The role of Values in Social Exclusion of the Homeless

An examination of psycho-social barriers faced by the homeless.

Value Differences between the Homeless and Housed Population: implications for Self-Esteem and Self-Mastery.

Aims

- Look **beyond structural factors** contributing to homelessness.

- Understand core factors influencing homeless people's **life choices**.

- Understand the **psychology** of the homeless from their perspective.

- Understand **psycho-social barriers** homeless may face reintegrating back into the community.
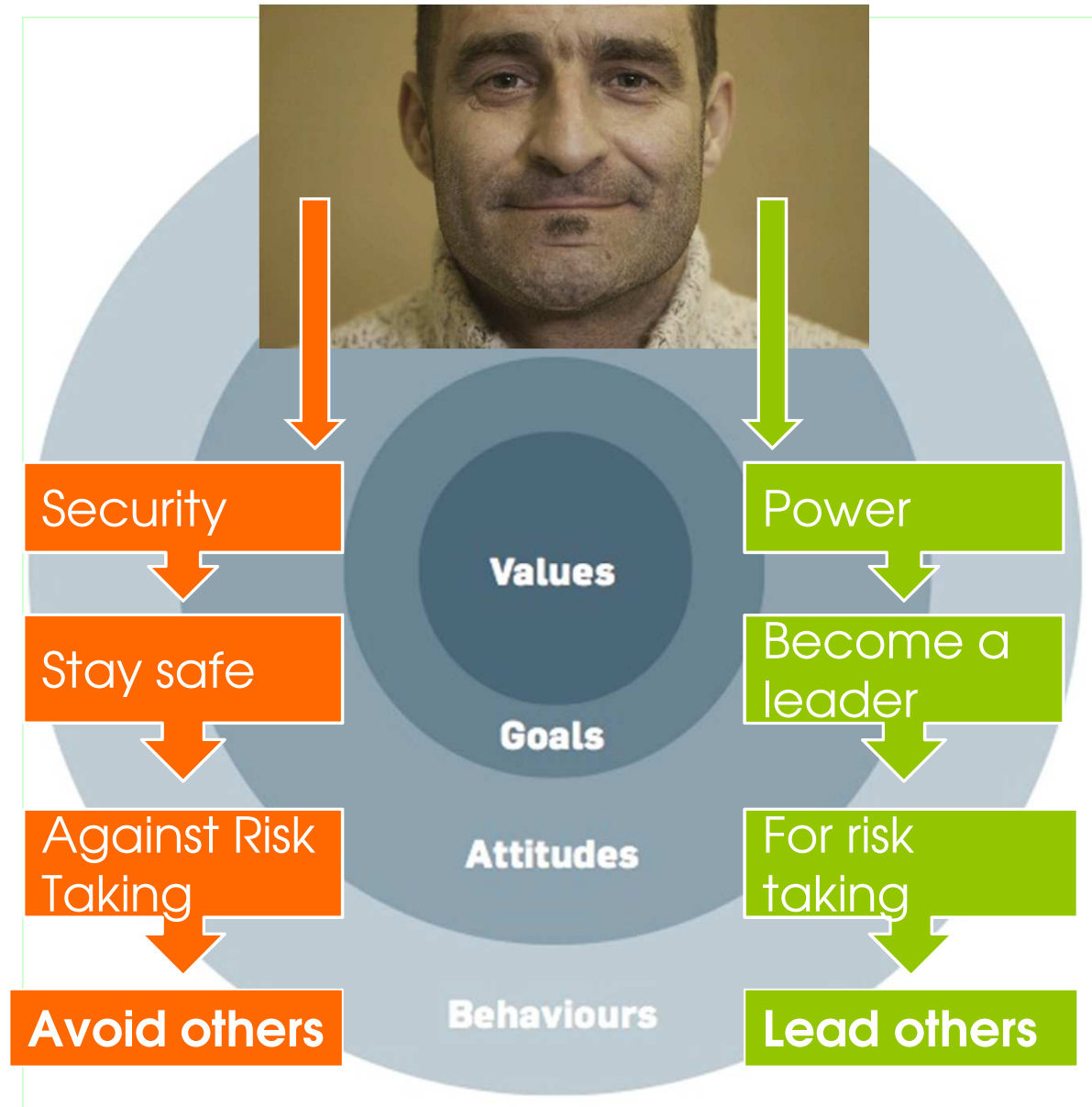
Why measure values?

- Values are believed to be underlying **drivers of behaviour** / action.

- Significant life events have been shown to change the importance of values.

- **Value differences** could explain some of the **difficulties** experienced by the homeless in **reintegrating** to society.
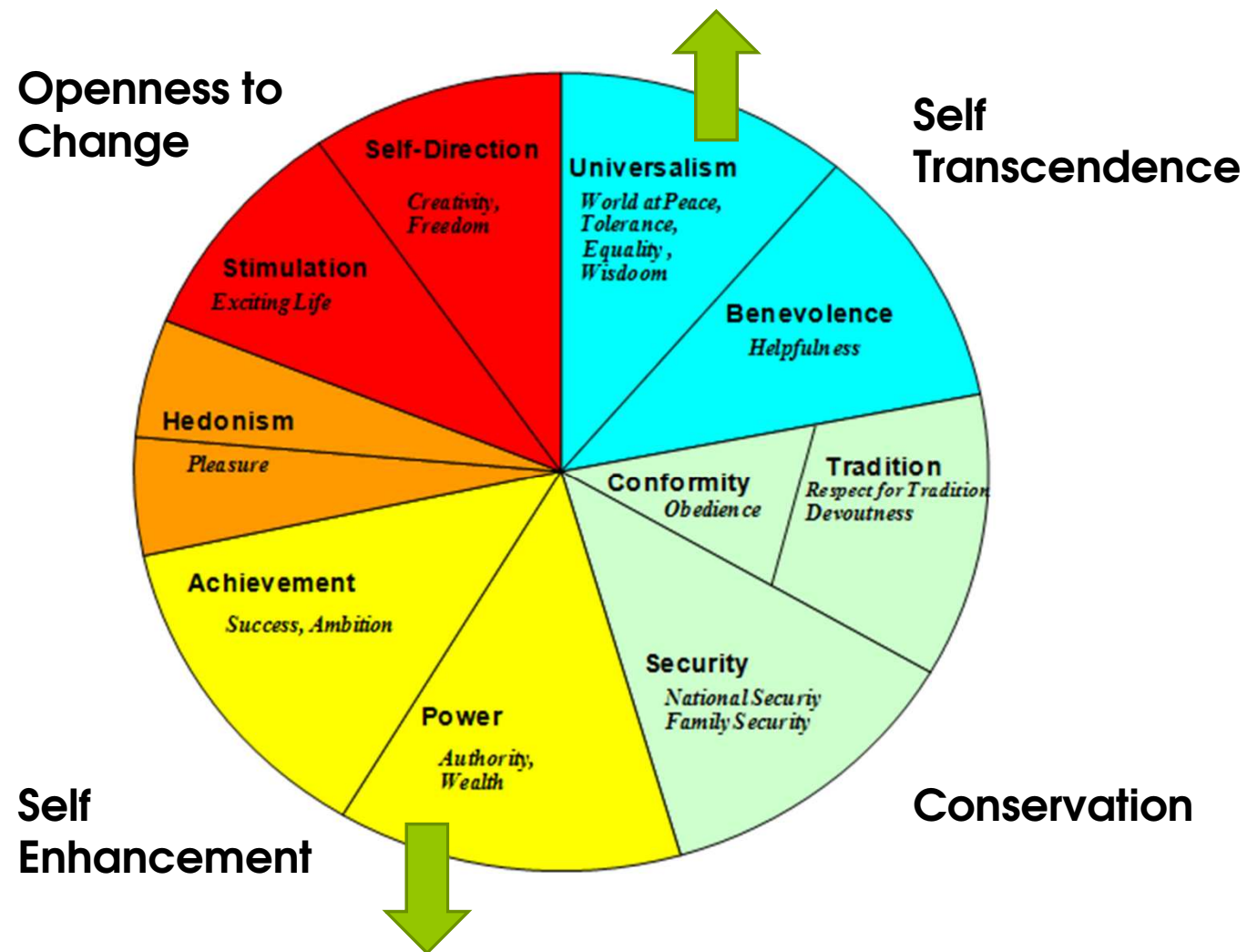
What are Values?

- **What is important** to people in their lives
  - Basic motivations
  - Perception and behaviour

- General (transcend situations)
- **Relatively stable**
- Available to consciousness
- Organized in **personal hierarchies**

How Values Work

Security → Stay safe → Against Risk Taking → **Avoid others**

Values | Goals | Attitudes | Behaviours

Power → Become a leader → For risk taking → **Lead others**

Schwartz Value Theory (1992)

Openness to Change

Self Transcendence

Self Enhancement

Conservation

Self-Direction — *Creativity, Freedom*

Universalism — *World at Peace, Tolerance, Equality, Wisdom*

Benevolence — *Helpfulness*

Stimulation — *Exciting Life*

Hedonism — *Pleasure*

Conformity — *Obedience*

Tradition — *Respect for Tradition, Devoutness*

Achievement — *Success, Ambition*

Security — *National Security, Family Security*

Power — *Authority, Wealth*

Method

- **Compare homeless to housed participants**

  - Homeless sample of 58 people

    - 75% had slept rough.
    - 61% reported experiencing multiple instances of homelessness.

  - Housed population sample of 57 people

Method

- Paper and electronic questionnaires given to participants.

- Questionnaire titled *'What is important to you and how has this changed?'*

- Items measured Values, Life Events, Perceived Value Change, Self Esteem and Self Mastery.

Method

- Measures

  - **Values** - PVQ40 (Schwartz, 2001)
    - 40 statements that a person indicates the degree to which they reflect them.
      - 'It is important to me to be in charge and have a lot of money and expensive things' (Power)
      - 'It's very important to me to help the people around me. I want to care for their wellbeing' (Benevolence)

  - **Life Event** – 12-item modified Social Readjustment scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967)
    - Relationship difficulties/separation from long term partner?
    - Volunteering?
    - Dismissal, redundancy or retirement from work?
    - Other life-changing event?

Method

- Measures

  - **Self Esteem** - Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg ,1965).
    - 10 items with a mix of positive and negative statements.
    - 'I take a positive attitude toward myself.'

  - **Self Mastery** - Pearlin Self-mastery scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978)
    - 7 items containing a mix of positive and negative statements.
   - 'I have little control over the things that happen to me.'

  - **Control Question**
    - Have your experiences of homelessness changed what is important to you?
    - Have your experiences of homelessness changed the way you view life?
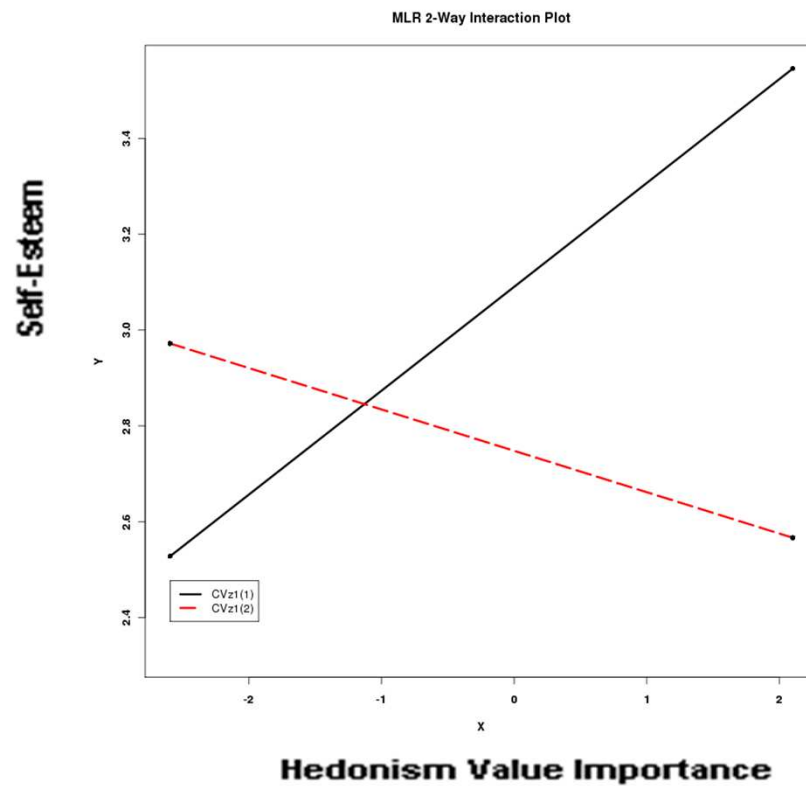
Results – Values
Homeless and Housed

- Homeless sample placed **less importance** on self-enhancement values :
  - **Power** values (p<.01)
  - **Achievement** values (p<.05).

- Homeless sample placed **more importance** on conservation values:
  - **Tradition** values (p<.05)
  - **Security** values (p<.05)

Results – Self Esteem and Mastery

Esteem and Mastery
Homeless vs General Participants
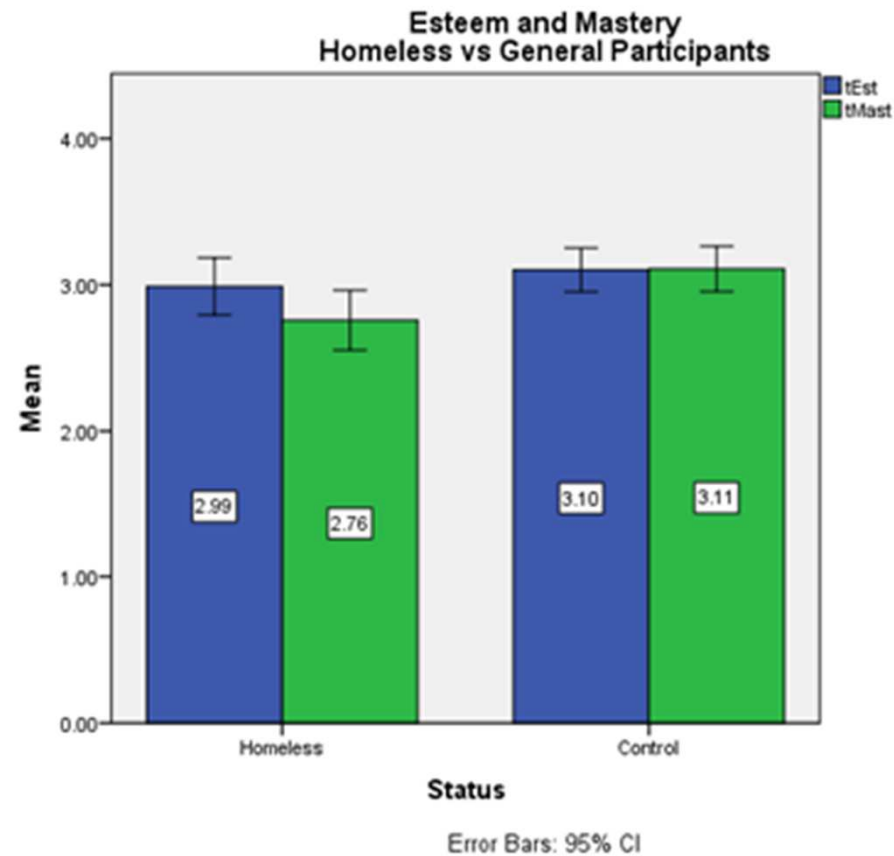
Homeless have significantly lower levels of self mastery (p<.01, two-tailed)

Results – Self Esteem and Hedonism Values

MLR 2-Way Interaction Plot
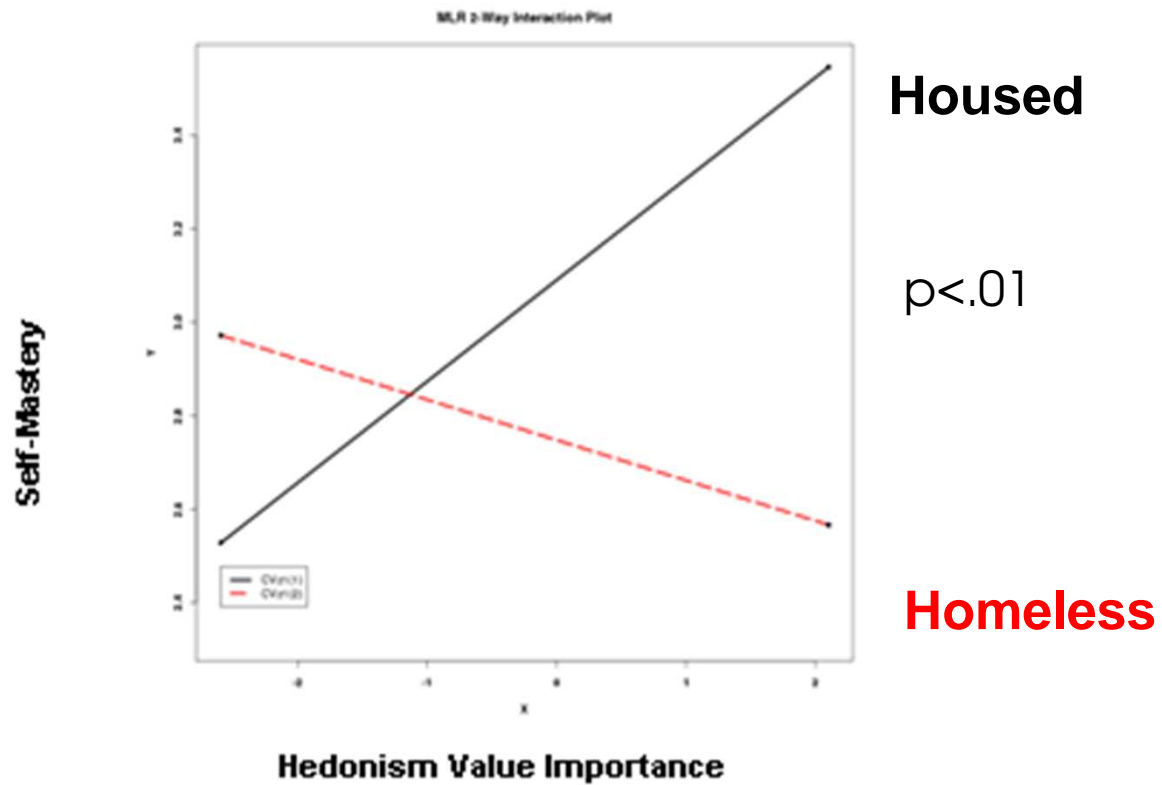
Housed

p<.01

Homeless

Self-Esteem

Hedonism Value Importance

CVz1(1)
CVz1(2)

Results – Self Mastery and Hedonism Values

MLR 2-Way Interaction Plot

Self-Mastery (y-axis)

Hedonism Value Importance (x-axis)

Housed

p<.01

Homeless

Results
First-time and Multiple Homeless

- First-time homeless (n=16) and multiple homeless (n=26)

- **Benevolence** was significantly more important to the first-occasion homeless than the multiple homeless ($p<.01$)

- The longer a person is homeless, the less likely they are to value Benevolence ($p<.01$)

- First-time homeless participants reported significantly higher levels of **self-mastery** ($p<.01$)

- Benevolence was significantly positively correlated with self-mastery in all participants ($p<.001$).

- **Repeat homeless** have **more clearly defined and homogenous value profiles.**

Results – Control Questions

- 80% of homeless respondents reported that their experiences of homelessness had changed what is important to them

- 89% of homeless respondents reported that their experiences of homelessness had changed the way they view life.

Future Research

- What are the levels of actual value change?

- Are value differences an antecedent or result of homelessness?

- What is the relationship between hedonism and self esteem?

- Why are benevolence levels so low in the homeless population?

Study 1 – Questionnaire Study

Measures

- PVQ40
- Self Mastery
- Wellbeing
- Life event
- Social Interaction
- Social proximity

Aims

- Expand previous study to national level

- Introduce additional measures relevant to the intervention

Study 2 – Qualitative Study

AIMS:

- Value priorities
- Value change
- Social barriers
- Coping strategies

METHOD:

- Interview 20 homeless individuals
- Analyse other qualitative data sources
- Thematic analysis to inform intervention measures.

Study 3 – Intervention Study

Assess the effects of a return to work programme for the homeless on psychological constructs of participants.

- Provide feedback to service providers
- Leverage existing infrastructure
- Measure participants at 4 x 3 monthly intervals.

Groups and Measures

Groups

- Homeless Intervention
- Homeless Control
- Homeless Colleague
- Worker Control

Measures

- PVQ40
- Self Mastery
- Wellbeing
- Life event
- Social Interaction
- Social proximity
- Success in maintaining work.

Participate

Please contact Jessica Rea at mwjt045@rhul.ac.uk for more information

The project's value for your organisation

- Look at existing research content in a new way.
- Ability to review practices across a number of organisations and identify which factors contribute to successful long term rehousing of the homeless.
- Derive empirically supported interventions.
- Participating organisations will be provided with a summary of the findings and custom reports according to your interests.

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