out to make improvements to the design and the order of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered in sessions previously arranged in the housing facilities and the social intervention programs. These sessions were carried out under the coordination of a member of the research team. In these sessions, the objectives of the study were presented, along with instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire and answer any questions from the respondents. The self-administered questionnaires also included information about the study, instructions on how to fill them in, the voluntary nature of participation, and the anonymity of the responses.

Participants gave their consent for the data to be included in the analysis. Given the anonymous nature of the responses, and following Spanish data protection legislation, approval by an external committee was not necessary. In addition, the interviews with people in public spaces were conducted in person by the research team. These subjects were recruited in collaboration with volunteer and social intervention programs.

2.3. Measurements

An ad hoc questionnaire was used (Giménez-Rodríguez et al., 2019) based on the questionnaire proposed by Marpsat and Firdion (2000) for the study on homelessness carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (INSEE) in France. This is a pioneering study on homelessness, as it covers the entire national population. These questions about the causes of homelessness have been used in other national and international studies related to the homeless and their experiences of losing their homes (INE, 2012; SIIS, 2019).

The sociodemographic and classification variables include sex, sexual orientation, age, last place of residence prior to losing the home and highest level of education attained. By recoding the first two variables, the two comparison groups are constructed: (a) homeless LGBTQ population and (b) non-LGBTQ homeless population. The questions on sexual orientation are not uniform (Ecker, 2016). In our case, we followed the procedure of Gattis (2013), which provides most response options regarding gender identity. Likewise, an open response category was provided to collect all possible options. Table 2 shows the recodings made.

Table 2. Recoding of the independent variables.

Variable	Recoded levels
Gender (1)	LGBTQ homeless
Sexual orientation (2)	Not LGBTQ homeless
Age (3)	Under 34 years old 34–54 years old Over 54 years old
Level of education (4)	Primary and no education First and second stage secondary Higher education
Last place of residence (5)	My own home Other
Explanation	
1	Q.37: Please indicate the category with which you most identify: man; woman; transgender man; transgender woman; intersexual
2	Q.38: Could you indicate what you consider to be your sexual orientation? R: heterosexual; gay; lesbian; bisexual; pansexual
3	Q.1: Age (numerical variable)
4	Q.11: What is the highest level of education you have completed? R: no studies; primary; secondary stage 1; secondary stage 2; higher education (vocational training, university degree, or postgraduate degree)
5	Q.8: Before you became homeless, could you tell me which of the following places you lived in? R: In my own home; with relatives; with friends; in a boarding house, hostel, or similar; in a shared room or flat; in prison; in the hospital; in a children's home; as a refugee; other

The variables relating to the loss of housing can be considered in at least three types of explanation: structural, health, and socio-relational. The response categories are dichotomous (yes/no). In the analysis of variance carried out, some questions were eliminated (see Section 3) due to the low response rate: gambling, psychosocial health problems, and leaving an institution.

2.4. Data Analysis

A hypothesis contrast was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to verify the normal distribution of the dependent and independent variables in the sample. The normal distribution of the continuous variables analyzed was rejected ($p < 0.005$), so non-parametric tests for two groups, such as the Mann-Whitney U test, were used. In addition, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to evaluate differences in variables with more than two items (age and level of education).

Subsequently, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied, as this aims to identify the main effects and interaction effects between multiple independent variables and is useful for knowing when some groups differ from others. MANOVA analysis is designed with multiple dependent variables (outcomes) operating simultaneously and is therefore considered a multivariate test (Field, 2016). A 4-factor MANOVA was used, in which four variables were evaluated for each of the causes of housing loss (Figure 1).

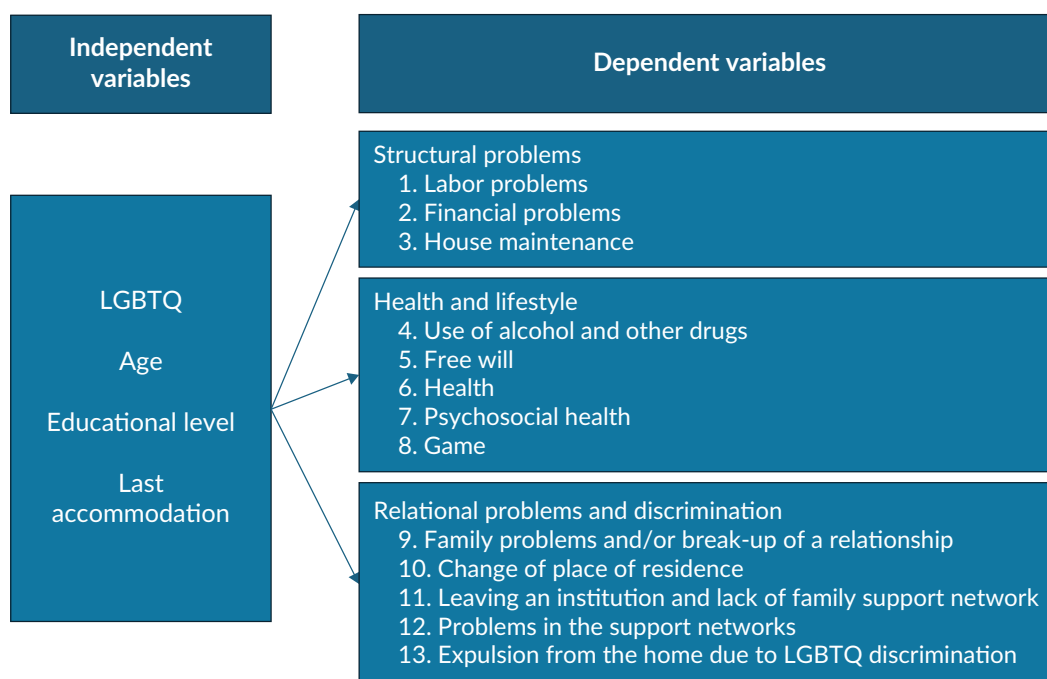


Figure 1. Causal analysis model.

Different authors have differentiated between the various causes that lead to the loss of housing and the problems derived from the period without accommodation (Fraser et al., 2019). The FEANTSA scheme was followed to specify the different trajectories that lead to the loss of housing (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Edgar et al., 2007). In this respect, three types of problems are differentiated: structural, health and lifestyle, and relational and discrimination problems.

A total of 60 analyses were carried out, 10 analyses per six different classifications in terms of independent variables. The results presented include those in which the most significant evidence was obtained. The calculations were made for three levels of significance: 99.9%, 95%, and 90%. Previously, χ^2 and Fisher's exact tests were applied to check for significant differences between variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Comparison Between Study Groups

Table 3 presents the distribution of the socio-demographic variables that have been considered independent in the study population. The variables of gender, sexual orientation, and last place of residence show significant differences between the two groups. In relation to the gender variable, the LGBTQ population

Table 3. Demographic characteristics according to sexual orientation and identity variables.

	LGBTQ		Non LGBTQ		Coef.	Sig.	Chi-Square	Df	p-value
	N	%	N	%					
Gender type									
Male	65	58	72	77.4	.367	.000	31.870	3	0.000
Female	15	13.4	21	22.6					
Transgender male	9	8	0	0					
Transgender female	20	17.9	0	0					
Intersexual	3	2.7	0	0					
Sexual orientation									
Heterosexual	27	24.15	93	100	.609	.000	120.575	4	0.000
Gay	49	43.8	0	0					
Lesbian	11	9.8	0	0					
Bisexual	22	19.6	0	0					
Pansexual	3	2.7	0	0					
Age									
Under 34 years old	41	36.6	25	26.9	.115	.255	2.730	2	0.255
34 to 54 years old	46	41.1	40	43					
55 and over	25	22.3	28	30.1					
Level of education									
Primary and no education	26	23.2	33	35.5	.134	.155	3.732	4	0.155
Secondary (first and second stages)	56	50	39	41.9					
Higher	30	36.8	21	22.6					
Last place of residence									
My own home	30	30.4	40	43	.131	.060	3.527	1	0.042
Others	78	69.6	53	57					

group was distributed as follows: men (58%), transgender women (17.9%), women (13.4%), transgender male (8%), and intersex (2.7%). In the non-LGBTQ group, there is a large majority of men (77.6%) compared to women (22.4%), with a similar pattern to the homeless population in the national survey (INE, 2012), with 77.4% men and 22.6% women. The variable *sexual orientation* in the LGBTQ group is distributed between gay (43.8%), heterosexual (24.15%), bisexual (19.6%), lesbian (9.8%), and pansexual (2.7%).

Differences were observed with respect to the last place of residence, with 69.6% of LGBTQ subjects coming from residential situations other than their own home (family home, rooms or flats, different types of institutions, and others). This issue in the LGBTI group has been confirmed in the literature reviewed (Fraser et al., 2019; Rosario et al., 2012; Shelton, 2015; Shelton & Bond, 2017). No statistically significant differences were found in relation to age groups ($p = 0.255$) and educational level ($p = 0.155$).

Table 4 shows the distribution of structural, health and lifestyle, and relational variables in the LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ groups. Significant differences were only obtained for the variable *expulsion from the household due to sexual orientation*. 32.1% of the LGBTQ homeless group identified with this issue.

To calculate the effect size, G Power 3.1., a software belonging to the University of Düsseldorf, was used with values above 0.80, based on recommendations from other social science studies (Cohen, 1998; Faul et al., 2007). Differences between groups and their relationship to effect size were as follows: non-LGBTQ homeless ($n = 93$) and LGBTQ homeless ($n = 112$) samples, with an effect size of .921.

Table 4. Causes of loss of housing, according to sexual orientation and identity.

	LGBTQ		Non LGBTQ		Mann-Whitney U	Sig.
	N	Average %	N	Average %		
Labor (1)	55	49.1	52	55.9	4853.5	.333
Economic (2)	58	51.8	55	59.1	4825	.239
Residential (3)	14	12.5	9	9.7	5061	.525
Alcohol and other drug use (4)	15	13.4	14	13	5177	.903
Free will (5)	3	2.7	5	5.4	5067.5	.322
Health (6)	11	9.8	11	11.8	5103	.645
Psychosocial (7)	7	6.3	10	10.8	4973	.246
Gambling (8)	2	1.8	1	1.1	5171	.674
Break-up of a relationship (9)	36	32.1	30.1	28	5101	.755
Change of residence (10)	40	35.7	30	32.3	5028	.604
Leaving an institution (11)	37	2.7	2	2.2	5180	.808
Support networks (12)	1	0.9	0	0	5161.5	.362
Expulsion from the home for reasons of sexual orientation and sexual identity (13)	36	32.1	0	0	3590	.000

Table 4. (Cont.) Causes of loss of housing, according to sexual orientation and identity.

Explanation	
1	Work-related problems: job loss, change in working conditions
2	Financial problems: lack of money, denial of financial aid, savings running out.
3	Problems related to maintaining the previous home: eviction, termination of the rental contract, rent increase, etc.
4	Problems with alcohol and/or other drug use: they threw him out of the house, he spent all his money, etc.
5	Own volition: because he/she decided to, free choice of lifestyle.
6	Health problems: chronic illnesses, disability, hospitalization.
7	Psychosocial health problems: loss of confidence, self-esteem.
8	Gambling-related problems: compulsive gambling, spending the family money, being thrown out of the house for this reason.
9	Family problems and/or break-up of a relationship: family violence, domestic abuse, separation from a partner, death of family members, family breakdown.
10	Change of place of residence. Problems related to the lack of "papers" and/or the need to start from scratch after having emigrated to another country.
11	Leaving an institution and the non-existence or absence of a family network: prison, juvenile center.
12	Problems with foster care: sanctions for misconduct, rules considered too strict, schedules, pets, etc.
13	Expulsion from the home directly linked to reasons of discrimination against LGBTQ

The variable *expulsion from the household in relation to gender orientation and gender identity* did not meet the homoscedasticity criterion ($p < .01$). The result of the box test for the rest of the variables ($p < .005$) allowed us to accept the test of equality of variances-covariances. Thus, the variability between the two groups did not differ.

3.2. MANOVA

A 2 (LGBTQ) X 3 (age) X 3 (educational level) X 2 (last place of residence) analysis was carried out to verify the main effects of these factors and the interaction effects for the ten causes of housing loss. Three blocks have been differentiated: structural, health and lifestyles, and relational and discrimination. For reasons of space, only those results that are statistically significant are presented. Regarding interaction effects, only those in which the LGBTQ variable acts together with other demographic or classification variables have been discussed. Also, their importance has been interpreted in terms of the value of the Eta Square.

3.2.1. Structural Causes

Table 5 shows the influence of structural problems on housing loss. Age acted as the main effect in the variables of housing maintenance ($F = 3.264$; $p < .05$) and economic problems ($F = 2.343$; $p < .10$), with a small effect size (Eta-Squared standing at 4.5% and 3.6%, respectively).

The interaction between the variables of educational level X last place of residence X LGBTQ X Age was significant in explaining the loss of housing due to economic problems ($F = 4.012$; $p < .05$), with an Eta-Squared of 4.5%. In addition, the interaction between LGBTQ X Age had a significant effect in explaining housing

maintenance problems. This confirms the findings of other studies (Fraser et al., 2019; Gattis, 2013; Rosario et al., 2012; Shelton & Bond, 2017). Those problems were related to the loss of housing due to eviction, the end of the rental contract, or an increase in the price of rent ($F = 3.197$; $p < .05$), with a small effect size (Eta Squared = 3.6%). Finally, the interaction between the variables of educational level X last place of residence X LGBTQ X Age was significant in explaining the loss of housing for work-related reasons ($F = 2.493$; $p < .10$), with an Eta-Squared of 2.9% (small effect size).

On the one hand, the loss of housing for work-related reasons was associated with the age group over 54 years old (66%), one's own home as the last place of residence prior to the loss of housing (63.5%), non-LGBTQ gender orientation and identity (55.9%) and secondary levels of first and second stage (55.8%). On the other hand, the loss of housing for economic reasons was related to the age group over 54 years (66%), non-LGBTQ gender orientation and identity (59.1%), the recoded item in which the rest of the types of housing are grouped (56.5%) and primary education and no education (55.9%). Finally, the loss of housing caused by difficulties in maintaining housing affected the variables of sexual orientation, identity, and age. The results analyzed affected the population under 33 years of age (12.1%) and the LGBTQ group (12.5%).

Other studies have investigated the effects of age concerning the structural causes that lead to the loss of housing. On the one hand, in the Spanish context, evidence has been found of the tendency of older people to lose their housing for economic and employment reasons (INE, 2012). On the other hand, there is also evidence of a higher frequency of younger people with cases linked to housing maintenance problems (Mayock & Parker, 2020; Mitsdarffer et al., 2023). This is mainly due to a lack of family support (Collins, 2000). Finally, no evidence has been found in the literature regarding the greater difficulty for the non-LGBTQ population regarding losing housing for work and economic reasons. However, a greater difficulty for the LGBTQ population and its effect on the younger age cohorts regarding losing housing for reasons of stability has been detected (Gattis, 2013).

Table 5. Structural problems as causes of housing loss.

	Wilks' lambda	Labor		Economic issues		Housing maintenance	
		F (sign)	Eta-Squared	F (sign)	Eta-Squared	F (sign)	Eta-Squared
Main effects							
Age	1.898	—		2.343 (.099)	2.6%	3.264 (.040)	3.7%
Interactions							
Last place of residence X age	1.637	3.637 (.028)	4.1%	—		4.291 (.015)	4.8%
Level of education X last place of residence X LGBTQ X Age	1.476	2.493 (.085)	2.9%	4.012 (.019)	4.5%	—	
Level of education x Residence	1.583	—		—		3.522 (.031)	4%
LGBTQ X Age	1.691	—		—		3.197 (.004)	3.6%

3.2.2. Health and Lifestyles

Table 6 shows health problems and lifestyle issues as causes of homelessness. Age acted as the main effect on the variable of alcohol and other drug use ($F = 3,000$; $p < .10$), with a small Eta-Squared value of 3.4%, indicating that age does not account for a large variation in substance use. Age was the only variable that was marginally significant.

The four-variable interaction (educational level X last place of residence X LGBTQ X age) is statistically significant ($p = 0.017$) for alcohol and/or other drugs, with a moderate effect size of 6.8%. This could mean that the relationship between age and alcohol/drug consumption varies depending on education level, LGBTQ status, and housing conditions, among other factors.

The interaction between education level and housing is statistically significant ($p = 0.036$) for will to act, with a small effect size of 3.8%. While the percentage of variance explained is relatively small, it indicates that willingness or motivation to act depends on the combination of education level and housing.

Individuals with primary education or no studies have the highest alcohol consumption (25.48%). Alcohol consumption significantly decreases among those with secondary education (8.40%). There is a slight increase in alcohol consumption for the next category (9.80%). These data indicate there is a negative correlation between education level and alcohol consumption. As education level increases, alcohol consumption generally decreases, though there is a minor uptick at the highest level. This suggests that higher education may be linked to lower alcohol use, possibly due to greater awareness of health risks.

Individuals living in their own home have a lower alcohol consumption rate (12.30%) compared to those in other types of housing (14.50%). People who own their homes may have a more stable lifestyle, which could contribute to lower alcohol consumption. In contrast, those in other housing situations might face different socioeconomic or environmental factors that influence alcohol use.

Table 6. Health problems and lifestyle issues as causes of homelessness.

	Wilks' lambda	Alcohol and/or other drugs		Will to act		Health status		Psychosocial Health	
						F (sign)	Eta-Squared	F (sign)	Eta-Squared
Main effects									
Age	1.898	3.000 (.052)	3.4%	—	—	—		—	
Interactions									
Level of education X last place of residence X LGBTQ X age	1.612	3.100 (.017)	6.8%	—		—		—	
Level of education X residence	1.583	—		3.378 (.036)	3.8%	—		—	

Non-LGBTQ individuals have a higher alcohol consumption rate (14%) compared to LGBTQ individuals (13.40%). Nevertheless, the difference is relatively small, but it suggests that alcohol consumption does not vary significantly based on LGBTQ identity. However, further statistical tests would be necessary to determine if this difference is statistically significant.

The results of the analyses did not confirm the findings of other studies reporting an increased risk of homelessness among sexual minorities, consistent with health problems, psychosocial health, or increased substance and alcohol abuse (Ecker, 2016; Gattis, 2013). However, a higher risk of substance use has been detected in older people with lower educational levels, which is consistent with the literature (Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2019; Padgett et al., 2006).

3.2.3. Relational Problems and Discrimination

Table 7 shows relationship problems and discrimination as causes of becoming homeless. Regarding the main effects, age ($F = 3.906$; $p = .021$) indicates a statistically significant effect, with a small effect size (Eta-Squared = 4.4%). In relation to discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity, age ($F = 4.735$; $p = .009$) explains a small portion of the variation (small effect size: Eta-Squared = 5.3%), whereas LGBTQ ($F = 24.752$; $p = .000$) shows a highly significant effect, with a moderate effect size (Eta-Squared = 12.8%). Hence, being part of the LGBTQ community significantly influences experiences of discrimination.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is higher among LGBTQ people (32.1%) compared to the non-LGBTQ population (0%). Likewise, this reason is more frequent in the cohorts under 33 years of age (25.8%), with a decrease in the 34–54 year-old cohort (14.8%), and a reduction of up to 20.1 points in the 55 years and over cohort (5.7%).

Problems arising from having to maintain residence affect LGBTQ people to a greater extent (35.7%) than non-LGBTQ people (32.3%). In turn, a change of residence affects more those under 33 years of age (45.5%). It decreases by 10.6 points for those aged 34 to 54 (34.9%), and by 16.9 points for those over 54 (18%).

Finally, relationship breakdown and family problems are explained to a greater extent by gender orientation and identity, more frequently in the LGBTQ population (32.10%), and are also more prevalent in those under 33 years of age (34.8%). Prevalence is lower in the 34–54 age group (27.9%) and in those over 54 years of age (32.10%).

The results highlight the importance of discrimination based on gender orientation and identity as a causal factor in the loss of housing (Shelton & Bond, 2017), especially among young people. These problems of discrimination are related to issues of family conflict and problems. The constant change of place of residence confirms the findings of Ecker (2016) regarding problems of housing instability. These problems are identified in the literature both with migratory processes and with young people who experienced sudden departures from home because of their gender orientation and identity. Finally, the results referring to family conflicts confirm the research carried out by other authors (Ecker, 2016; Gattis, 2009; Shelton & Bond, 2017). In these studies, young people who belong to sexual minorities are more exposed to family conflicts with their family of origin.

Table 7. Relationship problems and discrimination as causes of becoming homeless.

	Wilks' lambda	Residence		Family problems and/or relationship breakdown		Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity	
		F (sign)	Eta-Squared	F (sign)	Eta-Squared	F (sign)	Eta-Squared
Main effects							
Age	1.898	3.906 (.021)	4.4%	—	—	4.735 (.009)	5.3%
LGBTQ	2.877	—	—	—	—	24.752 (.000)	12.8%
Interactions							
Level of education X last place of residence	1.583	—	—	3.120 (.046)	3%	—	—
LGBTQ X Age	1.691	2.773 (.065)	3%	2.309 (.088)	4%	4.204 (.016)	4%
Last place of residence x age	1.637	—	—	2.945 (.055)	3%	—	—

3.3. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this research point to the differences experienced in the loss of housing depending on sexual orientation and identity. The findings highlight the importance of relational problems, discrimination, and housing stability, which highlight the specific needs of sexual minorities among the homeless population.

To respond to relational problems, it has been proposed to focus on specific aspects such as family communication, counselling, or the evaluation of family dynamics (Gattis, 2013). In our research, relational conflicts in younger people are more frequent, which is consistent with other previous studies, which propose the development of family therapies with young people who are expelled from their homes or the development of negotiation skills for family members (Gattis, 2013).

Discrimination has been linked to problems of homophobia and the need to develop appropriate professional practice (Côté et al., 2023; Gattis, 2009). The main recommendations focus on training professionals to develop adapted care in the early stages. These findings are more important given the lack of awareness in the professional environment of the specific needs of this population (Begun & Kattari, 2016; Ormiston, 2022). Training in counseling and sexual identity is part of the professional skills training in the degree of Social Work.

There are other studies that have pointed out relational problems among the young population. Shelton and Bond (2017) delve into the development of interventions aimed at this segment of the population with respect to gender affirmation. These interventions aim to respond to problems of discrimination within the family and gender affirmation before the family and caregivers. In addition, the young population presents greater instability in housing. Following Shelton and Bond (2017), these problems are caused by family rejection, among other reasons. Furthermore, difficulties in terms of stability have been detected as a reflection of problems of abuse and discrimination (Rew et al., 2005).

The findings obtained suggest further investigation into different areas of study. In relation to conflicts and relationship problems, findings in other research point to the worst levels of communication in sexual minorities both with family and with partners (Gattis, 2013).

Further research is needed into the internal differences in sexual orientation and gender identity minorities. In this regard, the literature indicates that there are subgroups that experience a higher risk of discrimination than others, motivated by greater disapproval (Begun & Kattari, 2016; Gattis, 2013). With the intention of continuing to delve deeper into theories of discrimination and the impact of migration, it is necessary to incorporate other variables related to place of birth (mainly country or geopolitical group). Finally, other studies point to the importance of going deeper, through the development of specific scales, into those areas in which problems of stigma and discrimination are experienced (Kidd, 2007; Shelton, 2015).

3.4. Strengths and Limitations

The findings reflect the importance of the variable sexual orientation and gender identity in understanding the differences in the reasons that lead to the loss of housing. In addition, they serve to justify specific measures of social intervention. This study also included a good sample size and good fieldwork.

Gender assignment in the transgender population is an aspect that appears in other studies (Gattis, 2009). Assignment by observation (dress, gestures, physical appearance, or language) is often limited and misleading, as it ignores the complexity and life of these people (Ansara, 2010; Ecker, 2016). To address this issue, neutral and respectful language was used in the subjective assignment of gender identity (Ansara, 2010). Only in those cases of manifest transsexuality in the interview and the assignment to the binary gender (man and woman) was it decided to consider it within LGBTQ orientation and identity.

One limitation of this study is that a cross-sectional design was used to study the loss of housing. A longitudinal design would have made it possible to compare those who remain without housing and those who managed to get out of this situation. Another limitation is the use of retrospective questions and the difficulty of specifying the order and importance of the causes that lead to the loss of housing (Nakamura et al., 2017; Rosario et al., 2012). In addition, to delve deeper into these aspects, a total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted that were not detailed in this research, considering sexual orientation and gender identity, origin, place for accommodation, or reasons that lead to the loss of housing.

It would have been interesting to analyze the distribution of the dependent variables according to each collected category of sexual orientation and gender identity separately, but there were some categories with such a small number of individuals that it would have made multivariate analysis difficult. Therefore, we opted to recode into a single variable with LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ categories. This can be further studied with larger population samples.

It is necessary to delve deeper into sexual behaviors and the demands for accommodation that are not met when housing is lost. On the one hand, specific trajectories have been detected referring to “survival sexual practices” in the early stages (Cochran et al., 2002; Gattis, 2009; Rosario et al., 2012). On the other hand, different authors point out the importance of access to safe and adequate accommodation as an aspect that enhances autonomy and security (Begun & Kattari, 2016; Gattis, 2009).

4. Conclusion

The findings of our study confirm the differentiation presented by the LGBTQ population concerning the structural, socio-relational, and discrimination aspects that condition homelessness. The first cause of loss of housing considered by LGBTQ people is expulsion from the home because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Unlike other studies, the existing differences in relation to health and lifestyles have not been confirmed. Finally, the analyses carried out also point to some findings not detected in the literature, mainly the lesser influence that sexual orientation and gender identity have on labor and economic problems.

Funding

This research was funded through the contract between the FACIAM network and the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos under the protection of article 83 of the Organic Law of Universities (Ley Orgánica de Universidades), with the collaboration of the Community of Madrid.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Data Availability

Due to the nature of the research, data sharing is not applicable to this article.

References

- Ansara, Y. (2010). Beyond cisgenderism: Counselling people with non-assigned gender identities. In L. Moon (Ed.), *Counselling ideologies: Queer challenges to heteronormativity* (pp. 167–200). Ashgate.
- Begun, S., & Kattari, S. K. (2016). Conforming for survival: Associations between transgender visual conformity/passing and homelessness experiences. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 28(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2016.1125821>
- Busch-Geertsema, V., Edgar, W., O'Sullivan, E., & Pleace, N. (2010, December 9–10). *Homelessness and homeless policies in Europe: Lessons from research* [Paper presentation]. European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, Belgium. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6442&langId=en>
- Cabrera Cabrera, P. J., & Rubio Martín, M. J. (2009). Personas sin hogar en España: Evolución y diseño de políticas públicas. *Temas para el debate*, 174, 27–30.
- Cochran, B., Stewart, A., Ginzler, J., & Gauce, A. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5), 773–777. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.92.5.773>
- Cohen, J. (1998). *Statistical power for the behavioural sciences*. New York University, Department of Psychology.
- Collins, M. (2000). Transition to adulthood for vulnerable youths: A review of research and implications for policy. *Social Service Review*, 75(2), 270–291. <https://doi.org/10.1086/322209>
- Côté, P. B., Frésard, L., & Blais, M. (2023). 'I didn't want to be noticed': Discrimination and violence among LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 21(1), 180–199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2023.2185337>
- Dias, W. P., Nunes, T. S., Nascimento, I. M. R., Abade, E. A. F., Dultra, L. S., Marinho, M. L., Ribeiro, G. S., & Nery, J. S. (2025). Transgender people and travestis experiencing homelessness in Salvador: A descriptive study on sociodemographic profile and access to social assistance and health services, Brazil, 2021 and 2022. *Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saude*, 33(spe1), Article 2024515. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s2237-96222024v33e2024515.especial.en>

- Ecker, J. (2016). Queer, young and homeless: A review of the literature. *Child & Youth Services*, 37(4), 325–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0145935X.2016.1151781>
- Edgar, W., Harrison, M., Watson, P., & P Busch-Geertsema, V. (2007). *Measurement of homelessness at European Union level*. European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/2007/study_homelessness_en.pdf
- Eurostat. (2020a). *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion*. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_statistics_on_income_and_living_conditions_\(EU-SILC\)_methodology_-_people_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_statistics_on_income_and_living_conditions_(EU-SILC)_methodology_-_people_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)
- Eurostat. (2020b). *Unemployment by sex and age—Annual data*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/UNE_RT_A_H/default/table?lang=en
- Fajardo-Bullón, F., Esnaola, I., Anderson, I., & Benjaminsen, I. (2019). Homelessness and self-rated health: Evidence from a national survey of homeless people in Spain. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1081). <http://doi.org/10.1186/s1289-019-7380-2>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A., & Buchne, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(2), 175–191. <http://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193146>
- Field, A. (2016). *Discovering statistics using IBM statistics*. Sage Publishing.
- Fraser, B., Pierse, N., Chisholm, E., & Cook, H. (2019). LGBTIQ+Homelessness: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(15), Article 2677. <http://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16152677>
- Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Hoy-Ellis, C. P., Goldsen, J., Emler, C. A., & Hooyman, N. R. (2014). Creating a vision for the future: Key competencies and strategies for culturally competent practice with lesbian, gay bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) older adults in the health and human services. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 57(2/4), 80–107. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2014.890690>
- Gattis, M. N. (2009). Psychosocial problems associated with homelessness in sexual minority youths. *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment*, 19(8), 1066–1094. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10911350902990478>
- Gattis, M. N. (2013). An ecological systems comparison between homeless sexual minority youths and homeless heterosexual youths. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 39, 38–49. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2011.633814>
- Giménez-Rodríguez, S., Carbonero, D., Ugalde, J. D., Rodríguez, J., & Benlloch, P. (2019). *Estudio sociológico de las personas LGTBI sin hogar de la Comunidad de Madrid*. FACIAM. <https://faciam.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Informe-LGTBI-sin-hogar-18-junio.pdf>
- Hughes, M. (2009). Lesbian and gay people's concerns about ageing and accessing services. *Australian Social Work*, 62(2), 186–201. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03124070902748878>
- INE. (2005). *Encuesta sobre las Personas sin hogar 2005*. <https://www.ine.es/dynt3/inebase/es/index.htm?padre=1874&capsel=1917>
- INE. (2012). *Encuesta sobre las personas sin hogar 2012*. <https://www.ine.es/dynt3/inebase/index.htm?type=pcaxis&path=/t25/p454/e02/a2012/&file=pcaxis>
- INE. (2018). *Encuesta de condiciones de vida. Módulo año 2018*. <https://www.ine.es/dynt3/inebase/index.htm?type=pcaxis&path=/t25/p453/modulo/2018/&file=pcaxis&L=1&dh=0&capsel=0>
- Kidd, S. (2007). Youth homelessness and social stigma. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 36, 291–299. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-006-9100-3>
- Marpsat, M., & Firdion, J. M. (2000). *La rue et le foyer. Une recherche sur les sans domicile et les mal logés dans les années 1990*. INED.

- Mayock, P., & Parker, S. (2020). Homeless young people “strategizing” a route to housing stability: Service fatigue, existing attempts and living “off grid.” *Housing Studies*, 35, 459–483. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2019.1612036>
- Misedah-Robinson, L., Witte, L., Henneke, E., Land, M., & Schick, V. (2024). An exploration of anxiety and depressive symptoms among sexual and gender minority young adults visiting a drop-in center for youth experiencing homelessness. *Health Care Transitions*, 14(2), Article 100055. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.hctj.2024.100055>
- Mitsdarffer, M. L., McColl, R., Nescott, E., Bianchetta, J., Layland, E. K., & Tóth, T. (2023). LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in Delaware: Building a case for targeted surveillance and assessment of LGBTQ+ youth needs and experiences. *Delaware Journal of Public Health*, 9(2), 80–86. <http://doi.org/10.32481/djph.2023.06.014>
- Nakamura, N., Kassan, A., & Suehn, M. (2017). Resilience and migration: Experiences of same-sex binational couples in Canada. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 29(2), 201–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2017.1298489>
- Ormiston, C. K. (2022). LGBTQ youth homelessness: Why we need to protect our LGBTQ youth. *LGBT Health*, 9(4), 217–221. <http://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2021.0324>
- Padgett, D., Gulcur, L., & Tsemberis, S. (2006). Housing first services for people who are homeless with co-occurring serious mental illness and substance abuse. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16(1), 74–83. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1049731505282593>
- Rew, L., Whittaker, T. A., Taylor-Sheehafer, M. A., & Smith, L. (2005). Sexual health risks and protective resources in gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual homeless youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 10(1), 11–19. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-145x.2005.00003.x>
- Roca, P., Panadero, S., Rodríguez, S., Martín, R. M., & Vázquez Cabrera, J. J. (2019). The revolving door to homelessness. The influence of health, alcohol consumption and stressful life events on the number of episodes of homelessness. *Anales de Psicología*, 35(2), 175–180. <http://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.35.2.297741>
- Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., & Hunter, J. (2012). Risk factors for homelessness among lesbian, gay and bisexual youths: A developmental milestone approach. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 186–193. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.09.016>
- Sales i Campo, A. (2016). Sinhogarismo y exclusión social. De la asistencia a la prevención. *Revista de Treball Social*, 2016(209), 9–25.
- Shelton, J. (2015). Transgender youth homelessness: Understanding programmatic barriers through the lens of cisgenderism. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 59, 10–18. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.10.006>
- Shelton, J., & Bond, L. (2017). It just never worked out: How transgender and gender expansive youth understand their pathways into homelessness. Families in society. *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 98(4), 284–291. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.2017.98.33>
- SIIS. (2019). IV Estudio sobre la situación de las personas en situación de exclusión residencial grave en la CAPV. 2018.

About the Authors



Silvia Giménez-Rodríguez is an associate professor of sociology at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (URJC) and the director of the Observatory for the Analysis and Visibility of Social Exclusion (URJC). She holds a PhD in sociology and a MSc in drug addiction and AIDS. Silvia is also a visiting researcher at Fordham, Columbia (NY), ITSCE (Lisbon), Sapienza (Rome), and El Salvador (Buenos Aires).



Juan Daniel Ugalde Galera is a lecturer at the URJC. A PhD in social work, he is also secretary of the Observatory for the Analysis and Visibility of Social Exclusion (URJC). He has 18 years of experience in intervention with homeless people (nine with LGBTBI people) and has participated in several research projects and publications.



José Gabriel Rodríguez Pérez is a lecturer at the URJC. He holds a PhD in social work (URJC) and an MSc in community social work, management, and evaluation of social services (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). He earned his bachelor's degree in social work from the Universidad Pontificia de Comillas.



Almudena Gómez Jiménez is a lecturer at the URJC with 25 years of experience in social intervention with people in vulnerable situations. She is a research collaborator at the Observatory for the Analysis and Visibility of Social Exclusion (URJC) and holds bachelor's degrees in social work and social education.