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Social isolation: A study of causal factors in homeless families

Samuel Ross Birdsall

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SOCIAL ISOLATION:
A STUDY OF CAUSAL FACTORS IN HOMELESS FAMILIES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Samuel Ross Birdsall
September 2000
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of social isolation as a causal factor in creating homelessness. Previous studies have focused on homeless individuals in general; the focus of this study is homeless families. The study design is exploratory and attempts to provide new insight into the dynamics surrounding homeless populations. Developed within a dualistic theoretical frame of Exchange Theory and Network Analysis, the study examined current strengths of self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships, actions, and exchange Value. The study took place at homeless shelters and other agencies that specifically provide services for homeless people. Case managers recruited participant volunteers from clients receiving services at these agencies. Twenty-two survey instruments were issued and eleven (N = 11) were selected for final analysis. The study did not produce significant quantifiable findings to indicate the presence of social isolation as a causal factor in creating homelessness. Discussion of findings includes other trends and issues significant to social work regarding methods of prediction, prevention, and treatment.
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County of San Bernardino Homeless Coalition
Community Services Department of San Bernardino County
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Option House
Frazee Community Center
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness within the United States presents a large and confusing social dilemma. This is especially alarming when one considers that in a nation as wealthy the U.S., homelessness is unnecessary. Once characterized as the select realm of predominantly poor, unemployed, single, young adult males typically suffering from, mental illness, addictions, or alcoholism who inhabit the skid rows of urban centers, homelessness is changing the face it presents to society. Starting in the early 1980s, two parent families and single parents with children (more often women with children) began to appear among the homeless. Currently, family groups are the fastest growing segment and may comprise as much as 30% of the total homeless population.

Part of the dilemma faced by social scientists, policy makers, and social service providers is their inability to define the magnitude of the problem with any degree of accuracy. Consequently, a consensus as to which methodology best identifies or quantifies the size of the homeless population does not exist. Depending upon whose study is presented, estimates range from half a million to three million people. The most conservative estimates, utilized by the Federal Government, put the number at 700,000
homeless people on any given night. Additionally, the historic debate continues between proponents of macro forces versus micro forces. Structural (macro) theorists occupy a position that attributes homelessness to socio-economic forces beyond the control of individuals. On the other hand, behavioral (micro) theorists look to individual deficiencies as primary causal factors. Treatment programs and policies are affected by and reflect this bifurcated and confusing mindset.

It is not the intent of this paper to enter into or take a position on either side of this discussion. Instead, this study will attempt to identify the presence of social isolation as a causal factor of homelessness. An operational definition of homelessness can be found in Appendix C. Results from this study are necessary for a number of reasons. First, the role of social isolation as an independent variable should be examined from a multivariate perspective. Second, by identifying attributes specific to social isolation we can improve our ability to predict the likelihood of a family becoming homeless. Finally, the ability to identify such a risk factor could aid in the design of treatment plans and intervention programs.

The foci of this study are composed of two concurrent
tiers. The first tier consists of identifying attributes indicating the presence of a variable called social isolation. In this initial tier, social isolation is the dependent variable. Identification of its sub-components or features will provide an operational definition for the term social isolation, establish a basis for reliable and valid checks to determine its presence, and create the necessary element for tier two. The objective of tier two is to document social isolation as one of the multi-variant causal components that contribute to creating homeless families.

Results of this study are important to the practice of social work for several reasons. First, in previous studies, social isolation received only cursory attention; the general perception is that social isolation is a by-product, concurrent effect, or result of other causal factors. It has appeared in studies of grief, loneliness in the elderly, child abuse, victimization of battered women, and among those who live in poverty. The intent of this study is to determine whether social isolation is identifiable in those who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and is therefore a primary causal factor of homelessness. Strength and direction of co-variance with other previously recorded factors such as poverty, mental illness, and alcohol or drug addiction will
also help determine the impact of the variable. Second, perhaps more than any other previously recorded cause, social isolation offers the best opportunity for policymakers and service providers to develop manageable and cost effective treatment plans to: (a) serve as preventative strategies for those at risk, (b) provide interim treatment programs aimed at ending an existing homeless situation, and (c) reduce the risk of recidivism among previously homeless families.

Literature Review

Homelessness and its relationship to absent or weakened social ties are not new ideas. What has changed dramatically is the impact of dystonic social relationships on families and the drastic change in the composition of the homeless population's demographic profile. In just thirty years, the span of one generation, the faces of the homeless evolved to include families, women, and children.

Their increasing numbers are alarming; families now are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population (Roth & Fox, 1990). According to the U. S. Conference of Mayors' Survey of 29 Cities, 1997, (McChesney, 1990; Milburn & D'Ercole, 1991; Rosenberg, Solars, & Bailey, 1991) families, primarily women with children, make up an estimated one third of the total number of homeless. Compare this with
the 1968, edition of the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences that provides the following definition:

Homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterized by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures . . . Homeless women and children are relatively rare. Their appearance denotes widespread disorder and instability, such as follows famines and civil wars [emphasis added]. (Caplow, Bahr, and Sternberg, 1968, p. 494.)

One thing is glaringly apparent when analyzing current literature dealing with homelessness and its causes; no one simple answer or "systematic study of homelessness exists" (Hutchinson, Searight, & Stretch, 1986, p. 427). Keeping that in mind, no discussion of causal factors can commence without briefly mentioning the on-going debate as to whether homelessness is the result of macro level forces or the flawed character or cognitive maladies of individuals.

Macro level forces are those deemed beyond individual control: poverty, lack of affordable housing and low wages are just a few. Those who focus on the shortcomings of individuals blame mental illness and substance abuse (Lee, Lewis, & Jones, 1992); these risks are well documented but laden with controversy due to differences in research methodologies. Estimates vary from study to study with some claiming 10% to 20% (Drake, Osler, & Wallach, 1991) of the
homeless population being affected by these maladies. Fisher (1989), (Fisher & Breakey, 1991), claims disparate ranges of 2% to 90% for mental health problems... 4% to 86% for alcohol and 1% to 70% for drug abuse. Utilizing figures from a report published in 1998 by the Institute of Medicine, Levine and Huebner claim “alcohol abuse was the single most prevalent health problem faced by homeless persons” (Levine & Huebner, 1991, p. 1113).

In the past, our cultural belief held that having a job was the best way to secure financial independence. This may have been true when the U. S. economic base relied heavily on industry and manufacturing. Traditionally, jobs within sectors paid wages and salaries sufficient to meet the majority of a family’s financial requirements. In our modern service based economy, this is not necessarily the case. Most homeless people are unemployed and those who find employment discover the work “short-term, erratic, menial, and provided minimal wages” (Halter, 1992, p. 16). Despite the thriving economic conditions we currently experience, full time employment does not guarantee a wage suitable to maintain housing. An article in the April 20, 2000 Orange County Register reports:

The majority of the county’s 18,603 homeless — 60 percent to 70 percent — are working families who are sleeping in motels, parks, or their cars...
working poor are not benefiting from the county’s thriving economy and shrinking unemployment rate. Instead a growing number of people are struggling to meet rising housing costs on wages of less than $10 an hour (McKim, 2000, pp. 1, 5).

Recently, a new candidate entered the milieu; some researchers now recognize the contributions of social networks in people’s lives as a “safety net to prevent them from falling into homelessness” (Shinn & Weitzman, 1990, p. 5). Isolation from others can take on several forms. Chronic homelessness brings about high levels of transience. Adults, who as children were moved around repeatedly, claim they never had the opportunity to form social ties with persons outside their families. In other instances, individuals cite alienation from their families as a contributing reason for being homeless. With the latter, familial support was either not requested of or was withdrawn by the family due to inter-personal conflict (Reilly, 1993). Alienation from society and friends also contributes to feelings of hopelessness and attitudes of insurmountable situations among long time residents in homeless shelters (Halter, 1992).

Structural critics argue that ratios of the numbers of low-income householders to the number of low income housing units is a primary factor in homelessness (McChesney, 1990). Other factors including living at or below the poverty
level, loss of low-income housing, reductions in federal subsidies to low income housing, devaluation of the dollar’s purchasing power, and reduced employment opportunities for unskilled labor also contribute to socio-economic conditions affecting at-risk or homeless people (McCarty et al, 1991). There is some additional support for this position and the belief that if:

housing were cheap and abundant, employment high, and benefits for those who are not employed generous, individuals who lacked social supports or those with severe mental disabilities would still have residences. (Shinn & Weitzman, 1990, p. 7).

In another study (Shinn, Knickman, & Weitzman, 1991) conclude that homelessness is a direct result of poverty and lack of housing, and that weakened or absent social ties may predispose families for homelessness [emphasis added]. The Stanford Study of 1991 reports similar findings when comparing homeless poor to the poor who are at-risk of becoming homeless. By duplicating Peter Rossi’s Chicago Study, Stanford researchers discovered:

A low level of social support does not, alone, cause homelessness. But low levels of social support combined with low income and high housing costs are a volatile combination. (The Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children, and Youth, 1991, p. 15).

At this juncture, it is important to understand the relational aspect of social isolation, as well as its role
and fit with causal factors that were previously presented as subjects of other studies. It is incumbent upon all of us to understand that not all mentally ill persons, drug addicts, or alcoholics become homeless. All poor people or unemployed workers do not become homeless. All divorced women, teen mothers or all retired persons on fixed low incomes do not become homeless. What then differentiates these people from those who become homeless? Baum and Burns (1993) provide an answer that illustrates the spirit and focus of this study. They claim:

Homelessness is more than being poor and without a home; homelessness is a condition of disengagement from ordinary society—from family, friends, neighborhood, church, community . . . Homelessness means being disconnected from all of the support systems that usually provide help in times of crisis; it means being without structure; it means being alone . . . Homelessness occurs when people no longer have relationships. (Baum & Burns, 1993, p. 23).

Previous studies of social isolation include grief associated with death (Schwab, 1996), powerlessness among the poor (See, 1991), loneliness among the elderly (Mullins, Woodland, & Putnam, 1989), and paranoid states (Berger & Zarit, 1978).

The absence of studies relating social isolation as a causal factor in homelessness may be indicative of a lack of understanding as to how disruptions in social support
networks can be a precursor to homelessness. Baum and Burns (1993) even state, "Disconnectedness or 'disaffiliation' does not cause homelessness, but rather is the most universal characteristic of the homeless" (Baum & Burns, 1993, p. 23). This logic appears to contradict their previous statement. This study attempted to demonstrate the following: (A) When people become disconnected from support systems, they either no longer have relationships or suffer greatly weakened relationships. (B) When people no longer have relationships, they are alone—they become homeless. If the former is indicated in this study then the following question must be asked and answered, "If being alone—without relationships is not a form of social isolation, what is?"

The theoretical perspective employed in this study will consist of the incorporated principals of Exchange Theory and Network Analysis. Fusion of these perspectives is considered relatively radical and by some, even incompatible. Support for this combined theoretical approach is offered so researchers can observe and explain the relationship between psychological factors which drive individuals and "social constraints in terms of alternatives and opportunity structures" (Cook & Whitmeyer, 1992, p. 113.). Exchange Theory provides a structural basis for observers to explain the actions of individuals or groups.
In its simplest form this means actors satisfy their needs with actions. These actions comprise a set of repeatable activities in which finite personal resources are expended in order to produce a desired outcome. A resource is:

> Anything transacted in an interpersonal situation. It encompasses, therefore many different events; material objects such as a dress, a flower or a bottle of wine, money and equivalent forms of payment, a kiss, a medical or beauty treatment, a newspaper, a congratulatory handshake, a glance of admiration or reproach, a pat on the back or a punch in the nose. In short, a resource is any item, concrete or symbolic, which can become the object of exchange among people (Foa & Foa, 1980, p. 78).

Foa & Foa, (1980), arranged these resources into six classes labeled love, status, information, money, goods, and services. Their relative placement and inter-relationships are grouped within a coordinate ordered axis [See Figure 1] labeled “concrete-symbolic and particularistic-universal” (Foa & Foa, 1980, p. 79). See Figure 1.

---

1Emerson, R. (1987) Actor is derived from neoclassical economic theory and describes a person or a firm (p. 11).
On the first coordinate, concreteness, services and goods involve the exchange of some overtly tangible activity or product, and are classed as concrete. Status and information . . . are typically conveyed by verbal or paralinguistic behaviors and are thus more symbolic. Love and money are exchanged in both concrete and symbolic forms, and thus occupy intermediate positions on this coordinate. The positions of love and money are extreme and opposite on the particularistic coordinate. (Foa & Foa, 1980, pp. 79-80.)

As ascribed by their finite nature, resources are scarce thus making actions purposeful "in the sense that (a) actions have consequences in the environment, and (b) they are performed because of those consequences. When both (a) and (b) are true for a given type of action . . . the consequence is said to be a valued outcome of that action" (Emerson, 1987, p. 19). These outcomes, while constrained by environmental factors which may either restrict opportunity or offer coexistent choices, serve as reinforcing stimuli and enable an actor to develop value domains as "emotional guides to action based upon long-term processes of conditioning" (Emerson, 1987, p. 39). Emerson also makes this point--need is not the sole contributor in the formation of an actor's value. In addition to need, objective probability and uncertainty are also determinant factors; all three offer empirical research opportunities.

At the most fundamental level, human needs are defined as food, shelter, and companionship. In terms of Exchange
Theory, these basic needs are value domains. Therefore, needs become measurable when they are satisfied by their selection. Objective probability governs an actor’s ability to make a decision as to what action to take when an opportunity for two reinforcing stimuli co-exists. Emerson theorizes:

It is not unreasonable to believe that subjective estimates are made that help determine the action performed. Thus over time, opportunities within any domain will govern objective probabilities within that domain, and when estimates can be made, we assume the higher (subjective) probabilities will prevail” (Emerson, 1987, pp. 22-23).

As an actor’s selection between choices is made through subjective analysis of probable outcomes, conditioning occurs. Future selections made by the actor within the same value domain become predictable and measurable, an important concept for social workers who design intervention and treatment programs. In order to measure objective probability, the study explored the choices made by participants and examined their choices for patterns indicative of conditioned responses. Finally, value formation is also defined by uncertainty. Emerson hypothesizes that by nature, humans are “‘problem solvers’ meaning that outcomes obtained in problematic situations have enhanced value” (Emerson, 1987, p. 42). Emerson
continues and explains that with each successful outcome the human actor acquires competence. However, competence comes with a price. If outcomes are easily achieved, no matter how much they are needed, they are not highly valued. Actions to acquire outcomes which lie beyond an actor’s competence create stress and an opportunity to, "(a) gain increased competence; (b) evolve into a system with a different need structure or (c) die" (Emerson, 1987, p. 44). With competence our actor gains confidence in her ability to determine and assign Value when confronted by choices on how to best satisfy needs through the use of finite resources. This variable then becomes measurable by determining the relative value assigned to the resource expended in order to satisfy the need.

At this point the second aspect of our theoretical fusion, Network Analysis, requires explanation. According to Yamagishi, (1987), "A network consists of points and lines connecting points. In an exchange network, points represent actors . . . and the lines represent exchange opportunities between actors" (Yamagishi, 1987, p. 150). By extension then, Yamagishi, (1987) contends that exchange network analysis makes some assumptions: (a) an actor’s behavior reflects the network’s structure, (b) if two actors occupy the same structural position they are under the same
structural constraints, and (c) actors occupying the same position behave similarly as a reflection of those constraints. Therefore, "the logical unit of analysis of exchange networks is position rather than individual actors or points" (Yamagishi, 1987, p. 150).

By exploring the frame constructed of the generalized components, Network Position, Actions, Emotional Status, and Value, this study will attempt to quantify attributes indicating the presence of social isolation among homeless people.
CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

This study is exploratory and comprised of two concurrent purposes. First, identify the attributes associated with the phenomena of social isolation and second, determine the causal relationship between social isolation and homelessness. The method utilized is quantitative in nature and attempts to satisfy the five criteria (Williams, Tutty, & Grinnell, 1995) for quantitative study as presented in Grinnell (1997). Those criteria are (1) measurability, (2) objectivity, (3) reducing uncertainty, (4) duplication, and (5) standardized procedures (Grinnell, 1997, p. 74).

Whenever possible, participant selection was done on a random basis with purposive aspects. The study consists of client data supplied by individuals who are currently homeless and residing in temporary shelter facilities. In late December of 1999, a study proposal and cover letter was mailed to twenty-six agencies located within San Bernardino County. Eleven Agencies, those serving the highest number of homeless clients based upon temporary shelter bed count, were then selected. Several follow-up telephone calls were made to these eleven agencies. Four of
the eleven agencies responded and allowed the researcher to survey agency clients.

This study was primarily interested in surveying families. An operational definition of family is found in Appendix C. Only adults participated.

Presentations were made to a total of twenty-seven people recruited by agency personnel; twenty-two elected to participate. Of the twenty-two participants, eleven questionnaires were selected for analysis. Of the eleven questionnaires not selected, rejection occurred for the following reasons: (1) The first five were chosen and scrutinized for reliability and validity checks. As a result, the questionnaire was modified in order to eliminate participants' confusion. (2) Three instruments were not returned to the researcher. (3) Two respondents were homeless individuals—not accompanied by children or a domestic partner. (4) One respondent did not complete a substantial (over 40%) portion of the questionnaire.

Limitations of the study are tied to several factors. First, since participation was voluntary, not all homeless people who were solicited chose to participate. Second, since only homeless subjects provided data, a certain degree of bias exists. Third, the survey instrument is previously untested but every effort was made to insure compliance with
validity and reliability factors. Content validity requirements were satisfied by asking multiple questions within the same context. Face validity requirements were satisfied by comparing the questions with criteria established within Exchange Theory. Therefore, subjective as well as objective measures are employed. Finally, it is possible that attributes associated with social isolation may also exist within the general population and the possibility of ecological fallacy exists. However, it must be assumed that the presence of these attributes are of insufficient quantity, strength, or duration to cause homelessness.

Each participant was assigned a four-digit identification number. Informed consent agreements were obtained prior to administering the survey instrument. The participants’ identification number was coded on the consent form, survey instrument and debriefing statement (See Appendix A). No other identifying information was associated with any particular subject. Protection of human subjects was accomplished by confidential data gathering and generalized reporting methods. Questionnaires and consent forms were kept under separate lock and key. Identification numbers enabled any participant a means of withdrawing their data at any time should they choose to do so.
The survey instrument consists of 51 questions developed by the researcher in order to determine the presence of attributes associated with social isolation. The questions are subdivided into five units of analysis. The first four units are dictated by the theoretical frame; they are (1) Value, (2) Actions, (3) Emotional Status, and (4) Network Position. These first four subsections designate attributes associated with the independent variable social isolation. Operational definitions are found in Appendix C.

The fifth section is comprised of demographic data.

This instrument consists of ordinal, nominal, and interval data gathered and formatted using summated, self-anchored and semantic differential rating scales. Data was collected by a single researcher and took place during February, March and April of the year 2000.

Data analysis consisted of univariate and bivariate analysis methods. All data were subjected to frequency distribution, means, central tendency and variability tests. Transformation of some interval data into categorical variables was necessary. Bivariate analysis for correlation analysis included use of Spearman’s rho and Kendall’s tau tests. These tests are non-parametric and more appropriate than Pearson’s r when sample sizes are small and data are ordinal levels of measurement.
Multivariate analysis was employed in order to establish inter-relatedness between other causal factors of homelessness such as poverty, mental illness, drug or alcohol use, and social isolation.
CHAPTER THREE
FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the study and is separated into three subsections. The first subsection presents findings associated with each of the social isolation attributes and creates the Social Isolation Index Score. As previously discussed, these attributes are presented from within the paradigmatic frames of Exchange Theory and Network Analysis. They are Value, Actions, Emotional Status, and Network Position. The second subsection analyzes the Social Isolation Index Score (SIIS). Table 3.2 in Appendix D provides the following: (1) Social Isolation Index Scores, (2) attributes for individual scores, (3) group scores, (4) SIIS frequencies, (5) quartile scores, and the (6) participants' SIIS. The final subsection provides a distribution of participants' demographic data.

Social Isolation Index Scores Attributes

Value

This attribute consisted of a series of seven statements presented in a Likert Scale ordinal format. Participants were asked to respond by demonstrating their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Four choices, in their respective order, were provided as follows: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly
Disagree. Each answer was provided a respective numeric value from 1 to 4, with Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, disagree = 3, and Strongly Disagree = 4. Response Value approaching 1 would indicate someone whose personal exchange Value are oriented to the more concrete aspects of interpersonal exchanges. This is typified by a reliance on material gain (money and goods) as opposed to reliance on social connections (love and status). See Appendix E for the results to each question. The average score across the range of possible answers to these questions = 3.26. A score of this magnitude would indicate someone who has a relatively strong sense of attributing value to interpersonal relationships and social connectivity.

**Actions**

This attribute also consisted of a series of seven statements presented in a Likert Scale ordinal format. Participants were asked to respond by demonstrating their degree of frequency in compliance with the statement. The four offered choices, in their respective order, are provided as follows: Always, Frequently, Sometimes, and Never. Each answer was provided a respective numeric value from 1 to 4, with Always = 1, Frequently = 2, Sometimes = 3, and Never = 4. Response Value approaching 1 would indicate someone whose actions are preconditioned by their relative
success in other similar exchanges. See Appendix B for the results to each question. The average score across the range of possible answers to these questions = 2.43. A score of this magnitude would indicate someone who has a average to moderately weak sense of belief that actions produce outcomes desired by the participant.

Emotional Status

This section also consisted of a series of seven pairs of adjectives presented in a Semantic Differential format. The continuum between pairs of opposing adjectives allowed for selection of one of seven unnumbered choices. The pairings were as follows: Hopeless, Hopeful; Worthless, Worthy; Incapable, Capable; Dissatisfied, Satisfied; Not Confident, Confident; Mistrustful, trustful; and Careless, Careful. In order to facilitate quantitative analysis, scoring Value were applied to the selections after the survey instruments were returned. Numeric scoring ranged from 1 to 7 with the extremes anchored as in the following example: Worthless = 1, Worthy = 7. This uniform application of the continuum Value was applied to all seven pairs of adjectives. Value approaching 1 would indicate someone whose affective or emotional status demonstrates a general lack of self confidence that could hinder participation in social exchanges. See Appendix B for the
results to each differential pairing. The average score across the range of possible answers to these questions = 5.42. A score of this magnitude would indicate someone who possesses a moderate to strong sense of emotional strength and self efficacy.

Network Position

This section also consisted of a series of six statements and one question. The six statements were presented in a Likert Scale ordinal format in which participants were again asked to respond by demonstrating their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The same terms and numeric assignments used in the Value section were repeated here. The question was assigned a Yes or No nominal response. The numeric Value assigned to the nominal response were, No = 1 and Yes = 4, and were selected in order to maintain a uniform scoring format within the Network Position attribute. The results to each question can be found in Appendix B. The average score across the range of possible answers to these questions = 2.43. A score of this magnitude would indicate someone who possesses an average to moderately weak belief that interaction with others produces positive outcomes.
Social Isolation Index Score

The Social Isolation Index Score (SIIS) was created by adding the individual participant scores in each of the four attribute subsection ranges. The index was created in order to facilitate analysis. Within each of the four attribute groups, the individual ordinal scores were added. In affect, this converted ordinal scores to interval scores. The results of these compilations presented in Table 3.2 found in Appendix D. The index score was analyzed as an independent variable of the dependent variable homelessness. Previous studies have focused on other homelessness causal factors such as poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse. These factors, as identified within this study sample, were examined as independent co-variants and presented along with the Social Isolation Index Score.

The original method of this study proposed examination of three different family groups: (a) those presently homeless, (b) those not currently homeless (but at risk of being homeless), and (c) those whom had been homeless in the previous two year period. By examining three different groups, variation within the class of homeless would have occurred. Due to the transient nature of the homeless population, only homeless families currently residing in temporary shelters were available for interviews. Therefore
no variation within the dependent variable homeless exists; all of the families identified in this study are presently homeless.

Table 3.1 below presents bi-variant correlation of the SIIS and each of the attribute groups. Both Kendall’s tau and Spearman’s rho were used to analyze variable correlation. Spearman is preferable when samples are very small as in the study (N=11). Variable correlation is significant at .05 or greater.

Table 3.1. Social Isolation Attribute Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Emotional Status</th>
<th>Network Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIIS</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Status</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Position</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>-.089</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated within the table, three of the four attributes, Value, Emotional Status, and Network Position demonstrate a strong and positive correlation with the Social Isolation Index Score (SIIS). Only the variable Actions displays a weak relationship to SIIS. The same three variables that correlate strongly with SIIS also demonstrate a positive and moderately strong relationship with one another.

Demographic Data

Demographic data are provided in Table 3.3 found in Appendix E. Generalized findings of this survey indicate that the predominant profile of a homeless head of family is as follows: She is a female member of an ethnic minority who has at least one child in her custody. She is over 36 years old and currently not involved in a marital or domestic partner relationship. She was employed prior to becoming homeless. Her monthly expenses exceed her monthly income and she is dependent upon public transportation. She has been homeless longer than eight weeks and this is her first occurrence of homelessness. She currently does not use alcohol or drugs, has not been in jail, and is not diagnosed with any mental illness. Her residence prior to becoming homeless was inhabited by herself and at least three other family members. Since becoming homeless she continues to
communicate with relatives almost three times per week. She sees a dentist at least once a year, a physician four times per year and communicates with her AFDC eligibility worker four times per year. This profile, of a homeless head of family, is completely contrary to the general profile of a homeless person.

Indications of social isolation, drug or alcohol abuse, age, or mental illness did not present themselves as strong predictive factors in this study. Factors of gender, race, unemployment, domestic violence, and income were much more prevalent. Some of this may be due to the small sample of cases analyzed. However, even if this limited sample has produced some spurious results, two facts remain. First, twenty-eight homeless adults were presented the opportunity to take part in the survey. The positive aspects of this finding are that all twenty-eight were sufficiently self-empowered to seek housing in temporary shelters. The vast majority of these adults are heads of families and have children with them. If these numbers are multiplied by the more than 5,000 shelters in communities of over 25,000 residents (1989 HUD Survey in Weinreb & Rossi, 1995), the results are of epidemic proportions. The down side of this finding is that there are homeless individuals and families who have not made their way into the shelter system. If
viewed from this perspective, the problem is far greater than just epidemic, it is out of control. Second, quantitative findings from this study did not support the presence of social isolation as a causal factor. However, other indicators such as lack of stable relationships, weakened social support networks, high dependence upon public transportation, and poverty may imply its existence.
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION

There can be no doubt that the problem of homelessness is very complex. Just as there is no one simple reason for the phenomenon, there is no one simple solution.

As indicated in the findings, this study was unable to substantiate social isolation as causal factor in creating homelessness. This may be more the result of limitations within the study rather than lack of evidence of social isolation. Causal analysis depends upon variation within both the dependent and independent variables. No variation occurred within the dependent variable of homelessness.

By utilizing the Exchange Theory/Network Analysis frame, this study sought to explore interpersonal and social relationships and the strength of their sometimes-tenuous natures by examination of the personal attributes Value, Actions, Emotional Status, and Network Position. Hypothetically, if a person feels good about themselves, highly Value their personal resources (whether concrete or symbolic), takes actions (make exchanges) that fulfills needs, and maintains social and interpersonal network positions, a positive and fairly strong relationship should exist among the four attributes. Results of this study indicate that Actions are weakly, and in two instances
negatively, related to the other attributes of Value, Emotional Status, and Network Position. In other words, the participants may value their relationships, themselves, and their exchange resources but are prohibited from actions necessary to maintain them. This prohibition may be the result of several factors such as poverty, domestic violence or social isolation. Isolation or alienation from social and interpersonal networks does not mean necessarily that people are reclusive shut-ins. As presented in the Literature Review, social isolation occurs when support networks are strained or broken. It cannot be argued whether social isolation does or does not exist among homeless people, other evidence (Halter, 1992; Reilly, 1993) demonstrates that it does.

We also know social isolation and alienation occur and seem especially detrimental to people at risk of homelessness. This population often suffers from weak or strained social relationships that occur at both the community and family level. Reilly (1993) reports that for many homeless people, their isolation from society began when they were children. High transience levels kept them from attending schools regularly or making friends. Isolation from family occurs for two reasons; homeless people are often reluctant to call upon friends and family
for support, or their family refuses help. The results of the survey seem to support this. It is of interest to note that one of the areas surveyed dealt with the question, "How many times per week do you communicate with relatives that do not live with you?". The survey responses averaged 3.4 contacts per person. The survey also asked participants to rate two statements using a Lickert scale that offered a range of four choices indicating degrees of agreement or disagreement. Those statements were: (a) "Most of the time I depend upon people to help me" (mean response = 3.27 indicating disagreement), and (b) "Most people who claim to be my friends only do so because I have something they want" (mean response = 2.4 indicating agreement). Correlation between these three variables was not significant. Further investigation may indicate frequent levels of communication between homeless mothers and members of interpersonal support networks are common even when these networks are neither trusted nor relied upon. The result of this seemingly incongruent picture may be indicative of persons who are willing to maintain lines of communication with family and friends but are unwilling to ask them for assistance.

The affects of strained familial relationships in hastening homelessness as noted in other studies (Stanford
Study, 1991; and Stretch & Kreuger, 1992), conclude that overcrowding and family friction contributes directly to the phenomenon. The demographic table (Table 3.3 in Appendix E) provides figures that partially illuminate this claim. The table indicates that participants' average household size before becoming homeless was 3.4 people. Data collection did not include gathering information on the number of rooms the number of rooms in these households, so a crowding ratio was not established. However, if we look at other data, some inferences are possible. First, the average of 3.4 people per household is not unreasonable if the residence has sufficient rooms to provide privacy and some sense of spatial freedom. What is noteworthy is that five of the eleven participants (45%) came from households of four or more people, and two participants (18%) came from households of five or more people. In some respects, this is expected, families at risk of homelessness often turn to their first line of defense, their extended families.

What is at work here can truly construct a circular argument that has validity. Social isolation occurs making it difficult to reach the people it affects. Without access to isolated populations, research can neither determine social isolation's relationship separately nor in conjunction with other variables as a causal factor.
Other Causal Factors

One of the fundamental causes of crowding is poverty. People sometimes find it necessary to double up with friends and family just to survive. In order to extend the analysis, it is necessary to discuss the impact that poverty has on the homeless population. Without a doubt, the overwhelming majority of the homeless are poor. Milburn & D’Ercole report, "Homeless people are more similar to poor people than they are different from them" (Milburn & D’Ercole, 1991, p. 1159). Shinn & Weitzman indicated, "Individual and social factors probably also interact with the socioeconomic context in predicting homelessness" (Shinn & Weitzman, 1990, p. 7.).

The average family income for the population surveyed was $561 per month. This represented all forms of income including food stamp allowances. Annualized, this amount provides a family a gross income of $6,732. The average number of people living on this income was 2.4. According to the U.S. Department of the Census (1999) figures, the United States poverty level for a family of two is $11,060. For a family of three, the poverty level is $13,880. The U. S. Census (1980) reported the poverty level for a family of three at $6,635. In other words, the average annual
income of this study's participants only exceeded the 1980 poverty level by $97.

Race and gender also play a part in determining whether or not a family is at risk of homelessness; when joined by poverty, the risk is exacerbated. According to the Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census, there are almost 4 million female headed households whose income is below the poverty level; 41% of these families are black (U. S. Census, 2000).

Unemployment is compounded by homelessness. Findings of this study indicated a moderately strong and positive (.614 at p > 05) correlation between unemployment and homelessness. As homelessness and unemployment periods increase, it becomes increasingly difficult for people "to maintain a positive attitude toward work and independence." (Halter, 1992, p. 16.).

The other half of the financial equation is how much of a family's income is needed to maintain them in housing, food, utilities, and other essentials? The families in this survey reported average monthly expenses of $581, which exceeds their reported monthly income by $20. This may not be completely unreasonable if we consider the majority shared households with other people before becoming homeless. Sharing of income and expenses could have been
part of the household norm. It is also possible that erroneous reporting or the small sample size created this anomaly. The fact remains; affordable housing is the most critical of these factors. Poor families simply cannot consistently afford the rents they must pay in order to maintain residence.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLICH) in their Out of Reach report (September 1999) states the following, "45% of renters in California cannot afford the FMR [Fair Market Rent] on a two bedroom unit. According to Federal guidelines, a rental unit is considered affordable if the rent is not more than 30% of the renter’s gross income. In California, the FMR of a two-bedroom unit is $775 per month. Someone working in a minimum wage job earning $10,712 annually cannot afford rent that exceeds $267.80. A renter in California working full time and earning the Federal minimum wage would have to work 116 hours per week in order to afford the Fair Market rent on a two-bedroom unit. A family of three receiving the maximum Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant of $626 cannot afford to pay more than $188 (Out of Reach 1999). This bleak picture is matched only by the additional fact that due to legislative policy changes at the Federal level, Section 8 housing units will be gradually reduced over the
next ten years. This could put some current 3 million Section 8 recipients at risk as well as the additional 5 million families who have worst-case needs and do not receive assistance (Ranghelli, 1999).

Evictions can pose special problems for homeless families. Landlords are often reluctant to rent to someone that has an eviction on their credit report. Many families become homeless when they are evicted simply because they cannot find a subsequent landlord who will rent to them. Four participants (36%) experienced an eviction within the past year. It is unknown whether the eviction was directly or indirectly responsible for their eventual homeless state. Being evicted and forced to go into an emergency shelter would be a direct result. Going to live with friends or relatives would be considered and indirect cause if that residence then de-stabilized and consequently, the person became homeless.

On balance, the greatest challenge facing homeless families is lack of affordable housing. Communities must commit additional resources and provide their citizens with low cost rentals. On-going case management assistance for a family housed in community supported rentals will minimally accomplish three goals. First, continued contact with the family will allow follow-up and evaluation of on-going
needs. Second, the community can protect its investment in the property and assure that maintenance and up-keep efforts are continued. Finally, and most importantly, people previously homeless or at risk of homelessness will be sheltered.

Treatment

For many people who become homeless, temporary shelter facilities provide the only relief from life on the streets. However, majorities of these facilities do not offer long-term treatment or have the ability to track whether or not their efforts have been successful. Often, "it is unknown what happens to homeless families once programmatic support ends" (Stretch & Kreuger, 1992, p. 75).

The most successful treatment programs appear to be those that offer a multi-stage service approach and are time limited. Typically these programs are based upon a medical model of treatment that offers progressive and aggressive interventions. The initial stage consists of assessment, screening and intake to determine the extent of services required. Clients requiring additional intervention for medical, mental health, or substance abuse treatment receive assessment and referrals to appropriate providers. In the second stage, immediate needs such as clothing, food and shelter are provided. Case managers also assist clients in
meeting personal as well as agency goals. The third stage is the actual treatment program. Case managers work closely with clients to assist them in locating permanent housing. Often this stage includes enrollment in programs to improve parenting and communications skills. By encouraging clients to improve interpersonal relationships with family and friends, they strengthen their support networks. This stage also provides counseling or referrals for clients who need intervention in order to treat mental illness, substance abuse, and other deficiencies. The final stage may be the most critical. This stage tracks clients once they discharge from the agency’s residential programs. By providing ongoing support to families after they have exited the resident shelter programs, rates of recidivism are often reduced.

Implications for Social Work

Implications for social work are addressed in two parts, research and practice. The time-honored principle of ethical clinical practice that implores social workers to “Start where the client is,” must be extended to research as well. In the past, research has tended to focus on demographics and deficiencies and has distorted research dealing with homeless populations. These distortions take on four forms:
Treating strips of data as indicators of a pattern, (2) Uncritical use of psychiatric inventories, (3) Decontextualized analysis, and (4) Employing the language of disability rather than biographic vulnerability (Snow, Anderson & Koegel, 1994, pp. 463-469).

Snow, Anderson, and Koegel present a convincing argument imploring researchers to employ alternative methods of research. They feel research must be multi-focused and longitudinal across time and space rather than cross-sectional snap-shots, which tend to focus on single pathological aspects of human behavior. They believe research should be contextual as well as reflective of the views of the homeless themselves. Without a strategic client focus, the tendency of research is to focus on deficiencies and pathologies. When done at the expense of clients’ true needs, systematic poverty, strained family ties, and disrupted social relationships will prevail.

Further research of this population is warranted, especially research focused on familial resilience. By applying the focus of research toward identifying family strengths rather than deficiencies, models of treatment can be developed to assist clients by emphasizing what they have rather than what they are lacking.

Social work practice can take place within many arenas. At the macro level, community organizing can assist at risk
populations by bringing strength of numbers to bear within the political sphere. Communities that are dedicated to eradicating homelessness and its demoralizing effects can take full advantage of some of the Federal policy changes that returns control of public housing and vouchers to local government (Ranghelli, 1999). By banning together under a common umbrella such as the County of San Bernardino Homeless Coalition, local private and public agencies can bring the full power of networking to bear. Much organizing has already occurred at the national level. The National Low Income Housing Coalition, National Coalition for the Homeless, and resident-led groups such as the Public Housing Residents’ National Organizing Campaign and The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) are just a few of the national organizations already in place and working hard as advocates for homeless people.

At the micro level, practitioners and case managers must continue their own education as well as the education and treatment of clients. Advocates of homeless people must keep abreast of the annual changes to the McKinney Act as well as other legislative acts that affect the homeless population. The 1996 Welfare Reform Act and the 1998 reforms enacted within the Federal Housing Authority brought
sweeping and potentially catastrophic changes to how programs will be funded and administered in the next decade. Practitioners must also keep in mind that client treatment models based on client empowerment is in reality a two edged sword. Often, agencies and practitioners seek to empower clients to take responsibility for their situations and work to help strengthen clients' skills so they can investigate and implement their own solutions. This approach has met with some success when resources are available to meet those client needs. In situations where resources are scarce, there is a tendency to become frustrated, angry, and blaming. This occurs with both clients and social service providers. Workers, when not empowered can be just as easily victimized by burnout and despair as are their clients. Albers & Paolini report on this phenomenon, "As programs attempt to empower homeless individuals it is essential and critical that empowerment also take place on an agency and inter-agency level (Albers & Paolini, 1993, p. 102). The impact of this empowerment approach will do much to strengthen clients, service providers, and communities. By educating the public and changing attitudes toward homelessness, eliminating inter-agency competition for finite resources, and continuing efforts for creative solutions, all benefit."
Solutions need not always involve expense to agencies and communities. In fact, with minimal financial investment substantial savings are sometimes realized. The Housing Services Demonstration Project (Auerbach, Beckerman & Levitt, 1990) established in 1989 in Manhattan, NY is one example. This program utilized a $240,000 grant spread over two years. The program’s goal was to reduce the number of evictions among welfare recipients in Northern Manhattan. In this two-year period, over forty families were identified as being at risk and were provided rental assistance grants. Due to the high costs of housing vouchers, food assistance programs, transportation allowances and special education needs for children of homeless families in New York City, this small project saved the City of New York an estimated 2 Million dollars, a return of almost 8 to 1.

Outreach programs can do much to eliminate homelessness and social isolation. This study indicated that the majority of these homeless families still make contact with professional service providers such as dentists, physicians, and social welfare cash assistance workers. By making these professionals more aware of the services available in their communities, they also can help reach out to people at risk of losing their homes. Finally, it seems ironic that in most cities, law enforcement vehicles are stenciled with the
quotation "To protect and Serve." It is not the researcher's intent to minimize the job performed by law enforcement. However, one has to wonder how the community would be affected if teams of social workers in cars and vans were patrolling the same areas? For the first time in many years, social workers would have the opportunity to provide services indicative of our roots. Working under the direction of professional social workers, outreach volunteers with minimal training can do much to ameliorate the effects of social isolation. Neighborhoods could once again feel the effects of friendly visitors who provide transportation, a handshake, a bit of advice on how to plan and prepare low budget-high nutrition meals, and warm smile that says, "You are not alone any more."
APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please answer the following questions by circling the number that most closely describes the way you feel now.

(1) Having whatever I want is more important than a safe place to live.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(2) Having money is more important than being loved.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(3) Having possessions is more important than having respect.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(4) Buying things I really need is more important than paying my rent.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(5) Making decisions is easy because I usually have few choices.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(6) I rely upon my own information and abilities rather than services from others to get what I want.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4
Survey Instrument - continued

(7) If I do a good job for someone, I would rather have payment than praise.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree
1 2 3 4

(8) I accomplish what I set out to do no matter what.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(9) I pay my bills on time.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(10) I feel that it is foolish to take risks in order to get what I want.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(11) I make my own decisions without help from others.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(12) I like to try new experiences even if I am uncertain of the outcome.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(13) I believe there is only one way to do the job right.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4

(14) I feel good about the most of the decisions I have made in the past.

Always Frequently Sometimes Never
1 2 3 4
Survey Instrument - continued

In this section, place an X in the space closest to the word that best describes the way you feel now.

(15) Hopeless ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Hopeful

(16) Worthless ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Worthy

(17) Capable ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Incapable

(18) Dissatisfied ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Satisfied

(19) Not Confident ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Confident

(20) Trustful ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Mistrustful

(21) Careless ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Careful

Please answer the following questions by circling the number that most closely describes the way you feel now.

(22) All of my friends are just like me.

Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree ___

1 2 3 4

(23) I feel better about myself if I can help somebody else.

Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree ___

1 2 3 4

(24) Most of the time, I depend upon other people to help me.

Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree ___

1 2 3 4

47
Survey Instrument - continued

(25) The majority of my problems could be solved if people would leave me alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(26) Most of the time I would rather be by myself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(27) Most people who claim to be my friends only do so because I have something they want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(28) One can of beer, one ounce of hard liquor, or 8 ounces of wine = one drink. How many drinks of alcohol do you have per day? _____

(29) How many times per day do you use street drugs such as heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, or others? _____

(30) If you are presently employed write the number of weeks you have been employed in space (A). If you are presently unemployed, write the number of weeks you have been unemployed in space (B).

(A) _____ Weeks employed

(B) _____ Weeks unemployed

(31) If you are presently homeless, write the number of weeks you have been homeless in the space provided. _____ weeks.

(32) If you presently are not homeless, but have been homeless in the past two years, write the total number of weeks you were homeless in the space provided. _____ weeks.
Survey Instrument - continued

(33) What is the longest period of time you have ever been homeless? Write the total number of weeks in the space provided.
____ weeks.

(34) How many times have you been evicted in the past two years? Write the answer in the space provided.
____ evictions.

(35) How many people live in your current household? If you are presently homeless then answer the question relative to your last home.
____ people in household.

(36) Of the people who live with you, how many are non-relatives. If you are presently homeless then answer the question relative to your last home.
____ Non-relatives in household.

(37) Have you ever been imprisoned?
   Yes____   No____

(38) Have you ever been diagnosed with any mental illness?
   Yes____   No____

(39) If you answered Yes to question #38, please provide your diagnosis. If you do not know, leave the space blank.

Answer as many of the following selections as apply to you. For question #40, place a quantity in the space provided next to the appropriate response. If you did not contact any of these professions, leave the question blank.

(40) During the past year I have had contact with the following service professionals.
Accountant ______
Attorney ______
Dentist ______
Doctor ______
Child Protective Service Social Worker ______

Survey Instrument - continued

Clergy ________

Mental Health Worker, Therapist or
or counselor. ________

Other Social Worker (AFDC) ________

Probation or Parole Officer ________

Questions 41 through 51 are personal information about you. Please place an X in the appropriate space provided or fill in the quantity requested.

(41) Ethnic or cultural group with which you most closely identify yourself.

_____ African American

_____ Asian American

_____ East Indian

_____ European American

_____ Hispanic American

_____ Native American

_____ Other

(42) Gender _____ Male _____ Female

(43) In what year were you born? ________

(44) Current Marital or Relationship Status

_____ Married

_____ Never married

_____ Separated

_____ Divorced

_____ Living with a significant other

(45) Number of children presently in your custody. ________
Survey Instrument - continued

(46) What is your total monthly family income. If you are currently receiving food stamps, include the total value of all cash income and food stamps in your total. $____per month.

(47) Before becoming homeless, how much did you spend per month on rent, utilities, and food? If you are not homeless, how much do you spend on these items now? $____per month.

(48) How many times per week do you communicate with relatives that do not live with you? _______times per week.

Survey Instrument - continued

(49) Do you have someone you consider to be your best friend? Yes____ No____

(50) What method of transportation do you use the most?

_____ have my own car

_____ use public transportation

_____ rely on family or friends for transportation.

(51) Are you now or ever been homeless in the past because of Domestic Violence?

Yes____ No____

This is the end of the survey, thank you for your assistance.
Dear Participant,

As an adult member of a homeless household, you are being asked to participate in a survey that will help our understanding of some of the causes of homelessness. The focus of this study in particular is to determine the relationship between social isolation and homeless families. This study is being conducted by Samuel Birdsall, a graduate student in the Masters of Social Work Program at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB). This study will assist me in pursuit of fulfilling the thesis project requirement for a Master of Social Work degree. This project has been approved by the Department of Social Work sub-committee of the Institutional Review at CSUSB.

It is not the intent of this study to infer any particular status or reason as to why you personally have become homeless. The questions asked are not intended to offend or trivialize your current condition. The intent is to test the general applicability of Exchange Theory, determine the implications of social network analysis, and enhance our overall understanding of the dynamics that create homelessness. You have been randomly selected for this study and your participation is strictly voluntary. A four-digit number has been assigned to you. This number is the only means of identification that can in any way be attributed to you. This informed consent form and the questionnaire will be kept under separate lock and key. The only persons having access to the documents are the researcher and his faculty advisor. After the surveys have been analyzed they will be destroyed.

The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions as best you can without consulting with other participants. Your answers are important to the overall integrity of the study. If you have questions or concerns you may withdraw at any time. If after you have completed the survey you wish to change any of your answers, please contact the researcher or faculty adviser, Mr. George Taylor by calling (909) 880-5565. The researcher is responsible for insuring that participants in research projects conducted under the guidance of the university are safeguarded from any harm caused by their participation. The data you provide by answering the questions in the questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence. Your responses cannot and will not be held against you in any way and your participation is not a condition of receiving or continuing in any treatment programs in which you are presently or subsequently may be enrolled.

On the basis of these statements, and by the application of my mark in the space indicated, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Place an X above Date
Debriefing Statement

This survey was conducted by Samuel R. Birdsall, a Masters of Social Work Student at California State University at San Bernardino (CSUSB). The purpose of the study was to determine the affect of social isolation as a factor in causing homelessness. The Department of Social Work sub-committee of the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB approved this study.

I would like to emphasize that all data collected will be held in confidence. If you need to contact the researcher for any reason, please call. If you feel that you have been emotionally harmed in any way by participating in this study, please notify the researcher and a list of counseling referrals will be made available. For written results please contact the following individuals. Results should be available by July 31, 2000. Again, thank you for your participation.

Samuel Birdsall
Department of Social Work
California State University
San Bernardino (909) 880-5501.

Mr. George Taylor
Project Supervisor, California State University
San Bernardino (909) 880-7223
### APPENDIX B

**ANSWERS TO SURVEY QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Having whatever I want is more important than a safe place to live.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Having money is more important than being loved.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Having possessions is more important than having respect.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Buying things I really need is more important than paying my rent.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Making decisions is easy because I usually have few choices.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) I rely upon my own information and abilities rather than services from others to get what I want.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) If I do a good job for someone, I would rather have payment than praise.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) I accomplish what I set out to do no matter what.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) I pay my bills on time.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) I feel that it is foolish to take risks in order to get what I want.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) I make my own decisions without help from others.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) I like to try new experiences even if I am unsure of the outcome.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) I believe there is only one way to do the job right.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
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<td>(14) I feel good about most of the decisions I have made in the past.</td>
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<td>(17) Incapable vs. Capable</td>
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<td>(18) Dissatisfied vs. Satisfied</td>
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<td>(23) I feel better about myself if I can help someone else.</td>
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<td>(25) The majority of my problems could be solved if people would leave me alone.</td>
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<td>(27) Most people who claim to be my friends only do so because I have something they want.</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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## Answers To Survey Questions - continued

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<th>Mean</th>
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<td>(43) Year you were born converted to age</td>
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<td>(44) Current marital Status</td>
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<td>Divorced</td>
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<td>Lives with domestic partner</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>(45) Number of children presently with you</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.43</td>
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<td>(46) Total monthly family income from all sources including food stamps.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$561.27</td>
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<td>(47) Total expenses.</td>
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<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$581.82</td>
<td>$353.75</td>
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<td>(48) Number of times per week communicating with relatives.</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>(49) Do you have someone you consider to be your best friend?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>(50) Method of transportation most used.</td>
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<td>Has own vehicle</td>
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<td>Public conveyance</td>
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<td>Depends upon others</td>
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<td>(51) Homeless now or in the past due to domestic violence.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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APPENDIX C

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Family** - (A) Any group of people, one of whom is over 18 years of age and acts as the custodial caretaker of at least one minor child. (B) Any group of two or more adult persons currently involved in a domestic relationship who consider themselves family by blood, marriage, or affinity.

**Homelessness** - A condition occurring among a special population that is currently homeless or at extreme risk of becoming homeless as indicated by their utilization of services and programs provided by agencies who serve homeless people.

**Value** - Symbolic and/or concrete assessment of six resource classes: Love, Status, Services, Information, Goods, and Money. These resources comprise items exchanged in social and interpersonal interactions. Value assignment is weighted based upon probability of the outcome of actions.

**Actions** - Sets of conditioned, purposeful, and repeated activities that expend resources. Actions are performed in exchanges to satisfy a particular need and/or produce a desired outcome.

**Emotional Status** - Subjective measure of an infinite set of emotional assets or resources that are assigned Value and expended by actions.

**Network Position** - A location relative to links to other points within a network. When strained, severed, or infrequently utilized, they are indicative of isolation from other network positions.

**Demographic data** - Generalized data associated with the subjects' personal characteristics. These include but are not limited to gender, income, and personal behaviors. Data gathered in this section is primarily used to determine correlational factors associated with previously studied causal factors.
APPENDIX D

SOCIAL ISOLATION INDEX SCORES

Individual Attribute Scores

Mathematical calculations for individual scores are based upon the number of statements (7) x the value of 1 of 4 possible answers.

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<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Minimum Score Possible</th>
<th>Maximum Score Possible</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td>Value</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>17.00</td>
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<td>49</td>
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Individual Attribute Group Scores

Mathematical calculations for the entire range of scores are based upon the number of statements (7) x the value of 1 of 4 possible answers x (N = 11).

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Table 3.2
Social Isolation Index Scores - continued

Participant SIIS Frequency Scores

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SIIS Quartile Scores

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<th>Third Quartile</th>
<th>Fourth Quartile</th>
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<td>86</td>
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Individual SIIS and Index Score

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Table 3.2
### APPENDIX E

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

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<td><strong>ON PROBATION OR PAROLE</strong></td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVOLVED</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVICTIONS PAST YEAR</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOMELESS expressed in weeks</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 12 Weeks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 12 Weeks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNEMPLOYED expressed in weeks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 50 Weeks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 50 Weeks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>382.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD PRIOR TO HOMELESSNESS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE WEEKLY COMMUNICATION WITH RELATIVES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CUSTODY OF HOMELESS PARENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONTHLY INCOME PRIOR TO HOMELESSNESS</strong></td>
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<td>$561</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONTHLY EXPENSES PRIOR TO HOMELESSNESS</strong></td>
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<td>$581</td>
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Table 3.3
Demographics - Continued

Contacts with Professional Service Providers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number Visits</th>
<th>Total Number Participants</th>
<th>Average Number Visits/Participant</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<td>Doctor</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>CPS Social Worker</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (AFDC) Social Worker</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probation/Parole Officer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{X}One participant attended church on a weekly basis.

\textsuperscript{Y}Two participants attended therapy sessions five days per week for a period of 25 or more weeks.

Table 3.3
REFERENCES


